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The Ethics of Bishop Butler and Immanuel Kant.

—BY—

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THE ETHICS
OF
BISHOP BUTLER AND IMMANUEL KANT,
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KANT.

INTRODUCTORY.

Kant opens the first of his ethical treatises with the now famous statement, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification except the Good Will," and in developing the notion of the good will he first brings clearly into view the great difficulty of Idealistic ethics. For when we are told that somewhat is good, we at once ask for what is it good. If it is good at all, it must be good for something, and we thus conclude with Butler that its purpose or end must be outside of or beyond itself. This seems especially true of the will. As action, it is necessarily determined to some end, and its goodness would seem to consist in its adaptation to its purpose. With Hedonistic and Theological ethical writers (if there is any fundamental distinction between these) such has always been the view of will, but Kant on the contrary tells us that the good will is good in itself, not for anything beyond. 'It is good not because of what it can accomplish, but simply by virtue of the volition,' 'and considered by itself must be esteemed higher than anything that can be brought about by it.' ('Like a jewel it has its value wholly in itself.' Here then Kant comes in direct opposition to Hedonism. Happiness, here or hereafter, the

gratification of any or all the inclinations, is not the end according to which the Good Will is determined as good. It is wholly determined to itself, is good in itself, and thus, and this is the difficulty which here emerges, it must be the end of its own action.

If, as empirical ethics has always assumed, will is simply the response to some sensuous impulse, and its whole nature consists in its effort for sensuous gratification, manifestly the only end it can have is the gratification it seeks. To speak of it as its own end is to use words that can have no meaning. But is this the whole nature of will, or the nature of will at all? Or, what is only another form of the same question, is man merely a sentient being, and does his whole nature consist in seeking the gratification of his inclinations? Some such assumption as this Hedonism must always make. Reason, it must say, does not change man's essential nature. Want and desire remain the same, man must still find his happiness in their satisfaction. Reason, morally considered, can only modify actions, so that, instead of blindly following his impulses, man will stop to enquire whether they will, after all, lead to greatest gratification. The increasing use of reason will thus postpone 'immediate ends' for 'more remote,' because it will be seen that thereby a greater sum of happiness or gratifications will be obtained. Reason does not in the least change the nature of the end or the character of the actions, and the essential nature of man is just what it would be without reason.

But Kant replies that this is neither the nature of will nor of the rational being. From whatever point of view we choose to regard man, reason gives to him his distinctive character. Even for knowledge reason is necessary and constitutive. It is not simply engaged in reasoning

about objects given us in nature, but itself makes for us a nature and all the individual objects in nature. Through reason alone also is morality possible, and it is here even in a higher sense constitutive. Kant defines reason as the faculty of acting according to the conception of ends, or of laws derived from these ends, that is, according to ideas. Practical reason is thus identical with will, as the faculty of action according to the conception of an end.

This result can be accepted in some sense by all schools of moralists. There can be no doubt that our actions are directed to the attainment of ends already conceived, by the idea of something desired or desirable, of something the possession of which will give satisfaction. But the real point at issue is whether the desirableness of every object depends upon the gratification of some inclination, as ascertained by some previous experience, or whether reason itself can constitute it desirable. Kant's answer is in effect to affirm this latter position; for it is this he means when he says pure reason can be practical, and it is only in this sense that moral reason can be said to be constitutive. How reason is practical, in what way it affects or constitutes the objects of the will, we shall see in the following discussions.

I.

THE DOCTRINE OF DUTY.

In the discussion of duty, Kant's first distinction is between actions done from duty and those done from inclination, and he concludes that only the former have moral worth. Actions may be outwardly conformable to

what duty requires, but if done from inclination, from an impulse or from the anticipation of the pleasure which they will yield, instead of from duty, they are still not moral. This is true even of beneficent actions; to act from duty alone can give moral worth. That is to say, we can not look for such worth in the particular springs of action. That worth can lie neither in the immediate purposes we have in view nor in their effects regarded as ends and springs of the will. In what, then, can it lie? Solely in the principle of volition itself. "For the will stands between its *a priori* principle which is formal and its *a posteriori* spring which is material as between two roads, and as it must be determined by something, it follows that it must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it." (Ab. p. 22.) "But in excluding the effect of inclination there remains nothing except *objectively law*, and subjectively *pure respect for the law*, by which action can be determined," and "Duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the law." (Ab. p. 22.) In other words, 'The preeminent good which we call moral can consist in nothing else than *the conception of law* in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will.'

