

A Guide for the Religious Instruction of Jewish Youth

Isaac Samuel Reggio

An abstract geometric pattern in yellow and black on a white background. The pattern consists of various geometric shapes including triangles, squares, circles, and lines, arranged in a complex, interlocking manner. Some shapes are solid yellow, while others are black outlines. The overall effect is a dense, modern, and somewhat chaotic design.

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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF JEWISH YOUTH***

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A GUIDE

FOR

THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF JEWISH YOUTH.

PROPOSED TO TEACHERS BY

ISAAC REGGIO,

RABBI AND PROFESSOR,
MEMBER OF THE ORIENTAL AND LEIPSIC, HALLE,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

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NOTICE.

THE name of Isaac Reggio of Goritz, is now a celebrity in the Hebrew literary world. A man of vast mind, a profound scholar, a philosopher, and an elegant writer, his numerous works on Theology, Hermeneutics, Philology, History, and Literature, written in Hebrew, in Italian, and in German, have tended much to revive the taste for Hebrew literature, and to reconcile modern education to the study of Jewish antiquities.

The present little book is one of his latest productions in the Italian language. In a style at once concise and perspicuous, and with a form of reasoning suited to the scientific requirements of the times, he introduces the student to an enlarged view of Religion, ascends with him to the heavenly source from which it emanated, and leads him, through the paths of virtue and love, to the comprehension and admiration of the objects contemplated by it. In short, he teaches—if I am permitted the expression—*the philosophy of religion*.

I humbly, but firmly believe that, in the hands of able Jewish teachers, this work will considerably assist them to infuse into religious instruction a little more spirituality, and to impart a more comprehensive view of religion, than the routine of former days deemed necessary, and that, by so doing, they will be better able to enlarge and satisfy the minds, improve the hearts, and generally advance the moral education of youth.

Notwithstanding the well-intentioned and beneficial efforts of many friends of education among the British Jews, and the praiseworthy exertions of some excellent teachers, the education of the mass is, we must confess, still in a condition, in which the attainment of those objects has not ceased to be a desideratum. We may or may not be on a level with our neighbours, but we have very urgent and special calls of our own for self-improvement, we have a particular mission to fulfil, with its concomitant duties. Such self-improvement and such duties are demanded by the spirit—not of *the age*, as is too commonly said and believed—but of an age which began thirty-two centuries ago, at the revelation on Mount Sinai—the spirit of Judaism, of well-understood Judaism. Our age, with all its boasted and undeniable progress, is still, morally, far below

the type designed by Providence for humanity in the Sinaitic dispensation, far behind the spirit which dictated and pervades the pages of the sacred volume, and which, when thoroughly understood and generally acted upon, must bring about the supreme reign of justice, charity, and universal love, and—as far as attainable—the ultimate perfection of mankind.

It has appeared to me that these truths find a plain and logical exposition in this little work, and that its contents may not prove uninteresting even to the general reader. I also believe that a more correct apprehension of the true spirit and principles of Judaism by our Christian brethren, than is commonly arrived at, will have the twofold effect, of gradually leading to a larger measure of justice being dealt to the Jew, and inducing the latter to a higher degree of self-respect. For these several reasons, I have volunteered to translate it for the use of the English public, while other versions are being prepared in Germany and France. I trust that those to whose lot has fallen the honourable but arduous task of educating and informing young minds, and to whom it is more particularly addressed, will give it their earnest consideration, for the sake of whatever good they may cull from it, as a material in aid, while they are laying the foundations of virtue in the hearts of the rising generation.

That the results may correspond to the intentions is the sincere wish of

THE TRANSLATOR.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TO INSTRUCTORS.

IN the exercise of the sacred mission entrusted to you by Providence—that of educating our youth to piety and religion—it must have frequently occurred to you, to wish that such an instruction could be imparted, not in the shape of dogmas demanding to be admitted without investigation, but as doctrines addressed to the intellect by proper demonstrations, and finding their way to the heart by stimulating its noblest feelings. The little book that I present to you is intended to satisfy, at least in part, that wish. You will not find in it a complete treatise on Jewish Theology, or a systematic catechism, but only the essential elements, which may serve to the future elaboration of both. You will find deposited in it the rough materials, which some abler hands will perhaps one day employ in constructing an edifice, in which our youth may find a safe refuge from the storms of doubt, unbelief, and irreligion. I have purposed to avoid all exuberant ornaments of style, all pompous parade of erudition, and contented myself with a plain diction, and a strict laconism. I have not quoted authors who preceded me in the same field; I have not called up for investigation what of valuable or defective could be found in them; in short, I have not instituted comparisons, scientific disquisitions, or critical examinations of the opinions of others. A series of aphorisms, simple, plain, unadorned, of easy understanding, drawn from no other source than the Divine Word, presented with the greatest possible perspicuity and precision, progressing in a regular chain of consequential propositions, and containing in few words the most important points of the Israelitish creed—that is the form in which I have thought more proper to present to those, who are already versed in the Bible and in Hebrew literature, a skeleton of the vast religious science, in which they may perceive at a glance the principal characteristic of Judaism, its various ramifications, subsidiary parts, and special tendencies; they may then easily discover and account for the multifarious phases, in which it manifested itself in the various epochs of the universal history of mankind. To supply the deficiencies, to adorn those naked propositions, to provide them with evidence deduced from the sacred text, to enlarge them with appropriate applications, to illustrate them with

examples, in fine, to reduce the whole into such a catechistic form as will suit a sound system of instruction—such is the task which remains entrusted to your intelligence, and to your zeal. By employing the proffered materials with that discretion which is peculiar to your ministry, with that method which the tender minds of your pupils require, and with the love inspired by the sublimity and importance of the subject, yours will be the merit of having propagated the seeds of truth that will bring forth charity and universal edification; to me suffices the happiness of having, in some degree, contributed to so noble a work.



**A GUIDE FOR THE RELIGIOUS
INSTRUCTION OF JEWISH YOUTH.**

CHAPTER I.

I. WHOEVER directs his mind to the contemplation of the objects that surround him, the aggregate of which is called the universe, will soon perceive, that the parts of which it is composed undergo continually various modifications and successive changes, every one of them exercising some influence on the others, and receiving from them some alteration. This state of mutual dependence, in which the parts of the universe stand in relation to each other, leads us necessarily to conclude, that none of them has within itself the reason or cause of its existence, but that all of them together depend upon a cause which is out of themselves, and through which they began to exist; the universe, then, has had a cause, an Author.

II. This Author of the universe, if he had not in himself the reason of his existence, must also have it in others, and these again in others. Consequently, we must either suppose an endless progression of causes and effects, which is repugnant to reason, or arrive at last at a Being existing by and of himself,—that is to say, one who owes not his existence to others, and has caused all other things to exist;—and in that case, the reason of his existence must be part of his *own* essence and nature, and, consequently, inseparable from him and indestructible. The Author of the universe is then a Being necessary and eternal; and as to Him all things owe their existence, it follows that through Him they began to exist, and He created them from nought.

III. He, who could create all from nought, has a power without limits, and nothing is to Him impossible; He, who has given existence to all things, has also ordained the laws to which they are subject; He, who has ordained at His will the laws of nature, has also the power of changing or suspending them at His will; and lastly, He, who caused all things to exist, can alone keep them in existence, governing and directing them with ceaseless providence; and such continual action implies, of necessity, that He should know everything, that nothing should be hidden from Him, and that in Him error should be impossible. The Author of

the universe is then omnipotent, free, all-provident, omniscient, and infallible.

IV. Again, whoever attentively contemplates the universe cannot help discovering, with admiration, in every part of it a stupendous art, a constant order, a systematic correspondence of means to ends, which demonstrate that all has been arranged on a predetermined plan and for a fixed purpose, to which all the particular dispositions developed in the course of the natural phenomena are exquisitely adapted. This order and this harmony—which manifest themselves, also, in all the progressive courses of nature—indicate a self-developing excellence, and a tendency to an ever-increasing perfectibility, such as can only emanate from a cause infinitely intelligent and good; and as such qualities cannot be attributed to a being corporeal, because limited and subject to changes, it follows that the Author of the universe is all-wise and good, pure and immutable.

V. Now, this Being, necessary and eternal, whom the contemplation of the universe alone reveals to us as the Author of everything, as omnipotent, free, all-provident, omniscient, infallible, pure, immutable, all-wise, and good, is He whom we call GOD.

VI. But our conviction of the existence of God need not be derived exclusively from the wonders of the universe; for every man can find in himself the evident proof of the existence of that supreme cause. In fact, man feels within himself that he thinks; and if he were even to doubt it, he could not deny that at least he doubts; and the doubt itself is already a thought. Admitting that he possesses the faculty of thinking, he must admit that there is within himself a substance, a being, a something which thinks. But this being, who is conscious of his own thoughts, is also conscious that he exists not by himself, that he has not existed from all eternity, that he is subject to changes, that even the simple ideas, which compose his thoughts, are not produced by himself, but acquired through his senses from external objects; and, in short, that he depends upon various causes placed without himself, and undergoes vicissitudes, which it is not in his power to remove. Therefore man has not within himself the reason of his own existence, but he must trace it to another, who is the Author of it. Now, this Author cannot have received His own existence from another, if He is to be considered the primary cause; otherwise we should fall into a succession of causes and effects to infinity. Then, the true Author of our existence is one who exists by Himself, and as such He is eternal, omnipotent, all-wise, etc., etc.; He

is God.

VII. Another source, affording the proof of the existence of God, man finds in himself when his intellectual faculties have attained a certain degree of culture and maturity. He then knows himself to be a moral being; that is to say, a being who, placed between good and evil, can, of his own free will, adhere to the former and reject the latter, if he follows the dictates of his reason. Then the moral sense awakens in his mind the idea of a supreme blessing, of a progressive and infallible moral perfection, of a future final accord between virtue and felicity, and their necessary co-existence. Now, he cannot expect this supreme blessing from anything that surrounds him in nature, because he does not find in the latter the desired union of happiness with virtue, enjoyment with merit. He must, therefore, seek it in a Supreme Cause existing out of nature—in a Cause which should contain in itself the type of the moral law, embrace the whole extent of that law with infinite intelligence, and act up to its dictates with a powerful will. This Supreme Cause is God.

CHAPTER II.

VIII. MAN has many advantages and privileges over all other creatures. Not only can he, like other animals, perceive through his senses all the surrounding objects, but he can compare with one another the perceptions received, associate them together, separate them, and form new ideas. He can know for what purposes things exist, investigate their causes and effects, discern between good and evil, between just and unjust; he alone can communicate his thoughts to others; he alone can speak.

IX. Everything produced by an intelligent Author must be intended for some purpose—must have a *destination*. Man, the noblest creature on earth, must also have a destination. We shall arrive at a clear knowledge of that destination, when we shall have considered the powers and capabilities possessed by him; for the means with which nature has endowed him, for the development of his activity, evidently point out the goal which that activity is designed to attain.

X. Now, the capabilities that we discover in man are the following:—Besides a body constructed with wonderful skill, but weak, corruptible, mortal, man has within himself a vivifying principle, which substantiates in him the knowledge of things with the aid of the senses, renews in him perceptions once received, unites them, separates them, and forms out of them new ideas. This thinking principle is certainly different from the body, of which no part is apt to think, and is what we call the *soul*; the act itself of thinking proceeds from a faculty of the soul which we call *intellect*.

XI. But the soul can also judge, conclude from causes to effects, distinguish between good and evil, between just and unjust, conceive an idea of things never perceived through the senses; it can recognise the supreme Author of the universe, it can adore God. This faculty of the soul is called *reason*; intellect and reason are the principal or superior faculties of the human soul.

XII. Reason points out good as a thing desirable, and evil as a thing to be avoided; yet man feels within himself a desire or impulse towards all that is pleasurable to the senses, although reason may represent it to him as an evil. And, on the other hand, he is conscious of his perfect freedom of choosing good, however disagreeable to the senses, and of abhorring evil, however tempting it may appear; he has, then, the faculty of directing his action to one or other of these two courses; his soul is endowed with *free-will*.

XIII. A being endowed with intellect, reason, and free-will cannot be composed of parts, because the operations proceeding from such faculties presuppose a comparison of various relations with each other, and a deduction of consequences from their principles; and these operations require such a unity and simplicity in their subject as are absolutely incompatible with the nature of matter, composed, as it is, of parts. The human soul is therefore a simple being, a *spirit*, and, as such, indestructible, *immortal*.

XIV. Man, then, unites in himself two natures, belongs to two classes of beings very different from one another, is a citizen of two worlds. In his body he is linked to the material world, undergoes all the vicissitudes of matter, is subject to the incentives of the senses, and is impelled to gratify the wants and cravings of physical enjoyment. As regards his soul, he enters into the sphere of intelligences, he feels himself attracted by the ideas of the beautiful, of the true, of the just; he participates in the condition of the spiritual beings, aspires to the immense, to the infinite; and is susceptible of an ever-increasing perfectibility, finding within himself the power of abhorring moral evil, viz., vice, and of cleaving to moral good, viz., virtue.

XV. Man has, therefore, within himself a germ of discord between the two principles of which he is constituted, a contrast between the exigencies of the body and those of the soul—between the appetites of the senses and the dictates of reason; and as this latter alone is competent to form a judgment on what he ought or ought not to do, it follows that reason alone should be consulted and obeyed in determining upon every action.

XVI. Now, by freely and spontaneously resolving to conform all the actions of his life to the dictates of reason, which commands him to be wise in his self-government, upright with others, and pious towards the supreme Author, man will have worthily corresponded to the end for which he was created—he will have fulfilled his *destination*; for it is clearly the destination of man to make the

best possible use of the sublime faculties with which his soul is endowed; and the best possible use he does make when he subordinates his inferior to his superior tendencies, the cravings of the body to those of the soul; in a word, when he obeys the dictates of reason.

XVII. When man obeys the dictates of reason, an internal voice in his heart tells him that he has done right; he feels satisfied with himself, and is penetrated with a sense of true joy. When, on the contrary, he consciously infringes the laws of reason, he is not only deprived of that internal approbation, but an inextinguishable voice rises reproachful within his heart; he is no longer satisfied with himself, but feels uneasiness and perturbation. That internal voice, which judges man's actions, and generates happiness or sorrow, is what is called *Conscience*.

XVIII. But the human soul, when it concentrates itself within, has also the faculty of feeling the sense of its own individuality, and perceiving that the state in which it is is its own. By virtue of this sense, which we may call feeling, the soul is led always to desire its own welfare, its own happiness; thence springs love or hatred, inclination or aversion towards an object, as this object seems apt to occasion pleasure or pain. But man, sooner or later, discovers that a true and permanent pleasure cannot be obtained through any of the physical enjoyments on earth, which he may not always be able to procure, or, when procured, leave after them weariness and disgust. He, consequently, cannot place in them his true happiness; and his internal sense tells him that there are other enjoyments of a purely spiritual nature, which alone can satisfy the highest aspirations of his soul. The exercise of his moral duties—which, through his freedom of action, lies always within his power, and by which alone he can tranquillise his conscience and fully delight in self-contentment—is that which offers to his soul true and permanent enjoyment; that alone is worth desiring.

CHAPTER III.

XIX. ON man governing himself morally well in life, it becomes manifest to him, on the one hand, that his conduct, being conformable to the end for which he was created, must also be agreeable to the will of the Creator. On the other hand, that same internal sense, which prompts him to satisfy the demands of his own conscience, leads him, also, to elevate his mind towards God; and he feels at the bottom of his heart that he would be wanting in the principal element of his happiness if he referred not his every thought to the Author of his existence. This twofold direction of the mind towards God is called *Religion*, a word derived from the Latin *religare*, for, as a moral being endowed with intelligence and freedom, man feels always a certain tendency to disengage himself from the physical order of terrestrial things, and to *link* himself again to the Supreme Cause from whom he emanated.

XX. All the peoples of antiquity exhibited, in their successive developments, the aptitude of the human soul to entertain religion within itself, nay, the necessity in which it finds itself to connect the exercise of moral duties or virtue with the Supreme Source of all morality. In fact, God, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, wills nothing but what is good; and in no better mode could man ever manifest his gratitude to the Author of his existence, than by doing that which is agreeable to His will. Hence it is, that whoever is true to his destination, is said to be true to God; and he who is virtuous is religious. There is, then, in the human soul a natural disposition to religiousness or piety; and the history of all ages testifies that no people ever existed, who, however rude and uncultivated, has not had some presentiment of the relations which bind the rational creature to its Creator. Man is born to religion.^[1]

XXI. This need for man to be religious constitutes the basis of *faith*. As man is said to *know* that which is proved to him by experience, or by the testimony of the senses, so he is said to *believe* that which is to him a real want, although it cannot be demonstrated to him either by experience or by the evidence of the

senses. *Knowledge* is based upon *objective*, and *belief* upon *subjective* proofs.

The existence of God, the providence with which He governs the world, the immortality of the soul, the excellence of virtue, the just expectation of a final triumph of good, and of an improvement and future perfection of the human condition, are truths which have their foundations in man himself, that is, in the *nature* of his soul; they originate in him, even without the concurrence of reflection, almost from an innate feeling of the heart, which impels him to admit them; they are founded on subjective proofs, and man *believes* them as necessities of his own nature. These religious truths are therefore called *natural*, and their disciples are said to profess a *natural religion*.

CHAPTER IV.

XXII. YET, notwithstanding the possibility for man to attain happiness by only following the voice of reason, experience has shown, in the most unmistakable manner, that natural religion is insufficient alone to guide mankind in the right path, to preserve him from error, and to regulate his life with constant conformity to his destination, under all circumstances and in all conjunctures. Such insufficiency is caused by various obstacles, presented by the self-same nature of man, and the objects that surround him, and which prevent reason from exercising an absolute dominion over the heart, and naturally weaken its influence on human actions.

XXIII. First among these obstacles, is the circumstance, that the intellectual faculties do not exhibit so much vigour in early youth as the animal or appetitive faculties. Long before the force of reason has developed itself in the mind, the sensual tendencies have already grown giants in the heart, impelling man to desire ardently all that has the semblance of pleasure, however fugitive and deceitful. The will, which is in its full vigour even in a child, has already carried into effect most of these desires, and has thus produced such a habit of grasping impulsively, and without reflection, at everything that presents itself in the aspect of an enjoyment, that reason often arrives too late to destroy the ascendancy gained by the lust of the heart, and to claim its dominion over all man's actions.

XXIV. Besides, reason is sometimes in danger of losing its supremacy, even after having asserted it. Instinct, which, in brutes, holds the place of free-will, confines their physical cravings within certain limits, and we never see an animal wallow in intemperance; but man, just because enjoying absolute freedom of will, may extend his desires beyond every limit, and so much strain and invigorate them as to succumb under their influence. Therefore reason, whether from its tardy development, or from the unlimited ascendancy of sensuality, holds the reins of its power always with uncertainty, and is not ever certain of being obeyed.

XXV. Another obstacle is to be traced in the want of opportunity and time, or, in other words, in the little time that man can spare to devote to reflection, in the presence of the multifarious cravings of his body. These cravings, increased, no doubt, by luxury and an inclination, to superfluities, demand daily and hourly to be satisfied. He is, then, obliged to work unceasingly to earn or procure the means of satisfying his own physical wants, as well as, not unfrequently, those of a whole family. Aliment, clothing, habitation, comfort, recreation, and other innumerable cares, real or artificial, require so much labour and exertion, that little or no time remains for the great majority of mankind to devote to the assiduous reflections and researches necessary to determine what duties reason imposes upon them to fulfil, and what actions to perform.

XXVI. A third obstacle to the development of the moral force in man is the very social life which, by his own nature, he is called to enter. The safety of the social fabric demands that the property of each individual be distinct and acknowledged, and establishes a diversity of ranks, offices, honours, and positions, which ill agree with human cupidity. Hence a conflict of desires, a collision of ambitions, a contest of interests, which at all times generate among men discords, machinations, frauds, usurpations, treachery, violence, and rapine. Add the consequences of the pride and ambition, which each more or less entertains, to reach or surpass some others in power, wealth, or fame, whence many causes of disappointments and heartburnings, of hatreds and jealousies, of persecutions and calumnies, of acts of vengeance and injustice of every form, and it will be easily conceived how little, under the influence of so many evil passions occasioned by social life, could populations, in the course of time, be disposed to submit willingly to the severe and exclusive regimen of reason.

XXVII. Independently of these external impediments, there exists a kind of internal anarchy in man, arising from the want of a force exercising the functions of an arbitrator between the mind and the heart, and inclining the latter to shape its decisions on the motives of the former. The truths, which he is frequently able to discover, satisfy his intellect without affecting his will, minister food to the mind, but operate not on the heart; in short, they establish a theory, but command not practice. Hence it often happens that man sees right, approves it, and yet adheres to wrong. Even after having gathered an abundant harvest from long studies and profound meditations, he still feels the need of a guide to direct his steps—of a means, available at all times, and competent to enable him to subordinate the appetitive to the intellectual faculties, and to cause the will to

follow the judgments of the mind rather than those of the heart.

XXVIII. The inadequacy of natural religion alone becomes still more manifest, when we consider the weakness and limited extent of the human understanding. To meditate assiduously on an abstract object, which does not fall under the perception of the senses, is given only to a few individuals endowed with uncommon penetration. But by far the greater part of men, disinclined to submit to long and arduous researches, concerning what they ought or ought not to believe and to do, prefer living thoughtlessly; and when they even try to enter upon spiritual meditations, they soon feel discouraged, and, often distrusting their own powers, throw up the difficult task half way, to resume the course of a reckless mode of life.

XXIX. But even the few privileged beings, who believe themselves equal to the task, and plunge earnestly into spiritual researches, must confess to the insufficiency of the intellectual powers, and admit, that beside some few principles which they have succeeded in establishing, many doubts remain to be cleared, many questions to be solved, many objections to be overcome; and they must ultimately conclude, that reason by itself is unable to answer on all that interests man to admit or to deny, to seek or to avoid, to believe and to do, to hope and to fear. There is not, in this wide range of spiritual subjects, a proposition held by one as true, which has not been discarded by another as an error; and there is not a paradox or an absurdity that has not found some supporters, who maintained it as a truth. Doubt and error, in abstract and metaphysical questions, are natural and inherent in mankind, so long as reason is their only luminary in the research.

XXX. The experience of all ages teaches us that the obstacles above stated have always exercised their influence upon the development of the moral sense among men, by retarding, and sometimes even rendering impossible to them, a clear and sound conception of their destination, and a firm resolve to conform to it.

All the nations of antiquity, which, left to themselves, never received from without any spiritual and religious instruction, could never rise from the slough of sensuality and superstition; they sank deep in idolatry, and ultimately adopted creeds and practices abominable and repugnant alike to the excellence of reason and the dignity of man. On the other hand, all the nations that totally or partly succeeded in extricating themselves from a state of brutality and barbarism, must

acknowledge that not to the development of their intelligence alone they owe their regeneration, but to certain sublime doctrines—originated in causes quite extrinsical from human nature—which, having found their way to them through a concourse of favourable and apparently fortuitous circumstances, were more or less readily admitted, as notions gained from without, and by degrees ingrafted, under various modifications, on their own primitive ideas.

XXXI. It being, then, almost impossible, or, at least, extremely difficult, for man to arrive, through the sole action of the faculties inherent in his nature, at his intended goal, to shape his course accordingly, and thus to lay the foundations of his future happiness, it was necessary that an intelligence far superior to his own should come to his assistance, communicate to him some fundamental truths concerning his present and future life, enlighten his intellect, guide his reason, invigorate his will in the paths of truth, justice, and righteousness, and thus facilitate to him the attainment of his sublime destination. It was necessary that God himself should instruct him in what was most important to know, manifest His will to him, and explicitly point out to him the way he was to follow, the obstructions he was to avoid, and the goal he had to reach. Man, then, was in need of a *revelation*.

CHAPTER V.

XXXII. THIS revelation was actually vouchsafed. It pleased the supreme Being, through His infinite mercy, to manifest His will, and make known some great and precious truths, which men would have vainly attempted to discover with the unaided operation of their reason; He chose to undertake, to a certain extent, the education of mankind. From the beginning of the world God revealed Himself to the first man; and He continued afterwards for many ages, as His eternal wisdom deemed proper, to communicate to such individuals as were the worthiest among mortals the instructions which were afterwards to work the salvation of all mankind. Those instructions, which contain truths by far more comforting and sublime than any results which man could have arrived at through his own faculties alone, constitute the substance of Revelation; and he who acknowledges their divine origin, and conforms to them the actions of his life, is called a professor of the *revealed religion*.

XXXIII. That God has really revealed Himself to some individuals of the human species is an historical fact, the truth of which is proved, like all truths of a similar order, by testimony and documents. But independently of the existing evidence, the possibility of such an act can be easily conceived by the human understanding, when we consider that everything is feasible to the omnipotence of the Creator; and nothing is more consentaneous to His infinite goodness and wisdom, than the blessed purpose of granting to human frailty an assistance calculated to lead the noblest of creatures to the attainment of the exalted end for which he was created. To conceive, also, the precise modes and forms in which such a revelation is effected or conveyed, it was given only to those elect who were themselves the recipients, and who are called Prophets. But we can arrive at the knowledge of the principal characteristics which constitute prophecy, after we shall have placed in a clear light the essence and the final object of revelation.

XXXIV. All the revealed doctrines may be reduced to one fundamental

principle, from which they originate, and on which rests the whole edifice of revelation. This principle may be expressed as follows:—Besides the general relation of dependence existing indistinctly between all creatures and their Creator, there is a relation more intimate and special between God and man—a relation of a spiritual and sentimental nature, arising from the circumstance of the latter being created in the image of God, by virtue of which man is not subject exclusively to the blind government of the physical laws of nature, but, almost independent of them, he walks under the immediate influence of his celestial Father; this independence, however, cannot be accomplished before he has succeeded in subduing his sensual appetites, and has bent them to follow the divine direction. Thus acting, he will not remain a passive spectator of the vicissitudes which accelerate or retard the fulfilment of that which the Divine wisdom purposed as the final aim of the creation, but, through the immortal spirit transfused in him, he will feel impelled to take some active part in the great work of the ultimate universal perfection, and to associate his own will to the will of the Creator.

XXXV. The relation between God and man is a tie of love. God being goodness itself, this finds a more extensive field for its manifestation in the rational creature than in any other. On the other hand, man, possessed of a spiritual soul, is superior to matter, and is capable, more than the other terrestrial beings, of receiving within himself an abundance of the Divine benevolence, which *diffuses itself throughout the universe in exact proportion to the various aptitudes of the recipients*. It is precisely in consequence of the understanding with which man is endowed, and of his aptitude to nourish love for the supreme Being, that he has been elected, from among all terrestrial creatures, to enter into a more intimate relation with God, and to co-operate, in as much as lies in his power, to the accomplishment of the divine plan.

XXXVI. The plan of the Creator is immeasurably profound, and therefore inscrutable. Nevertheless, in so far as it is permitted to the human mind to penetrate it, and as it has pleased the Divine mercy to reveal it, we know with certainty that it is all directed to diffuse happiness and beatitude over all creatures, in proportion to their respective capabilities of participating in them, and to guide all beings towards that end, which, in the scheme of the universe, was pre-ordained by the Infinite Wisdom as *the best*. Now, the inanimate portion of the creation progresses unconsciously in the way ordained by Providence, obeys physical immutable laws, and is, therefore, only a means to a more exalted

end. But the moral being, who has self-consciousness, resolves on action after deliberating upon what he thinks best, and carries out his resolve with free will; he is, then, himself the aim of his life. Therefore, to lead this being towards his own destination, it was proper not to subject him to restraint under laws of necessity, otherwise the freedom of his will would have been destroyed; it was only necessary to enlighten him, to place before him some fundamental truths, capable of dispelling all doubts from his mind, and detaching him from errors and superstitions, and thus to offer him means and inducements sufficient to direct his attention and will towards the end designed by the Divine wisdom.

XXXVII. It is these truths, offered as means and inducements, that constitute the essence of revelation. Through revelation, man was made acquainted that God created the universe out of nought, that He governs it with His wisdom, and can work every change which He deems suitable; that He created man in the Divine image, that is, with an immortal soul, capable of receiving within itself the Divine idea, of conceiving its sublimity, and carrying it into effect. Through revelation, man learnt that God is One, omnipotent, holy, of infinite forbearance and mercy, and an inexhaustible source of pure love; that He created as a stock of all the human family a single individual (to proclaim thereby the principle of universal brotherhood and mutual love between all the members of that family); that He desires to be loved, worshipped, and served by it, with purity of heart, with elevation of spirit, and with unflinching constancy. Through revelation, we are taught to use wisely the earthly gifts, and to turn their material enjoyment into a subject for edification and the glorification of God; to exercise right, justice, rectitude, charity, piety, and humility; we are also taught that God judges the human actions, punishes those who contravene His will, and is disposed to pardon the sins of those who feel a true repentance. And, lastly, through revelation, an invitation is tendered to man to elevate his mind to the Creator, to imitate Him, to approach Him through self-sanctification; and a perspective is opened before his mind's eye of an interminable future of beatitude beyond the grave, as the ultimate goal of his longings, and a just reward to his virtuous conduct.

XXXVIII. When an individual, after long and serious meditations, and through a concurrence of favourable circumstances, acquires a comprehension of this divine plan, and conceives it in its fullest extent and excellence, he will feel an irresistible attraction towards such a contemplation, and an ineffable admiration will seize all his mind; an internal intense desire will spring up in his heart to see

it carried out, nay, to contribute himself to its accomplishment, since the first tendency is already engrafted on his very nature. In proportion as this desire extends its roots in the heart of that individual, so will he make it his exclusive pre-occupation, voluntarily sacrifice to it every worldly consideration, and so will he feel impelled to devote himself to promote, promulgate, and bring to universal knowledge those truths which, as stated, form the essence of revelation; his soul will become the receptacle of the Divine idea, his tongue and all his body the organs of its fulfilment; his whole life will be an expression of the idea which pervades him; he will feel within himself an irresistible call to constitute himself, of his own authority, and without any regard to worldly powers, a preceptor to mankind, an adviser and censor of all, a supporter of right and virtue, a herald of truth, and a defender of the cause of God; he will defy every obstacle with unbending spirit, will employ all his powers, physical and moral, to the attainment of his aim; and sometimes he will end by becoming a martyr to his holy project. In short, his will becomes identical with the will of God.

XXXIX. Such a man is a prophet. His mind elevated to the highest degree of intelligence, his heart bent constantly to love what is good, he has almost assumed a second nature, and he lives upon earth a purely spiritual life. Of all that surrounds him, nothing is of any value in his eyes but that which may contribute to the accomplishment of the Divine design; in all passing events he sees but as many dispositions of Providence calculated to direct men to the path in which they are called to walk; the very thoughts which cross his mind, and the wishes which form themselves in his heart, he regards them not as the productions of his own soul, but as emanations from the Spirit of God which dwells in him, and pervades all his being. Such a mode of viewing things is, after all, not a mere effect of his imagination, but a true reflex of the influence that actuates this man, an influence springing from the fact already stated, that his will has identified itself with the will of God. Hence the prophet is called a man inspired by God, for it is the Divine Spirit that pervades, agitates, and directs him; it is the Divine Spirit that found in him an instrument for its operation, an organ for its manifestation, a medium to carry out its high designs, a representative of God on earth, who shall recall men to their Divine origin, and lead them on to their ultimate destination.

XL. From the foregoing exposition of the characters of prophecy it will appear obvious, that those are greatly mistaken, who think that the exclusive or even the

principal ministry of the prophet consists in foreseeing and foretelling future events. The prophet may occasionally find it necessary to his ends to predict some events, which he does by virtue of the Divine spirit infused in him; but this is for him only an accessory means to the chief object, which is to propagate and promote among men divine knowledge and religious life. With an all-wise provision, God disposed that, as a rule, the future shall remain hidden from mortals, that they may exert themselves to render it propitious by their good actions; and if He sometimes permitted, as an exception, that it should be revealed to them through the dispensers of His word, it was not to gratify an idle curiosity, but to excite men to worthily conform their works to coming events.

CHAPTER VI.

XLI. THE preliminary notions hitherto set forth are to be regarded as placed in the vestibule leading to the temple of Revelation. Now, before we cross the threshold, it may be well to meet at once an objection which will possibly be offered by modern incredulity. It is fashionably said, that rational man can admit nothing as true except that which is proved to him by logical demonstrations; and as for the acceptance of a revealed religion faith is a necessary element, and this must exclude (as commonly pretended) every kind of proof, therefore all reasoning is out of the question, and the very basis of that which is sought to be inculcated as a truth, renders it inadmissible. Such an objection, however erroneous in reality, has too grave an appearance, and its consequences would be too lamentable, to permit us to disregard it. It becomes, therefore, indispensable, before entering the sanctuary of Revelation, to remove the obstruction of such an error, even at the cost of a digression from our path, in order to consider the matter in its origin.

XLII. One of the primary laws of existence in the physical world is self-love; that is, an instinct in every creature to procure its own good, even at the expense of others, so that the preservation of one is attended with the destruction of some others. All nature is in a perpetual struggle within itself, and every component part receives the elements of its own life and increment from the destruction of others. This we see repeatedly happen under our own eyes, as well in plants as in animals, and so evidently, that we need not here record instances to confirm it. It is through this contrast of individual interests, through this perpetual alternation of production and growth with decrease and destruction, that Providence ordained the preservation of the world in its totality, while the individuals perish and the species remain.

XLIII. Man also, considered only in his physical nature, is subject to the universal law of self-love; and until he has arrived at a correct appreciation of his moral nature and duties, he will allow himself to be impelled by that law to

possess himself of all that he thinks suitable to his own advantage, regardless of the detriment of others, and even of their very existence; and so will, on the other hand, every one else, being in the same condition, act towards him. But the effects of unrestrained self-love are by far more mischievous in man than in the irrational animals, for the intelligence with which he is endowed affords him more means and artifices to accomplish his selfish views, so long as he is governed by these and not by nobler impulses. Hence it happens also, that so long as a man lies under the fascination of self-love, society, of which he is called to become a member, places him in a condition, from which he looks upon his fellow-men as the natural enemies of his individual happiness; and he feels a propensity to throw obstacles, either by malice or violence, in the way of others, to prevent their attaining that which is denied to him.

XLIV. But we find, also, in man another principle diametrically opposed to self-love, which, proceeding from the noblest prerogatives of his soul, distinguishes him from the irrational creatures, and invites him to a career totally opposite to theirs. This principle, commonly called virtue, we shall express by the more comprehensive name of *heroism*. As by self-love man is inclined to sacrifice the welfare of others to his own, so by heroism he is led to sacrifice himself to the welfare of others. When we see a mother struggling to death, and with admirable self-devotion, against overpowering waves, or ferocious beasts, or devouring flames, to save her child from certain destruction, it would be stolidity and folly for us to bring into comparison with this act, the cares bestowed by a brute in feeding her young, since as soon as the latter has carried into effect the order of nature, she forsakes them, and, when grown, does not even recognise them; whereas the love of a mother endures beyond the grave. When a husband, bound with the indissoluble tie of affection to the woman of his heart, voluntarily sacrifices to her everything dearest in the world, and finds in her affection ample recompense for his direst privations, who would dare to attribute this to the physical sexual tendency common even to the brutes? a tendency, which, besides manifesting itself only at detached periods of time, disappears altogether in old age, whereas conjugal love runs beyond the confines of time. The same may be said of a friend, who would give his own life to save that of his beloved, of a generous warrior who risks everything for his country's sake, and of a host of others, who magnanimously devote themselves to the relief of suffering humanity; in short, of every one who feels himself moved by a superior force to cross over the boundaries of selfishness and sensuality, and to

become a hero.

XLV. In all these phenomena, a principle directly adverse to that of physical nature manifests itself. While in the latter, self-love is a necessary supreme law, in the spiritual life of man we see prevailing, as a foundation to morality, a voluntary sacrifice of self, offered on the altar of love. No pain or regret ever accompanies such an offering; on the contrary, a sensible man undertakes it with cheerfulness, as a manifestation of his exalted nature, and derives from its performance a purer joy than all other earthly enjoyments could afford him. But this love, which limits and conquers self-love, this love which so well testifies to the excellence of man, whence does it proceed? Assuredly not from physical nature; this is, on the contrary, based upon a law which would destroy love. It must emanate, then, from a source, itself a prototype of moral perfection, a perpetual spring of the purest love; and this source is God. Through the effects and impressions of this celestial love, man feels the need of approaching his Creator, of finding in Him the provident Ruler of the human destinies, and of expecting from His kindness the future triumph of good, and an ultimate perfection of all things. God, providence, and the immortality of the soul, become then for him incontestable truths: and at such a knowledge he does not arrive by way of laborious instruction and logical demonstrations; but it springs up, as it were, in his inward feeling, which prompts him to regulate his life according to that sublime model of moral perfection; therefore, although reason furnishes not to him logical proofs of these truths, yet he finds the presentiment of them within his heart, he feels them, he accepts them with a force more sentimental than intellectual, he embraces them with enthusiasm, and can no longer detach himself from them; in short he *believes* them.

XLVI. Thus, with the same confidence with which man admits as true, what is demonstrated to his reason by solid arguments,—and he is then said to be *convinced*,—does he likewise give his assent to the noble inspirations of his heart, not yet depraved by abject inclinations,—and he is then said to be *persuaded*. Thus there are two kinds of truths, equally ascertained, and therefore equally admissible; the one proceeding from intellect and called rational truth, the other formed in the heart, and called moral truth. The source of the latter might also properly be called *good sense*, which in fact acts, in many circumstances of life, in lieu of pure reason. A man endowed with good sense, and who has not yet become a slave to sensual appetites, will not doubt for a moment, even without having ever been acquainted with the proofs, that lying,

calumniating, blaspheming, false swearing, robbing, murdering, betraying friendship, country or honour, are culpable and abominable actions. Other truths based on good sense are also the following: the faith we have in friendship, in the rectitude of those who administer justice, in the fidelity of a beloved object, in the tenderness of parents, in the excellence of virtue, and above all, in the wisdom, goodness, and providence of God; all these things we admit within our souls, not in consequence of a cold calculation of the intellect, but through an irresistible impulse of the heart, and in consequence of a sort of presentiment springing from the consciousness of our own noble spirituality, which develops itself and gains force, in proportion as we elevate ourselves above the material propensities to which we are subject as citizens of this earth.

XLVII. Those who, throwing themselves on a severe rationalism, will recognise nothing as true but what is demonstrated to them like mathematical theorems, will look upon the sentiments above referred to as delusions of the fancy, because they see them founded but upon feeling; but they who think so are manifestly in error. If faith in God, in His providence, and in the immortality of the human soul, were a mere product of the imagination, it would last only so long as the semblance, which had given it aliment, exists; and when man is awakened to the sense of realities and facts calculated to destroy the delusion, he would be seen to withdraw from the meshes of his error, and his reason triumphant would confess the former aberration of the mind; yet it happens not so. In the moment we are struck by some grave calamity, when we see fond hopes, long cherished, vanish in an instant, or when we are on the point of losing what is dearest to us, why is faith in God and in His providence not then weakened in the religious man? Why, on the contrary, does he cling to it more and more? The reason is, because such a faith is not a cold theorem, against which some doubt may eventually arise, but a truth rooted in the love inherent in our nature; and consequently it acquires vigour with the growth of love, and its power cannot be extinguished but when we cease to love. So, also, the other impulses to heroism and to exalted moral action, by which we are induced to great sacrifices, or led to believe ourselves capable of accomplishing them, are produced in us by faith in an eternal Source of pure love, by that faith which carries with itself the surety of a future life and a future kingdom founded upon love. Therefore, in proportion as man succeeds in subduing his own passions, or as these grow faint by age or other causes, so his love grows more vigorous; and as earthly objects gradually disappear, so faith rises and shews itself all-

pervading and invincible.

XLVIII. As a condition indispensable to the entertainment of faith, we have already insisted on the necessity of previously freeing the heart from the sway of the sensual appetites; and it is not without a grave reason, for therein precisely consists the secret of the solution of the great question agitated in all ages between the so-called rationalists and the supernaturalists. Intellect and reason are rays from the Divine wisdom, bestowed upon man to assist him to discern between true and false, between good and evil; but such a function is not exercised by those faculties with an absolute power over the human will; they, on the contrary, are subservient to such desires and passions as have acquired a preponderance in the heart; they are similar to those ministers of a prince who, in offering him advice, only aim at facilitating the attainment of their master's wishes; or to the known effects of a glass applied to a jaundiced eye. So long as man remains faithful to his moral duties, and desires nothing but what is good and honest, his intellect and reason always offer him valid arguments to confirm him in his purpose, and to augment his love of virtue; and then, also, the noblest dogmas of faith, God, providence, and immortality find easy access to his mind, and are Harboured with joy. But if depraved propensities have corrupted his heart, so that his aspirations are in a wrong and base direction, then these same faculties become ministers to the predominant passion, and suggest to man sophisms, fallacies, and specious subtleties, whereby to disown that which he heretofore respected, to upset the edifice of his faith, to lull his conscience and quiet remorse, to excuse his weaknesses and break through every restraint, and thus to warrant every kind of fault and vice. Hence it is that the knowledge and discernment of what is true or untrue, in the moral world, depends, in a considerable degree, upon the practice of good or evil; hence it is, that the judgments of the mind are modified by the inclinations of the heart, and that virtue opens the way to faith, and vice is the author of infidelity.

XLIX. From what we have hitherto briefly stated, it will appear sufficiently obvious that the dogmas of revealed religion, though based rather on the ground of faith than on that of philosophy and strict criticism, are yet, for an upright man, susceptible of a degree of evidence equal to that of any other demonstrable truth, inasmuch as they have their foundation in human nature itself, and can be rejected but by him who rebels against the noblest impulses of the heart, to give himself up to the sway of passions or inordinate appetites.

One of the features, which most enhances the value of religion, is precisely this, that it is the product, not of transcendental devices of the mind, but of faith in God, itself springing from love, and that consequently, it is not originated by the intellect, but infused by a Divine grace. Thus we see every day, in our own experience, that the loftiest thoughts of virtue and heroism are not suggested to us by a long and laborious chain of syllogisms, but break upon us unexpectedly as inspirations of the heart; truly—considering the divine spirit dwelling within us, and which we have but to harbour carefully—they break upon us like inspirations of heaven.

Having, as we hope, satisfactorily disposed of the objection usually put forward by the so-called rationalists, we shall now proceed to relate the modes by which Divine revelation historically came into actuality.

CHAPTER VII.

L. THE benefits which the Eternal Wisdom had determined to confer upon mankind through revelation, depended, however, on a condition without which, they could never have been realized. It was necessary that men, on their part, should be inclined to receive the bidding addressed to them, that they should direct their attention to the truths to be gradually promulgated to them for their own advantage; in short, that they should feel disposed to correspond to the Divine intentions. It was no part of the plan of the Divine wisdom that men should be in any way constrained, for that would have been depriving them of the precious gift of free will, and destroying their essence. But this very liberty, of action granted to man, rendered the realization of the Divine thought doubtful; and it might have happened that a generation, sinking itself into complete corruption, would have lost every trace of the truths already revealed; and thence a necessity would have arisen for one or more repetitions of the communication, with equal uncertainty of permanent success.

LI. To avoid such a danger, it pleased the Divine Mercy to found upon earth a permanent institution of an exceptional, wonderful, almost preternatural character, through which the preservation of the principal doctrines, that form the substance of revealed religion, could be insured to mankind. As seeds of rare and precious plants are preserved with care, that the species may not perish, so the Ruler of Providence designed to establish among us a repository wherein to keep the germs of all that which concerns man's spiritual life; and He so ordained that they should be there jealously guarded, and with particular diligence cultivated, in order to bring about their slow and gradual, but sure propagation among all the individuals of the human family. This provision is a most luminous proof of the unbounded love and mercy of the Divine Artificer towards the rational creature, to whom a powerful assistance is thus offered to attain his noble destination, without in the least impairing his liberty of action.

LII. Such a provision consists in God having chosen a small portion of

mankind to be a medium for, and co-operator in, the grand work, and having entrusted to it the special important mission of perpetually preserving within its pale, the principal dogmas of revealed religion; of keeping always alive on earth the remembrance of that relation which was established from the beginning of creation between the Creator and the human family; and, in short, of contributing with all its might to the practical realization of the Divine idea. The chosen few had consequently to propose to themselves, as the goal of their career, the defence of the sacred deposit entrusted to them from all attacks that might be directed by malice, ignorance or superstition; they had to promote the propagation of the notions of monotheism; of the divine origin of man, and of the duties incumbent upon him to practice justice, charity, rectitude, and piety; they had to protest incessantly against polytheism, and against all and every idolatrous and superstitious creed, as adverse and injurious to the development of the principles of revealed religion; they had to confirm these theories by making themselves the exemplars of a religious life, and by bearing witness to them, when necessary, by their own martyrdom; they had thus to become the effectual instruments to the gradual diffusion throughout the world of those elements of truth, of virtue and happiness, calculated to bring forth the ultimate and universal perfection of mankind.

LIII. In order that the individuals charged with such a grand mission should be competent effectually to fulfil it, it was necessary that they should themselves have been always free from the pernicious influence of the errors and corruption, which had already spread almost throughout the world; it was necessary that their minds should have remained unpolluted by the notions of the extravagant and degrading idolatries, which were in practice among almost all the ancient nations; and that their hearts should have remained untouched by the contagion of universal depravity. The soil to which any seed, however good, is to be committed, would never respond to the expectations of the husbandman, if it were not cleared from weeds and thistles. Those individuals had, therefore, to be drawn aside from the general society of men; and from their infancy educated and prepared, so as to receive within their virgin souls the seeds that were afterwards to produce in them, and through them, the spiritual regeneration of all mankind. But here another difficulty presented itself; who would have undertaken the charge of watching over those individuals from their infancy, and keeping them in such an isolation, as to make them inaccessible to the general depravity? It was, then, necessary to begin by a single individual, whose

descendants should receive from that stock the education capable of fitting them for their future mission.

LIV. The providential measure once decreed, of selecting an individual as guardian of the revealed truths, and making him the father of a posterity, whose duty was to preserve them and to make them fructify, it remained only to determine the selection of the person. And here it is obvious that not a capricious hazard, not an indulgent predilection, but only a strict justice and wise impartiality could determine the important choice. Whoever would have aspired to such a glory—and everybody could have aspired to it—by no other means could he have attained it than his own merits. Such a man must have, of his own accord and spontaneously, withdrawn himself from the general current of depravity; opposed, by his own impulse, the absurd ravings of his contemporaries; displayed a lively attachment to virtue, and a steady abhorrence of evil; cultivated, above all, justice, charity, and righteousness, in his every action; that man must have thrown off the subjection of the senses, and all cupidity of earthly things, and, almost assuming a second nature, have soared towards the eternal Source of truth, the Creator of the universe, offering as a sacrifice to Him his own dearest personal interests, and, if required, his life itself.

CHAPTER VIII.

LV. SUCH a man did appear on the stage of the world. It was the patriarch Abraham. The rarest qualities of mind and heart concurred admirably to render him fit for the high mission. By the superiority of his intelligence, he arrived at the rejection of the captivating, but absurd, idolatrous opinions of his contemporaries, and at the recognition of a unique supreme Cause of all things, omnipotent, all-wise and holy, that governs all with impartial justice and infinite mercy. The nobility of his sentiments led him to labour and exert himself in the diffusion of these holy notions wherever he found himself; and he was most sedulous in drawing the attention of men to that which most concerned their spiritual life. An unparalleled cordiality towards not only his own friends, but all who approached him; a self-abnegation, carried to the point of refusing the best deserved remuneration; a humility ready to waive any right of his own in order to support that of others; a hospitality full, generous, unasked; a continual exercise of charity and justice, which had become in him a second nature; in fine, a submission of all himself and his dearest to the will of God,—such was the character of that celebrated luminary of antiquity, of that man truly divine, of that exemplar of sublime virtue.

LVI. Although so many pre-eminent merits indisputably assigned to him the distinction we have pointed out, yet the Divine wisdom decided to subject his constancy to various trials, with the view of making manifest to the world the excellence of that virtuous character, and the justice which dictated the choice. In the continual antagonism between the material and spiritual interests involved in the events of his agitated life, he had opportunities to display the noblest firmness in causing the latter to prevail. Involuntary peregrinations, conflicts with foreign potentates, domestic discords, dangers, hazards, hopes deferred, and promises well nigh forgotten, became to him so many occasions for the exercise of the highest virtues: and last, the holy resignation with which he prepared to immolate his beloved son, thinking thereby to respond to a Divine bidding,

raised his glory to an unapproachable summit. If the other deeds of his edifying piety caused him to be appointed a herald of the true religion, this last heroic act brought down upon him the greatest blessing, in the shape of a promise, that even to his remotest posterity would be extended the mission of jealously preserving the revealed truths, and effectually cooperating in their propagation, so that through that posterity would be *blessed all the families of the earth*.

LVII. Abraham's vocation marks a luminous and highly interesting epoch in the history of humanity. It was the commencement of the execution of that plan of education of mankind, which, conceived since the beginning in the Increate Mind, came by means extraordinary, yet consistent with the natural course of earthly events, to diffuse itself gradually and to acquire a progressive force among the various ramifications of the human family. In that vocation we perceive the first threads of a wonderful tissue of events, as well in the physical as in the moral world, which went on preparing a slow but always progressive development of the human intelligence, and will go on to produce ultimately the full final accomplishment of the same primitive plan, so grandly conceived. In fact, in the very act of electing this patriarch, God revealed the ultimate object of the election by saying, that He chose him, in order that he might transmit to his latest posterity the obligation—which was to become characteristic of it—of exercising and promoting CHARITY and JUSTICE, the two chief columns on which rests the edifice of human perfectibility, two conditions indispensable to the fulfilment of the Divine idea, and therefore called *ways of the Eternal*.

LVIII. Abraham and his race having been called upon to perpetuate the idea of the relation existing between God and man, it was obviously necessary that such a relation should be fixed and established in a more precise mode in the individuals of that race than it was in any others; in other words, it was necessary to show clearly that the idea, which was to be promoted among others, was firmly seated, under permanent and concrete forms, in those who were called upon to propagate it. This permanency of the relation exhibited itself, then, to Abraham and his posterity under the form of a *covenant* between God and that family, whereby the contracting parties, as it were, promised and undertook to maintain certain conditions, upon which depended the subsistence of that relation. The mutual conditions established were, in substance, nothing else than the universal relations subsisting between God and every rational being, but expressed, with respect to Abraham's family, in more special and characteristic terms, viz., under a form in which God promised Abraham that He would be

particularly *his God*, his Protector, Guardian, and Benefactor; and the Abrahamites, on their part, bound themselves to recognise *Him alone* as the Deity, to whom adoration and loyal obedience were due. Thus the covenant, which had been formerly established in general terms with Noah, as the representative of all mankind, was afterwards confirmed in more specific terms to the Abrahamites, as those who were appointed to keep and to promote among mankind the fulfilment of the conditions of the said relation.

Considering the Abrahamitic covenant in this point of view, all objections of unreasonable exclusiveness and unjust predilection, which have been sometimes urged, must disappear. The God of Abraham is the God of the universe; and the descendants of Abraham propose to themselves nothing more than the attainment of that same happiness to which every mortal can aspire.

LIX. In order that the idea of the contracted covenant might remain firmly impressed on all Abraham's progeny, it was necessary to institute some external mark, which should continually recall it to the mind; for an idea being but an abstraction, it could not be very long retained in men's minds, without some symbol or visible sign capable of keeping its remembrance alive. It was also necessary that the adhesion of that progeny to the covenant should not begin to take effect in individuals in the adult age only, and as a result of one's own spontaneous reflexions, as had been the case with the first stock of that family, but that it should present itself as an accomplished fact, and, therefore, irrevocable and obligatory; so that every future offspring should bear from his birth an external indelible mark, characterising him as a follower of that principle, and qualifying him to enter into the pale of that association. By such means the preservation of the covenant was insured, and a beginning was made in the system of those external, symbolical, and commemorative acts, which were to be thereafter prescribed to all that race, when sufficiently increased to form an entire people distinct from others. This external mark, instituted before the birth of the elect progeny of the patriarch, is the *circumcision*.

LX. Before Abraham's descendants attained that degree of maturity which would fit them to receive a revealed legislation, they had to pass through various stages of progressive material increment and intellectual development, and also to undergo several sad vicissitudes produced by the inevitable relations of contact with other nations. Throughout all this period, which we may call preparatory, the Divine Wisdom was pleased to take that race by the hand,

guiding its first steps, and watching in an extraordinary manner over its destinies, so as gradually to prepare it for the high mission for which it was designed. We, therefore, perceive, during that epoch, a continual intervention of the Divinity in regulating the particular concerns of the patriarchs and their successors, and an incessant care to draw their attention to the future destiny of their grandchildren, and to their duty of preparing worthily for it. Such a care manifested itself, particularly, in various providential measures, the objects of which evidently were to remove from them everything that might exercise over them a sinister influence; to enlighten them on the importance of their election, and to make them acquainted beforehand with the severe trials in store for them for several centuries, before they could deservedly reap the intended benefits.

LXI. To this category of providential measures belongs the state of isolation and of precarious subsistence, in which, by the Divine will, the first fathers had to live, in respect to their neighbours, in that same land which was yet promised to them as a perpetual inheritance; whereby they were brought to learn from the beginning that the great work, which their children were called upon to accomplish, was not absolutely dependent on the possession of a land under their own sovereignty, but rather on the religious doctrines to which they were to remain faithfully attached. To it belongs, also, the severance or removal of the elder branch of the first two families, which was too much inclined to material interests, to teach thereby that physical superiority is not at all requisite to the preservation of a covenant based entirely on spirituality. And, lastly, to the same category of measures belongs the decreed long servitude of the Abrahamites in a strange land, in which, not only the door to social enjoyments would be shut against them, but a barbarous tyranny would also deprive them of the free exercise of acts which are an imprescriptible right of all mortals. Through the instrumentality of such an oppression, the profound counsels of the Eternal Wisdom designed so to regulate the first education of that growing people, that, refined in the crucible of adversity, it should early learn to renounce the subjection of the senses, and turn its heart and soul to God, from whom alone it could hope salvation. It was only by depriving that people of all human support, and of all extraneous influences on its culture, that it could acquire a character, firm, independent, tenacious in the principles adopted, adverse to foreign notions, faithful to its vocation, and that its mind could be deeply impressed with the sentiment of a constant adoration of the Supreme Being, as its only Deliverer, Legislator, Father, and Sovereign.

CHAPTER IX.

LXII. THE descendants of the patriarchs, grown into a numerous people, were, then, obliged to undergo the severe trial of a long servitude in Egypt, from which they could expect no rescue otherwise than by a recourse to the God of their fathers. If the privations of earthly enjoyments tended to strengthen their spirits and courage against adversity, and to direct their desires towards gratifications of a more elevated nature; if the repulsive conduct of their oppressors (by character hostile to all strangers, and by system constituted in different castes, each of which jealous of its own privileges) favoured in a great measure their isolation, and kept them from a pernicious contact and association, it was the prayer which they offered up from the bottom of their hearts to the Supreme Ruler of their destinies, whose covenant with their progenitors they remembered; it was that prayer that hastened the termination of so severe a discipline, and drew near the epoch of their glorification. A fit instrument only was wanted, through which the deliverance should be effected, an organ to communicate to the people the Divine laws, a medium for the new solemn covenant which was to be proclaimed between God and Israel. This elect from among all mortals—whose noble character, resplendent with all human virtues, was heightened by the true grandeur of an unexampled humility—was the holy legislator Moses, the divine man, the faithful expounder of the will of God, the first link of the glorious chain connecting the human family with its Maker. He was appointed to deliver miraculously the Israelitish mass from the yoke of Egypt, and to lead it to the skirts of a mountain, where the grand act of the revelation was to be accomplished.

LXIII. Before imparting that revelation, the Divine wisdom vouchsafed to declare to the people at large, in brief but clear words, the ultimate object intended to be attained by such an institution, and the principal condition conducive to its realisation. Therefore it was, that God began his communications by saying to Israel, through Moses, "*I have brought you unto*

me" a concise and sublime sentence, which comprehends in itself the whole system of revealed religion, for the recognition of the intimate relation which brings the rational creature near to its Creator, is the true goal of man's destination. He added that, to facilitate the attainment of that object, He had adopted the means of electing a small portion of mankind to be His missionaries ("*although*" said He, "*all the earth is mine*"); that He wished, therefore, to form of them *a sacerdotal kingdom*, that is, a class of persons, who, as priests of God, should watch over, conserve, and promote spiritual interests upon the earth; and that in consequence of the gravity of such a task, He required of them that they should become a *holy people*, that is, a people peculiarly devoted to self-sanctification—which substantially consists in imitating, in as far as human nature permits, the Divine perfections, or virtues.

LXIV. The awfully solemn act which succeeded this preliminary manifestation is the most portentous event to be found in the annals of the world. Two millions of persons, ranged around the skirts of a mountain, witness a majestic supernatural vision; and amid thunder and lightning, dense vapour and blazing fire, the whole ground trembling and the mountain echoing, a sonorous voice from heaven descends on the terrified ears of the people, and carries distinctly and unmistakeably to humanity the high message of God. By the pomp and circumstance which attended the glorious scene of the first revelation, God was pleased to afford an incontestable evidence of the truth and divinity, not only of the doctrines which were then and there being revealed, but of those, also, that were to follow; the unimpeachable testimony of the senses of a vast multitude, brought to bear upon the first and fundamental communication, was capable of producing so full and lasting a conviction in the minds of the numerous hearers, as to remove for the future all doubt as to the divine origin of revelation. Through an immediate sensible perception—which by its nature carries the most irrefragable certainty—Israel, then, received from God Himself the first dictates of a religion, of which that people was to become the professor, conservator, and propagator, in perpetuity; and equally convinced of the true mission of its leader, Moses, it naturally accepted from the latter all subsequent instructions, as laws emanating from the same divine source.

LXV. The word of God pronounced in that memorable instant, and known since under the name of Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, could not, however, embrace the whole sum of religious truths that were intended to be revealed, because it would have been humanly impossible to the people to persist in that

extraordinary state of intimate spiritual or prophetic relation with the Deity, till the end of all the revelation. Therefore, the Decalogue exhibits only some fundamental points, which, from their importance, deserved to be more prominently impressed; it marks the outlines of the foundation upon which the edifice of revealed religion was afterwards to be raised. Yet, although the promulgation of the entire divine code was a work reserved for the blessed legislator Moses, the Ten Commandments present, nevertheless, a compendious but complete system of institutions, referring to all those social and religious subjects, which most interest mankind. In fact, the three relations of man towards his Creator, his fellow-man, and himself, are traced in the Decalogue in a masterly manner, classified according to their order, and elucidated by placing prominently forward one culminating point, which serves to determine their true character. Such is the wise economy of all revealed laws, that generally avoiding abstractions, they select as a standard one special case of the most interesting, and leave it to thy care of the human understanding to generalize, and deduce from it universal theories.^[2] Consequently, on analysing the ten emanations of the Divine Will, we must transfer mentally each of them to the class of duties to which it belongs, and consider it as intended to represent all that class.

CHAPTER X.

LXVI. THE first commandment, which regards the relations of man with God, lays down that the acknowledgment of the Supreme Being is the basis of all the revelation, and gives us to understand that such a conviction then began historically to manifest itself on earth, taking root first in the people of Israel, whom therefore the Deity addresses, saying, "I am the Eternal, *thy* God," signifying, "by *thee* alone acknowledged hitherto." It also establishes the immutable eternity of the absolute Being, conveyed in the etymology of the ineffable Name; next, his indivisible unity, indicated in the word *El*, which denotes the sum of all the powers, and the aggregation of all the attributes, in one and the same essence. The same text proceeds then to arouse the feelings of gratitude, which must bind especially this people to the powerful hand that had delivered it from ignominious servitude: and this involves the obligation in the same people of devoting itself entirely to God, and subordinating all its tendencies to religious feeling. The last two words of this text allude to one of the great principles on which revealed religion rests, the Eternal having thereby proclaimed, not only the individual equality of all the Israelites before the law, but also the personal liberty of all men, which principle, being regulated according to the true idea of right, becomes the fundamental basis of civil society.

LXVII. The worship of the only God, coupled with the absolute rejection of every form of idolatrous and superstitious creed, forms the subject of the second commandment, which completes the portion of the Decalogue regarding the relations of man towards the Creator. It severely prohibits every kind of idolatry, both that which substitutes for the true God false and imaginary beings, or even beings real but contingent and created, and that which would associate in His worship a veneration for others, under the title of mediators or protectors; it then interdicts the making of any image whatsoever, when intended to represent the infinite and incorporeal Being, and bids us neither to pay to any such simulacra a

religious respect or veneration, which is due to the true God alone, nor to practise such conventional acts, as, however insignificant in themselves, are yet held by idolaters as modes of worship. Lastly, this commandment conveys the obligation to dissent from, and reject, every superstition and every error, requiring us to preserve pure and intemperate the adoration due to the Supreme Being, who, in this sense, is represented in this text as jealously watching over human actions, and a not indifferent spectator of good or evil; therefore a sure punisher of the guilty, and an eternal remunerator of him who faithfully adheres to His law.

LXVIII. As a transition from the duties towards God to those towards our fellow-men, the two succeeding precepts are opportunely placed, one of which concerns the act of invoking the Divinity between men, and the other the mode of elevating men towards the Divinity. In the multifarious contentions arising in social life, it sometimes occurs to have recourse to God, to convalidate an assertion, or to test a truth. Now, in the act of attestation called oath, the third commandment prohibits with the greatest rigour anything that might offend the sanctity of the ineffable name of God, which is invoked by the deponent in attestation of the truth of his words. Consequently the text declares, that if such a solemn invocation were made to confirm a thing, which is not wholly conformable to the intimate conviction and most scrupulous conscience of the swearer, the consequences would be a profanation of the name of God, and a scandalous immorality, to the detriment of society at large; for this could not subsist without an upright administration of justice; and the latter would be upset and trampled upon by perjury. In order to shew more prominently the gravity of this matter, and to protect society, an avenging God protests that He would never leave unpunished whomsoever should render himself guilty of the monstrous crime of perjury.

LXIX. From the moment when the work of creation was completed, the Divine wisdom ordained that an intimate relation should subsist between man and his Creator, and called that day holy and blessed on which so merciful an institution was inaugurated and began to come into operation. This relation, which, as we have already stated, forms the basis of revealed religion, tended to emancipate man from the sphere of materiality, and to render him conscious of his higher destination, and capable of accomplishing it. It was, therefore, natural that the people called upon to give the religious principle a durable consistency on earth, should keep a perpetual commemoration of that day which represented the bond

subsisting between the Divinity and humanity; it was proper that the day should not only and simply be remembered, but that it should, also, have some feature exercising a predominating influence over material life, by making this subordinate to the spiritual requirements. The fourth word of the Decalogue prescribes, then, that the Israelite should for ever remember the holy day of sabbath, as a representative of religion, and should, during that day, abstain, and cause all his dependants to abstain, from all manual labour and earthly occupation, that might distract him from the contemplation of heavenly subjects, which should exclusively occupy his mind on that day.

LXX. Among all man's duties towards his fellow-men, those of children towards their parents are assuredly the highest in degree, because without them the bonds which hold society together would be destroyed. These duties form the subject of the fifth commandment. To define their character in a single trait, a profound wisdom has selected the word *honour*, thereby pointing to a respect which arises, not from fear and terror, but from gratitude, love and submission. Additional importance is given to this precept by the consideration, that the revealed religion could not have been preserved and made known to the latest posterity but by the instrumentality of an uninterrupted tradition from generation to generation; and the faith to be placed in such a tradition depended, to a great extent, on the respect in which parents would be held. The reward promised to him who observes this commandment, is in perfect and natural harmony with the observance itself; man's life will be prolonged and blessed by honouring the authors of it.

LXXI. The three conditions most prominent in human society, viz., life, matrimony, and property, are referred to in the subsequent words, which form the sixth, seventh and eighth precepts of the Decalogue. To concentrate in one word all that is to be observed regarding these essential elements of a social state, the sacred text confines itself to proclaiming, in an absolute mode, their *inviolability*, therefore adopting the negative or prohibitive form. It is desired to prevent and forbid every arbitrary act, and every unjust attempt, directed to deprive the legitimate possessor of, or to restrict and in any other way to disturb him in, the full, free, and exclusive enjoyment of his own. To respect the life, the conjugal bed, and the property of others, is to consolidate the bonds of society, to pay homage to the eternal principles of justice, upon the practice of which God willed that the preservation and prosperity of mankind should depend.

LXXII. In order that our conduct towards our neighbours be strictly in accordance with justice, it is necessary, generally, that it should be based upon an honest and straightforward character of veracity, and that our outward demonstrations, in deeds and in words, should not be at variance with our inward convictions, respecting the merits or demerits of our fellow-men. Falsehood, detraction, calumny, and other similar vices, injurious to the peace and reputation of others, as well as simulated friendship, and hypocrisy, may all be comprehended within the denomination of perfidy; and as an extreme and most distinct manifestation of perfidiousness is to be found in false testimony, hence the ninth commandment is addressed to this vice, and forbids the witnessing against our fellow-men anything that is not entirely and strictly conformable to the truth. It is easy and natural for us to step from this special prohibition to the spirit which dictated it, and to conclude that the precept is generally directed to remove from society all perfidy and wrong, as contrary to truth and justice.

LXXIII. A certain involuntary or instinctive desire of that which is pleasing, is in human nature itself; but this vague and voluble feeling may, by deliberate reflection, convert itself into an act of free-will, and, eventually increasing in strength, become a vehement affection, an uncontrollable passion. Now, so long as that feeling does not pass into an act of appropriating the thing desired, human law cannot deal with it; but Divine law, which has for its object the internal perfection of man, steps in to regulate the movements of the heart, when they are accompanied by a deliberate will of possessing. Therefore, the tenth and last commandment of the Decalogue, which refers to man's duties towards himself, aims at the human will, and prescribes limits, within which the desires, tending to procure possession, should be confined, forbidding specially to covet that which belongs to others. It is not thereby intended to absolutely prevent the formation of a natural wish, but it is directed to confine it within just limits, that it may not expand and be transformed into a usurpation.

CHAPTER XI.

LXXIV. THE succeeding revelations, which were made to the blessed legislator Moses, and by him collected into a body of statutes and rules, known under the title of Pentateuch, bear the same relation to the Decalogue as that of a finished edifice to the first outline which traced its limits and compartments—they are the elaboration of it, they branch into the same triple classification of duties which we have remarked in it, and present its development and completion. What in the Decalogue appeared, as in nucleus, under the form of duties of man towards God, towards his fellow-man, and towards himself, is developed by those laws into detailed instructions, through which the people of Israel was to learn the knowledge of God, to practise justice and charity, and to effect its own sanctification; three cardinal points, corresponding to the three classes of duties above mentioned, which embrace the whole sum and substance of revealed religion. We shall not, therefore, proceed to enumerate here, one by one, those multifarious laws,—a great part of which, being contingent on the existence of the temple and the possession of Palestine, have now no practical application,—but we shall only treat of the three principles which form the bases of them all, viz., God, Justice, and Sanctification, leaving to the intelligence of those who sedulously investigate the single precepts, the easy task of tracing them to one or other of the said three categories.

LXXV. To the elucidation of these three principles we must, however, premise two observations. In the first place, it is to be remarked, on the one hand, that although the human intellect can by itself (provided it be not overruled by the sway of sensual appetites) recognise summarily the excellence of such principles, and give them unreservedly its sanction, yet its perceptions with respect to their specialities remain very imperfect, for several reasons: first, because it finds itself unable to rebut and conquer one by one all the objections which the infidel may bring forward; secondly, in consequence of the doubts which its own limited powers sometimes suggest, impairing its own sense of the

truth; and lastly, because wanting the knowledge of many details and circumstances, about which it can form no judgment, the intellect cannot construct a complete rationalistic system of moral theology. Whereas, on the other hand, emanating as they do from the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, formulated in the shape of positive precepts, and corroborated by the portentous manner of their promulgation, those principles acquire an undisputed authority, remove every doubt, illumine the mind with unexpected sublime truths, satisfy the heart which finds them consentaneous with its own feelings, and are thus more apt to accomplish the objects towards which they are directed. And if there be among them some precept, of which we do not in our present time clearly perceive the true tendency, we accept it, nevertheless, with that filial confidence inspired by its divine origin; and, by analogy, we consider it as calculated to contribute to the promotion of our own weal.

LXXVI. In the second place, it is necessary to distinguish, in the aggregate of this revelation, the universal theories applicable to, and concerning all mankind, from the special prescriptions obligatory only on those to whom they were addressed. Generally, all the children of Adam are bound to know God, to practise justice, and to procure their own sanctification; such duties are inherent in human nature itself, they correspond exactly to the destination of man, and none can exempt himself from them, without rebelling against nature and the sovereign Author of it. Consequently, the doctrines contained in the revealed law, in regard to these three points, apply to all rational beings, and everybody is called upon to participate in, and profit by, them; they are the inheritance of all mankind. But it was obvious that those, who were in the first instance selected to receive those dogmas, and to become their jealous conservators and perpetual propagators, should have some distinctive and peculiar devices, and be charged with observances, qualifying them for adepts to the ministry of such a sublime mission. Hence it is, that among the precepts of universal appurtenance there are several which Israel alone is bound to observe, and these consist partly of external acts to be performed, either at certain stated times, or at all times, partly of particular forms and rules to be followed, either in reference to one's self or to others, and to some external objects of animate or inanimate nature, and partly, in fine, they prescribe abstinence from certain things which to all others are left permissive. It will be easy to every attentive student to discern and point out the prescriptions of this class, as their very nature is sufficient to characterise them; we shall have, however, occasion to mention them, after we shall have

endeavoured to place in a clear light the three principal articles of the revelation.

CHAPTER XII.

LXXVII. IMMENSE efforts have been made by human reason to elevate itself to the conception of the Deity, to demonstrate His existence, and to deduce with solid arguments His principal attributes. Yet, even that quantum which human reason believes to have succeeded in establishing on this exalted subject, has always had to encounter in the fields of proud philosophy tenacious, or rather pertinacious, adversaries. Whereas revelation, extricating man from the labyrinth of transcendental abstrusities, presents him at once with a well constructed system of theological science, which he has only to receive within his bosom, to lead a happy life on earth, and attain his true goal beyond the grave. The Divine word informs us of God, as a pure spirit, eternal and immutable, incorporeal, absolute (that is, not dependent upon causes without Himself), omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-perfect and therefore all-holy (that is, possessing all the attributes in the highest degree of perfection); one, because admitting not in Himself distinctions of multiplicity, and sole, because beside him there is no God; Creator of the universe from nought, therefore distinct from all things created (which we would call, if allowed the expression, *extramundane*); Creator of man in His image, having endowed him with intelligence, liberty, and an immortal soul; provident and immediate^[3] to man, watching over his actions, punishing faults and rewarding merits, and pardoning him who truly repents of evil committed; He is a perpetual source of the purest love, hence a merciful father to all His creatures, unto whom He continually pours forth treasures of His kindness; He strengthens the weak, comforts the afflicted, enlightens the ignorant, protects the oppressed, and grants the prayer of those who trust in Him; He governs human events according to His will, now causing human enterprises to succeed, anon to fail; always directing them to the ends contemplated by His infinite wisdom, for He is the all-wise, just, and faithful, whose promises are infallibly accomplished, and whose word subsists to eternity. He sometimes suspends the order of nature, and works miracles, whenever He deems it suitable to His high designs. He established a covenant with the Abrahamic race, and

revealed to it His holy law, by this means to illuminate and bless all mankind.

LXXVIII. Although these notions do not complete the idea of the Divinity, much less can they claim to define His essence—for to the very limited faculties of the human mind this will always remain inconceivable—yet they are sufficient to afford such an instruction on divine subjects as to satisfy the wants of humanity. With the guidance of the elements offered, and by a conscientious meditation on those Divine attributes, man will be able to dispel the superstitious notions and the errors into which they have fallen, who have not consulted the Divine word on such a subject; he will be able to sketch in his own mind an idea, however incomplete, of the sublime object of his adoration, and thus preserve himself from much that is evil. Having been destined to live in society, and compelled to work in order to supply the multifarious wants of his body; always more or less struggling with the interests of his fellow men to secure a possession often disputed to him by malice, or violence; and evil example and ignorance and the sensual appetites being concurrently at work—man became naturally, in the course of time, too easy a prey to passions, vice and error; he was overpowered by materialism, and fell into sin. Therefore, the idea revealed to him of a holy God, who watches over his destinies, who punishes the guilty, rewards the virtuous, and pardons the penitent, is the best balsam that could be administered, the best truth that could be taught to him; it saves him from error, removes him from sin, invites him to direct his view to heaven, restores him within the Divine grace, and opens to him the prospect of an interminable beatitude.

LXXIX. Among those attributes, however, one becomes prominent, from its importance; it is that which establishes an immediate relation, or communion, as subsisting between the Creator and the rational creature; a fundamental point on which the whole religion hinges. The intimacy of such a relation manifested itself at the very beginning of the world by God having created man *in His image*, by which expression it is meant, that the Divine Maker bestowed some part of His perfections on the noblest creature on earth, endowing it with intelligence, free-will, and immortality; these high prerogatives conferred upon man, to a certain degree, a similitude with his Maker, and from this similitude was naturally to follow a closer relation of mutual love, than exists between God and the other created things. Such a relation assumed a more definite form when God took man under His special guardianship, whilst He left the government of inanimate nature to physical laws, unalterable and compulsory, which He had

established in the first instant of creation. The stupendous connection was lastly completed, by God having communicated His will to men, and traced out to them the course they had to follow, in order to render themselves worthy of the great boon, and to attain the end destined for them. From all these circumstances it became evident that God is *immediate* to man.

LXXX. As, in general, all the revelation, has for its object to benefit humanity, so, in particular, when the divine word is directed to impart to us the knowledge of God, it intends to teach us the duties we are called upon to fulfil towards the Author of our existence; duties which we could not well discharge if we were wanting in that knowledge. Now, the first of these duties is to *love God*. Such a noble feeling, which, as we have already stated, derives its origin from a relation of similitude between him who loves and the object beloved, cannot be kindled in us by effect of a mere command, as the motions of the heart are not produced by authority. Therefore, while holy writ inculcates the love of God, it at the same time indicates to us the means whereby this sublime love will be promoted; and the means is *to walk in the ways of the Eternal*. To understand the connection between the means and the end, we must consider the different degrees of which love is susceptible, and motives by which it is actuated. He who loves God because of great favours received, is apt to feel a diminution of attachment, or even indifference, on being overtaken by misfortune. He who loves Him with a view to benefits in a future life, is also in danger of ceasing to love, if some doubts were to arise in his mind and to weaken his hopes. But when man loves God because he understands, and admires, and adores in Him the aggregate of all perfections, and feels within himself the flame of a desire to approach the Divine Majesty, then his love is an inextinguishable love, for he abnegates his own self, and centres his motives exclusively in the object beloved. This kind of love, however, presupposes a uniformity of tendencies, which causes the one who loves to esteem and to endeavour to appropriate the qualities admired by him; and in this precisely consists the resemblance, which produces the true love. Justice, faithfulness, righteousness, mercy, and many other Divine attributes, which in the biblical language are called *the ways of the Eternal*, cannot be fully and worthily appreciated, except by him who uses all his endeavours to adorn himself with such virtues, as far as his limited nature allows. And now we can understand, why he cannot truly love who walks not in His ways.

LXXXI. Another principal duty, issuing from the same revelation, is that which

is commonly called *fear of God*, an expression very frequent in the sacred text, but which requires to be explained. The Hebrew word used is susceptible of two different interpretations. It might apply to the fear of retribution, suggested by the reflection that an all-powerful God will not leave unpunished the transgressors of his commands; or the same word might signify the sense of reverence and unbounded veneration, with which the frail creature must feel almost overwhelmed when thinking of its exalted Creator, who knows all, sees all, and governs all. The former originates in the intellect, the latter in the heart. It is obvious that the fear of punishment is not a sufficient restraint to deter man, at all times, from sin; for in the ebullition of impetuous passions, the intellect becomes offuscated and impeded in the exercise of its functions, or frequently is itself pressed into the service of the predominating passion. Not so the awe and reverence inspired by the majesty of the Supreme King of the universe. It pervades all the heart, disposes it to feelings of submission and obedience, convinces it that man is at all times in the presence of his Maker, and thus prevents inordinate material appetites from bursting forth and rising forcibly to uncontrollable preponderance. Hence it is that the fear of God, taken in the latter sense, is a powerful prop which supports the religious edifice, is the most effectual and valuable lesson we derive from the revelation of the Divine attributes.

LXXXII. From these two principal duties, spring, as corollaries, others of no less importance, which come, also, within the sphere of the first cardinal point of biblical revelation, the knowledge of God. He, who truly loves and fears God, will surely feel the necessity of placing in Him exclusively all his trust, for he is convinced that there is no being in nature, besides God, that can offer an infallible support to human hopes. He will find in his heart an almost irrepressible impulse to praise the Divine perfections, to extol His glory, to offer sincere homage to the Sovereign of the universe, to worship and serve Him with purity of heart, to thank Him for favours received, to supplicate Him for help, to confess to Him sins committed, and to ask His pardon with contrite spirit. All these and other like acts of filial dependence and piety, find their expression in that elevated form of external worship called *prayer*, which, whether exercised publicly in appropriate and consecrated temples, or recited in the solitude of the domestic closet,^[4] whether strictly following an established formulary, or pouring out the impulsive feelings of the heart, is always an urgent want and an indispensable duty of every religious man. Lastly, the true love and fear of God

imply the obligation of avoiding, in all that pertains to Divine worship, everything that might have the appearance of idolatry, of intrusion of intermediate powers, or of any superstition whatever; above all clearly emerges the duty of not abusing the holy name of God, either by uttering it on trivial occasions—which would tend to diminish the reverence due to Him—or by profaning it with an invocation to a false testimony, whereby the detestable crime of perjury would be consummated.

CHAPTER XIII.

LXXXIII. ON determining the duties of the individual towards his fellow-men, and towards all that surrounds him in nature, revelation did not think it proper to refer the motives to human intelligence, and to allow the bases of justice and benevolence to rest on human reason alone; but it said, "Do what is right and just and good in the eyes of the Eternal thy God; and refrain from all that is not such, because it pleases not thy God," whereby it wished to proclaim that the notions of just and unjust, of good and evil, of rights and duties, should be considered as emanating from, and prescribed by, the Divine wisdom, and therefore obligatory only because agreeable to the Divine will. In this also the revealed word purposed to come to the assistance of human frailty, and to render superfluous the abstrusities—as arbitrary as uncertain and controvertible—about which eminent philosophers tortured their brains, for many centuries, to fix, as they thought, the principles of the so-called *Jure* in its innumerable ramifications of natural and positive, public and private, civil and criminal, commercial, maritime, canonical, feudal, of police, of finance, of war, and what not, without ever yet arriving at a complete accord in their specialities; whereas all right obtains a solid and effective sanction when its origin is referred to God, who comprehending in Himself the sum total of right, justice and moral good, and having communed with man to enjoin to him their exercise, willed that the carrying out of their dictates should be considered as an act of religion, of service rendered to Him, and that violating the one or failing in the other, should be alike regarded as an offence committed towards Him, which He will punish severely. God, then, is the source of right; He made man acquainted with it through His law, and committed to him its performance on earth after rules prescribed by His will.

LXXXIV. In promulgating the duties of man towards his fellow-men, the holy scripture assumed sometimes the negative form, to forbid all that which may cause injury to others; and sometimes the positive form, enjoining the practice to

be followed towards all. To the first class belong the following prohibitions, viz., of nourishing hatred, rancour, revenge; of calumniating, or in any way whatever damaging the reputations of others; of assailing their honour or good fame; of restraining or obstructing others in the exercise of their rights, or in the use and enjoyment of their properties; of practising deceptions, impositions, frauds, and all forms of insincerity, usury, extortions, and violence; of laying obstructions in the way of the weak or helpless; of giving false testimony; of speaking untruth; of reporting even truth, when it may lead to discord and strife; of occasioning danger; of offending decency and good manners; of causing scandal; of withholding wages or remuneration due; of keeping in pledge the clothing or implements of the poor; of using two weights and measures; of associating with the wicked; of breaking a pledge-word; of violating or assailing the conjugal happiness of others; of coveting anything that belongs to others; and other similar prohibitions recorded in the sacred code, which can be easily collected as pertaining to this class. Moreover, it will not be unreasonable to complete this list by the addition of a few more particular actions, which, though not specifically mentioned, must yet be understood to be forbidden; for, as it is a constant rule in biblical exegesis to deduce general theories from single laws which appear to refer to particular cases, so must, by analogy, be comprised in an enunciated forbidden action all others of a similar nature, character, and tendency, as being understood in the former.

LXXXV. The positive precepts concerning a man's conduct towards his fellow-men, are naturally enunciated in directions of a tendency precisely opposite to those expressed negatively; that is to say, it is *enjoined* to practise the reverse of what has been forbidden. Now, to begin with the more general prescriptions; it is enjoined, in the first place, to love one's fellow-men as one's own-self, all mankind, without any exception, being comprised in this expression, as we meet again the same injunction with regard to the *stranger*, whom we are commanded to love as ourselves; and Scripture explained already what is to be understood by the word *stranger*, when it said: "Thou also hast been a stranger in the land of Egypt"; from which it is evident that the love inculcated extends even to adversaries and enemies. It is next commanded to respect in every individual the dignity of man, created in the image of God, which establishes the inviolability of person, and the equality of all before the law, so that there should be no privileged caste, no hereditary preeminence; desiring, on the contrary, that "under the protection of the same law and same right should dwell the native and

the foreigner." The personal liberty of every member of the human family is also proclaimed, as it is with that intention that the Decalogue has put prominently forward the circumstance of Israel having been delivered from servitude; and if, on the one hand, the condition of the times, which had rendered the use of slavery natural and universal, did not then admit of its sudden and immediate extirpation; on the other, Scripture designed to mitigate its acerbity by provident and humane laws, so as to make obvious the tendency to its future total, though gradual, extinction. To prevent pauperism, as well as to cure its evils, the rich were enjoined to lend money to those who needed it; and the law, starting from the presumption that the poor man would not, or at least should not, desire to borrow and incur a debt, unless being deprived of the necessities of life, ordered that such a loan to the destitute brother be gratuitous, whilst in commercial transactions with foreign people it permitted the charge of some reasonable interest on loans of money, as an equivalent for the service rendered.

LXXXVI. The administration of justice being, according to the revealed principles, a divine office, was naturally to be confided to persons carefully selected for their intelligence, probity, incorruptibility, and superiority to every human regard; these are therefore invested with a judicial representation of the Divinity on earth, and are enjoined to proceed according to the rules of the strictest justice, without ever deferring either to the pitiable condition of the poor, or to the influence of the powerful. As a corollary to this system, every person is bound to appeal to these authorities in any emergency, and to refrain from taking the law into his own hands; even for the correction of the disorders of one's own child, the law requires a recourse to the constituted authority, not permitting the infliction of punishments of any kind, without the intervention of those appointed to administer justice. Passing to the other observances, which grow out of the grand duty to be just to all, we are strictly commanded to respect the property, the rights and the honour of others, to be solicitous of their welfare, as much as of our own, to act honestly, sincerely and faithfully on every occasion, to fulfil our promises, to facilitate to others the success to which they are justly entitled, and to pardon our enemies. From the multifarious and varied ties which bind the individual to family and society, issue the special duties of husband and wife, of fathers, of children, of relations, as well as the regard due to misfortune, respect to the aged, the virtuous, the learned, the magistrates, and the authorities of the state, attachment to the country, and obedience and loyalty to the sovereign, who, in the language of the Bible, is constituted by God to

govern the destinies of the people committed to his or her care. All these duties, which branch off into many specialities, are either explicitly declared, or incontestably result, by analogies and sound hermeneutical deductions, from the various texts referring to such subjects.

LXXXVII. But not to strict justice alone our conduct towards our fellow-men must conform itself; we are bound to act on the principles of the most generous benevolence and charity. Those acts of a noble mind and a magnanimous heart, commonly called virtue, which are by moralists only *recommended*, as meritorious works, are by the Divine law *enjoined*, as obligatory, in the most absolute sense. Alms, for instance, are, in the Mosaic law, a duty of the rich, and a right of the needy. God is the owner of the land; He gave it to the diligent to cultivate, and through His blessing their labours prosper; He assigned to the poor His dues on the cultivated soil, and ordered that to them should be left the total produce of every seventh year, the tithes of some other years, and the gleanings of the fields and vineyards. It was not thereby intended to render charity legal and compulsory, depriving it of its noblest attribute, which is spontaneity, but to show more conspicuously the importance attached to it, having otherwise left free all acts of kindness and mercy, to which the law does not fix any measure. To this class also belong the precepts, which make it a duty to give timely assistance to him who is about to succumb to fatigue and labour, to supply with provisions the discharged servant, to restore before sunset the clothing taken in pawn, to obviate danger in building a house, to put no obstructions before the blind, to grant every kind of relief to whomsoever stands in need, without exacting, or even expecting, any remuneration, to rescue those who are in danger, to defend the weak, to protect the widow and the orphan, to attend the sick, and to give sepulture to the dead. These and other similar prescriptions, which make of charity a duty, carry with them the great lesson, that justice must go always hand-in-hand with mercy, since the all-just God is also all-merciful, and he who satisfies not both alike, does not fully discharge his duties to society.

LXXXVIII. The Mosaic dispensation, which considers the whole world as a grand unit, and tends to carry out the idea of moral good to its fullest extent, could not leave unnoticed the relations of man with beings of different species; therefore it also mentioned duties that we owe to the irrational creatures and inanimate beings. True, God granted to man a superiority, a dominion over all things created on earth, permitting him the use, and even the destruction, of them, whenever this is necessary to his own welfare, or conducive to his own

advantage; but He wisely restricted such power within certain limits. Mosaism regards the entire universe as a temple manifesting the glory of God, and directs us to admire in the single component parts the profound counsels and infinite wisdom of Him who created and harmonized so many wonders. Thus we are commanded, in the first place, to respect the laws of nature, as established by its Supreme Author from the creation, and not to do capriciously things that are in direct opposition to such laws. From this principle spring the various prohibitions to couple sexually different species of animals, to practise on them castration, to constrain simultaneously to joint labour beasts of unequal strength, to muzzle them while thrashing, and to use towards them any kind of cruelty. Nay, it is enjoined that they, also, should participate in the general rest ordained for men on festivals. It is well for us to reflect how incomplete are as yet the modern institutions for the prevention of cruelty to animals, when compared with those of the ancient Mosaic code. Even the simultaneous sowing of heterogeneous species, and the ingrafting of plants, are considered as violations of the law of nature, which had established the distinctions. In the second place, in order that man, while using all things for his benefit, might not imagine that he is their absolute master, and should not forget the true Owner, who conferred them upon him under various reservations, he was enjoined not to appropriate at the same time two things, one of which had been born or produced from the other; but in the act of converting to his own use some object or being, he should spare that which gave it birth, and not lay his hands upon both simultaneously. He is thus to learn to respect the causes while enjoying the effects; and from the secondary causes he will mentally ascend to the primitive one, which produced them all from nought. This is the sense and intention of the prohibitions of taking in a covey the mother with the young, of slaughtering a quadruped together with that which gave it birth, of cutting down a tree, were it even for the necessity of a siege, while we are enjoying its fruit.

CHAPTER XIV.

LXXXIX. THE third class of duties comprises those which man has towards himself; and here the fundamental rule, from which they all emerge, sounds thus—"Sanctify thyself, for I, the Eternal, am holy," which, in other words, may be rendered as follows—"Imitate God, for thou wast created in His image." As, however, this sanctification of self cannot possibly be effected without knowing and loving God, and without walking in his ways by practising justice and charity, it follows that this third article is the cardinal point, which virtually comprehends in itself the other two—it is the ultimate object of all the revelation, which purposed nothing more or less than the perfection of man; to this grand end the whole scheme of revelation was designed.

It is clear that, in regulating the precepts of sanctification, the revealed word had not alone to deal with the human soul, but to take into account the body also, without whose concurrence man cannot attain perfection. Designed for a receptacle of an immortal spirit, and for an instrument to carry out the actions of life, the body must be preserved entire, pure, and inaccessible to all contamination that would be an obstacle to the high spiritual functions to be accomplished by its means. To ensure this inaccessibility, as far as possible, the Divine law prescribed for all mankind a rule, which, though to the short understanding of many its character may not appear very clear, was deemed by the eternal wisdom as calculated to promote morality. Previously to Abraham's vocation, God forbade Noah and his children to feed upon blood; and the scriptural declaration, that the soul of animals resides in their blood, seems to indicate that the motive of that prohibition is to prevent the human body being brutalised by absorbing within itself, and assimilating, a large amount of an inferior vitality, and thus causing the material propensities to preponderate in man. But even if the true reason of that prohibition remained unknown to us, this would not be the only instance of man being obliged to acknowledge his own ignorance, and to bow reverently before an explicit and rigorous commandment

of God.

XC. The principles inculcated by the Mosaic code, for the preservation of the body, involve, primarily, the prohibition of attempting its existence, and, secondarily, that of cutting *off* or injuring any part of it. Suicide is, therefore, explicitly declared a crime; and several precepts are directed against mutilations, marks, and all sorts of deformations. The law does not permit voluntary macerations of the body, capricious abstinences from lawful things, multiplied or prolonged fasts, or subtractions from what is necessary to life. It, on the contrary, intends that bodily health should be cared for, that cleanliness and decency, in every respect, be regarded, a proper development of the physical faculties promoted, and an employment procured for them consonant with the superior requirements of man. It is likewise due to the physiology of the human body, not to use any of its limbs in a manner contradictory to its organisation, to provide for the restoration of equilibrium or health eventually lost, to avoid risks of injuries or disorders, and to take advice of skilled men in cases of disease. But food, drink, recreation, physical enjoyment, and every other indulgence usually allowed to the advantage of the body, are required by the law to be moderated by certain rules of a moral standard, having in view more elevated ends than the mere gratification of earthly wants; so that even the most vulgar acts may, from the intentions which accompany them, acquire a certain religious importance. In short, the government of the body must be such as to favour, and not to hinder, the exercise of what concerns spiritual life.

XCI. Passing to other moral requirements which come within the sphere of man's duties towards himself, it is unnecessary to demonstrate here how it is incumbent upon every man to choose a state in society adapted to his individual faculties and aptitude, to be industrious, sober and decorous, to fix on a well-regulated distribution of his time and work, to be economical without parsimony and liberal without prodigality, and generally to follow such rules of wisdom as tend to render life prosperous, and human conduct acceptable to society. All such rules are self-evident, and grow necessarily out of the general principle which demands of the functions of the body to subserve the attainment of self-sanctification. But we must now speak precisely of this sanctification, to point out briefly in what it consists. From the Divine prescript, "Sanctify yourselves because I am holy," we clearly conclude that the type of sanctification is to be sought, not in ourselves, but in God; therefore, to sanctify ourselves is to shape our own acts and will upon the known will of God; to be fully penetrated with

the idea of Him; to hold steadfastly to Him; to take Him for a guide in the walks of life; to make Him the goal of our actions and the centre of our hopes; to devote our solicitude to the accomplishment of the high designs of His eternal wisdom; to perform whatever is agreeable to Him; to imitate, as far as possible, His perfections; in short, so to act, that what in Him is absolute may become in us subjective; and thus the sanctity of God will produce man's own sanctification. Having established this sovereign principle, revelation has accomplished its intentions, has attained its object, for the whole sum of the Divine law is concentrated in it; and worship, morals, judicial laws, and all single observances prescribed, are but branches or constituent parts of this principle; they all flow from, and return to, it, with a systematic consequence.

XCII. Besides the three cardinal articles above stated, the observance of which, in their general tendencies at least, is incumbent on all mankind, there are in the sacred code various special prescriptions obligatory only on Israel, as him who first received the revelation, and who is bound to preserve it with particular means, and to testify it for ever, by his acts and by his very existence. Through such prescriptions, the law designed either to keep alive among the people the idea of the high mission entrusted to it, and the memory of signal favours which Providence prodigally conferred upon it in the early times of the institution, or to initiate it into a more scrupulous sanctitude, by interdicting to it some things that are left permissive to others. It is not necessary here to give a complete list of such precepts, as the mere inspection of the sacred text suffices to point them out; and we shall confine ourselves to indicating some of the more important. Pre-eminent among them stands the sabbath, the elevated tendency of which has been already explained in the Sinaitic revelation; next come the three Festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, which, besides being linked to, and combined with, rural events and circumstances, are also designed to commemorate luminous epochs in the national history; the great day of atonement, as a highly important act of reconciliation with God; the circumcision, as an ineffaceable mark of the adoption of Israel; the assiduous study of the Divine law, as the purest source of truth, and repository of the religious idea; the fringes in the garments, the phylacteries or frontlets, the inscriptions on the door-posts, and such like commemorative means; the redemption of the firstborn children; and the offering of the first fruits, as a demonstration of filial dependance on, and gratitude to, the Supreme Cause; the prohibition to feed on certain loathsome animals, and reptiles and insects, in

order not to assimilate to the human body substances of a low, imperfect, and possibly deteriorated organization; the interdiction of marriages between certain degrees of relationships, because wanting in the antagonism required in connubial unions;^[5] the duty of offering up prayer, one of the noblest offices of piety, and the most effectual medium of communion with God; that of confessing sins, the inevitable consequence of human frailty; the injunctions to reject idolatry, divinations, charms, exorcisms, sortileges, and all manner of superstitions, all of which are obstacles to the development of the religious idea; and several other precepts, which may be found dispersed throughout the sacred code, all having similar tendencies, and coming more or less directly within the scope we have assigned to them.

CHAPTER XV.

XCIII. CASTING now a retrospective glance on what we have hitherto briefly stated, it will be easy to deduce, from the aggregate of these notions, the principal characteristic of that wondrous institution, which it pleased the Divine mercy to found upon earth for the benefit of the human family, selecting for its organ the people of Israel; an institution, which, in reference to the means adopted for its preservation and propagation, is called *Judaism*. The scope of Judaism is, then, the propagation among men of the *religious idea*, and this comprises the doctrines revealed respecting the Deity and respecting man, in consequence of which the latter will be able to attain his true goal. Respecting God, revelation teaches that He is a Being absolute—that is to say, that has in Himself all the sources of existence, of will, of power, and of action—hence He is eternal, all-perfect, all-powerful, all-holy; He is unique, because there is no God beside Him; and He is one, because in Him there can be no multiplicity or division of parts; He created out of nought the universe, which He governs by pre-ordained physical laws, and all that exists owes to Him its existence and conservation. Respecting man, revelation teaches that he has an immortal soul, made in the image of God—that is, endowed with various spiritual faculties similar, in their nature, to those of his Maker—therefore susceptible of a progressive perfection, which he will attain by sanctifying himself—that is, by imitating God and carrying out his commands. To that effect, God entered into an immediate relation with man, whereby He not only provides for the preservation of mankind, as He does for that of all other things created, but He, moreover, granted him a supernatural assistance to improve his moral condition; and this assistance consists in having made him the recipient of a revelation, by which He instructed him in the best rules of life, and declared to him that He will be his support, his protector, his judge, his loving father, and his guide towards eternal felicity.

XCIV. But the religious idea is not simply a theory that may be accepted or

rejected without affecting the human actions, it is not an abstraction confined within the sphere of contemplation; it is a practical system, which requires to be put into execution, and to be manifested in every part of the human conduct. As such, it was to pass into the hands of men, to direct their actions; and they could conform to it only to the extent of their intellectual comprehension of its spirit. Now, every institution, however excellent in itself, is liable to vicissitudes, as soon as human ingenuity seeks to comprehend it, and human weakness to carry it into effect. Even as the intellectual powers and the modes of viewing things vary among men, so the religious idea, in its practical application, was subject, in the lapse of time, to some alteration among those who became its depositaries. Judaism did not remain always pure and consentaneous to its ends; and, although based on a foundation unchangeable in its nature, and eternal, its practice was sometimes at variance with its spirit, and its essence was either neglected or misunderstood, according to certain circumstances of the national development, as we are informed, even by the records of sacred history.

XCV. There can be no doubt but the inspired man, who first was commissioned to proclaim the true religious idea, had fully realized in his mind the vastness and immense consequences of that new institution in its ultimate universal compass. In his eloquent addresses there are even some broad traits which allude to a fulfilment reserved to the latest posterity. Nevertheless, it is obvious, that, having to instruct a people who were not yet prepared to realize such an idea, and in an age when the opinions of all mankind ran into totally different directions, he had to take into account the condition of the times and of men, and to use a language suited to his hearers. At the same time it was not designed, or expected, by the holy legislator to see at once realized the last and comprehensive results to which the revealed doctrine aspires; it was sufficient to have given it existence and form, and to have instituted a repository capably of preserving it, leaving its final universal triumph to the development of humanity and progress of civilisation. Considered in these points of view, Mosaism has the appearance, in its exterior garb, of a special law, adapted to peculiar circumstances, and circumscribed to few persons, but in reality, and apart from that kind of integument, it contains the universal doctrines, destined to become the inheritance of all mankind. The blessed Prophet clearly foresaw that the new ideas preached by him would meet with many an obstacle, before they were thoroughly adopted, even by those who were called upon to preserve them; hence the greater was the force with which he inculcated the monotheistic

principle, and the necessity of segregation from foreign and idolatrous influences; thus his laws acquired an aspect of *particularism* and nationality, whereas on being carefully studied, and deeply penetrated, they exhibit their more general and sublime tendency. Therefore, in judging of Mosaism, and in interpreting the body of laws contained in the Pentateuch, we must never lose sight of the two following necessary cautions; viz., to deduce general theories from particular cases; and to take into account the circumstances of time and place, in order to seize that which is designed for all times and all places.^[6]

XCVI. What the inspired Arch-prophet had foretold came too truly to pass, as soon as the people of Israel, mixing too freely with their corrupt neighbours, wished to imitate them, and assumed the form of a monarchy. Ambition and lust of power could ill agree with a law, which establishes individual liberty and equality of rights. Consequently, it was not long before Paganism ascended the throne, attended by a hideous train of profligacies and crimes; and, what then remained of the Mosaic institutions, consisted only of the material service of the temple, and some exterior acts mechanically performed, but sadly lacking the idea, which alone constitutes their merit. To put an end to so great a disorder, Prophetism rose. With admirable zeal, energy, eloquence, and abnegation, thundering in the courts, the temple, and the public markets; now by word of mouth, then by writings; now threatening, anon exhorting; always struggling with infinite obstacles, and setting at defiance the tyranny of the ruling powers with the sole prestige of the animated word, Prophetism undertook to revivify the religious idea, almost extinguished, or crushed under the weight of universal perversion. But to repress with greater force the overflowing depravity, and to combat the evil with an opposite extreme, it was proper to divest the religious idea of its particularising and national forms, and to present it in its more comprehensive and general character, in its celestial beauty of a future reign of happiness, based on love, justice, liberty, and universal peace. This was precisely what Prophetism did. Therefore, he would be greatly mistaken, who would suppose, in the expressions used by the Prophets, any intention of slight towards the ceremonial laws, and those biblical prescriptions, which are specially intended for the chosen people. True, these are to be regarded as means calculated to a superior end; but they remain in full force and validity until that end (which is in store in the Eternal Mind) shall have been fully and finally attained. The Prophets eliminated nothing from, and added nothing to, the law; they sought to revive the religious idea, which is the foundation and aim of the

law; they brought it into prominence, to impress it more forcibly on the minds of a people who had nearly lost it. But they did more; they bounded over the confines of the present, transferred themselves through the imagination to a future final re-arrangement of the human conditions; and, giving to the religious idea its greatest possible latitude, depicted a future state of ideal perfection, which, while it offered a vivid contrast with contemporary corruption, left to posterity an imperishable monument of their inspired eloquence and exquisite foresight.^[7]

CHAPTER XVI.

XCVII. JUDAISM is now clearly delineated before us. From the outline that we have endeavoured to sketch, it is evident that the religion of the Jew imposes upon him solemn duties towards God, towards his fellow-men, and towards himself. A sincere, pure, undivided, active, loving worship of his heavenly Father, and a constant practice of justice, benevolence, and charity, in their widest sense, will lead to his self-sanctification, which is the aim intended for him. These are his fundamental duties, as far as regards actions. Many of the observances prescribed by Holy Writ teach the modes and means of carrying out such duties. All such prescriptions as are strictly connected with the existence of the temple, and the sojourn in Palestine are dispensed with, since the destruction of the former, and the dispersion of Israel on the face of the earth. But no doubts can exist as to the others, which are all, and for ever, in full force, having been ordained for all times and all places.

But the Jew has also a creed to profess. According to the Scriptures, he is bound to believe in the unity, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, unerring justice, and infinite mercy of God; in His general providence over all the universe, which He created and which He governs, and His more special providence over man; he is bound to believe in the divine origin of the Mosaic revelation, in its truth and immutability, and in its efficacy to promote his own sanctification; he is bound to believe in the spirituality and immortality of the human soul, in its destination and aptitude to perform all that is good, and in the future reward of the virtuous and punishment of the wicked; and, lastly, he is bound to believe, that, in order to make known, preserve, and propagate these dogmas, a covenant was established between God and Israel, in consequence of which the latter is called *servant of God*, *son of God*, *holy people*, and has the particular mission to conform to the will of God, which is called *walking in the ways of the Eternal*. These various points are, however, so intimately connected with each other, and form so complete a system, that one being admitted, the

others follow as legitimate consequences.

It now remains for us only to add a few words concerning the hopes of Israel. The future—as great in its consequences as extraordinary in its conditions—which the Jew has a right to expect, has its foundation in the Divine promises, and, consequently, its accomplishment, though long in the womb of time, is infallible. By virtue of such promises, Israel expects a complete material restoration and spiritual perfection, not of his own people only, but of all the human family; so that every individual of the human species may then correspond, in all respects, to the lofty requirements of his nature, and attain the ends pre-established for man by the infinite wisdom of the Creator; and this not only during his earthly life, but also beyond it, in his immortal condition. As to the modes by which these heavenly universal promises will come into actuality, we must rest satisfied with very feeble and vague notions, and not require an exact comprehension of specialities, which, in our present limited power of mind, we might be unable even to conceive. It is sufficient for us to be able to deduce with certainty from prophetic words, that (as regards the future condition of this life) an increased intelligence, and a more energetic will directed towards what is good—which in the biblical language is called *circumcision of the heart*—will be the means of diffusing throughout the world the knowledge of the One God, and the exercise of virtue, under the regimen of an incorruptible justice, a generous benevolence, a universal peace, and an uninterrupted prosperity and happiness. To Israel, in particular, the gathering of his scattered members, the restoration of his ancestral inheritance, and the re-establishment of his nationality, have been promised and repeatedly assured; and the glory of that epoch forms the subject of the most glowing pictures of inspired poetry. But the fulfilment of these promises the Jew must expect from the wonder-working hand of God alone, without any personal efforts of his own. Meanwhile, he is to consider himself, as he truly is, a citizen of the country in which he dwells, a brother to his fellow-citizens, a dutiful observer of the law of the land, and a loyal subject of the sovereign, whose authority is constituted by God.

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CIRCUS PLACE, FINSBURY CIRCUS.

NOTES:

[1] These truths are now readily admitted by all well-thinking men. It was very easy, and very amusing, for the philosophy of the eighteenth century, to ridicule the ignorance and superstition of the ancients, and to denounce the modern peoples which followed in the same direction, though by different tracks. But the true philosophy of the present age, which has penetrated deeper into the recesses of the human heart, has arrived at the double conclusion, that a superior power has implanted therein certain elements which it is not in human power to remove; and that what is inherent in human nature cannot be combated, but must be wisely directed. Hence, modern civilisation deals less than preceding ages in abstractions; and in its Intellectual development, accepts religion as a starting point in the laborious but open walk, which leads to human happiness,—The TRANSLATOR.

[2] The author has already informed us, that he confines himself, in this book, to the enunciation of principles, and leaves to teachers the task of demonstrating, developing, and applying them, in course of instruction. Nevertheless, as this proposition recurs more than once in these pages, and contains a very important principle, it is perhaps desirable, for the general reader, to offer here an elucidation, by the following examples of its application.

We are taught, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again" (Exod. xxiii. 4). We are to understand, that the lesson thereby conveyed, is not confined to the particular case named, but that we are commanded to cast off selfishness, and to extend our kindness and charity even to enemies, actively exerting ourselves for the assistance and benefit of others, whenever opportunities offer themselves in our every-day life.

Again, we are enjoined, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind" (Lev, xix. 14). We are clearly to conclude therefrom, that any net of treachery, in itself already detestable in the eyes of God, becomes doubly so when directed against the unconscious and the helpless; and a very wide range of treacherous actions would, therefore, come within the meaning of this prohibition.

The paramount importance of this hermeneutical rule will be any apology for having dilated on a point, which must be already well known to biblical students.—The TRANSLATOR.

[3] This expression is here used to indicate the direct and special relation of God with man, and the direct government of mankind by God, without intermediate agencies, in contradistinction to the other terrestrial creatures, whose relation with the Creator is only general, and which are governed through the medium of pre-established physical laws.—THE TRANSLATOR.

[4] Public, as compared with private worship, has the undoubted advantage of being in itself a public homage to the omnipotence of God, and a solemn testimony of the

dependence of man on Him. True, solitary worship is often more likely to be attended with the requisite mental abstraction from all worldly objects, and intellectual elevation of the soul towards its Divine Source—a condition of mind indispensable to establish a true spiritual communion in Prayer, and without which all our orisons and ritual ceremonies would be but mechanical and meaningless performances, a body without soul. It is this condition of the mind that, in Talmudical style, is called כוונה, as is well known, and that later ascetic writers termed הקבוצות, from the circumstance that it is superinduced by solitary meditation. But whenever this condition is attained in a public service, then indeed is that service "divine," and humanity is exalted in its approach to the Throne of Mercy.—THE TRANSLATOR.

[5] Another probable reason of this prohibition is, that the practice of such unions would be fraught with great domestic disorders and unhappiness, and consequent social evils. But it is opportune here to remind the reader, that many attempts have been made, in the course of centuries, by eminent expositors, to assign to many of the Mosaic ordinances motives of various characters, rationalistic and metaphysical, sanitary, political, and mystical, but all more or less conjectural. To the religious man the positive knowledge of the true motives is not at all essential for the performance of the divine precepts; and in the words of our author himself, as stated elsewhere, "we have to bow reverently before an explicit and rigorous commandment of God, and we consider it as calculated to contribute to the promotion of our own weal."—THE TRANSLATOR.

[6] The attentive student of the Pentateuch must see, especially when assisted by the best commentators, that several ordinances are the creatures of circumstance and time, and consequently of an essentially transitory character. Among these stand foremost all such as refer to the treatment of, and relations with, the Canaanitic families. The strict separation of Israel from those corrupt and idolatrous populations, and their ultimate destruction, were conditions necessary to the establishment and success of the new order of things. As soon as the end of those ordinances was accomplished, they naturally ceased to have any other than a historical value. Therefore, he (if any such there be) who would transfer to the Gentiles of our days the principles of the policy that was inculcated towards the Canaanites of the time of Moses, would not only be committing a sad mistake, but running counter to the spirit of Judaism, and violating the very letter of the law, elsewhere clearly expressed. "Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself," is the motto which God inscribed for perpetuity on the banner of Israel.—THE TRANSLATOR.

[7] The original has here several succeeding paragraphs devoted to a historical review of various phases of Judaism, which it describes under the names of Talmudism, Rabbinism, Karaism, and Cabalism. Believing this digression, or appendix, to be unnecessary to the general purposes of the present book, I have omitted it in the translation, *with the sanction of the distinguished Author himself.* —THE TRANSLATOR.

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