This conclusion leads at once to the inquiry as to how we can act from respect for the law, and as to the nature of the law itself. The latter question belongs to a subsequent section; the former, as we can readily see, is involved in the question as to the determination of the will. In what way, then, is the will determined to action? In general, we may say the will is always determined by desire, and more specifically, such desire is always for some particular end or object. But is not this to deny the possibility of

duty as Kant has defined it? For desire is inclination, and how, then, can there be action from duty as distinct from inclination? (Is not the conception of duty as action from respect for the law a meaningless abstraction?)

In reply we may say, the conception of duty is universal among men, and its most immediate apprehension is, precisely as Kant has defined it, as action from respect for the law.* And when we look more closely into the nature of desire, we see that it is only through a confusion that it has ever been questioned. Desire is not mere inclination. We may say that a beast seeks food from inclination and call that desire, but we can not in the same sense say that a rational being seeks an object from desire. The characteristic of a rational being is that he distinguishes himself from all his inclinations, and so gives them an entirely new character. Reason from its very nature is self-conscious, and the rational being is thus conscious of a self which in all his inclinations he is seeking to satisfy. Inclination may prompt in many directions, but unless in its gratification it is conceived that self-satisfaction can be found, it does not become a desire. The various inclinations are given unity in the one conscious subject, which distinguishes itself from them, and may seek its own satisfaction through them, but what is sought is always this satisfaction, and not the mere gratification of the inclinations. This constitutes the very nature of desire, in which reason is always present. To assert the same thing in other words, there is but one self and it is always one. If it has many sides, properties, or distinctive characters, it is in these that its unity consists. Apart from them it is nothing, as are they apart from it. All

*The expression, "respect for the law," used here and elsewhere, does not contain the notion of necessity implicit in duty, but it expresses the idea of duty so far as we are now considering it.

activities must be activities of the self; all gratifications must be gratifications of the self, and it is only the desire for self-satisfaction that can prompt to seek any gratifications.

As desire receives its nature from the self-distinguishing character of man, so also must the object of desire. What it is that he desires can not be something external to himself. As the nature of desire is to seek self-satisfation, its object must be that form of self in which it is conceived satisfaction will be found. It is not the existence of something that is desired, but the possession or enjoyment of something, or more precisely, the self in that possession or enjoyment. Thus the object of desire can have no real existence. So long as it is desired it exists only in idea, and the action of will to which the desire prompts is only the effort to make the idea actual, to give it real existence. But as the object of desire is an idea of some form of self in which satisfaction is sought, the effort to make it real becomes simply the effort for some form of self-realization. Now, at first in the history of rational nature, self-satisfaction is conceived to be synonymous with gratification. The self to be realized is identified with the objects of the inclinations and is as various in its forms as the inclinations themselves. But with development the individual more clearly distinguishes himself from his inclinations, and conceives some general form of self in which alone he imagines satisfaction will be found. Thus the idea of self gradually becomes an ideal self, and the ideal assumes more and more definite form with the fuller development of individual character. This ideal is more or less present in all particular objects of desire; it constitutes them what to the individual they are, and through it they become desirable. Thus reason as the self-

conscious principle becomes truly constitutive. Through the conception of an ideal end, present in all particular ends, it renders those ends themselves desirable, and the rational being must thus act from respect for the law of this ideal, a law which reason imposes.

We are now in a position to examine Kant's distinction between inclination and duty. First, it is evident that, as rational, man can not act from mere inclination, and it is only as rational that he is moral. Then, on the other hand, can we still say that actions proceeding from repsect for law have moral worth? So far as we now see, the law is simply one imposed by an ideal end, and so must derive its character from that end. Thus the character of an action must ultimately depend upon the character of the end in which satisfaction is sought. This end itself may be vicious, and actions determined thereto can not be good. It is not enough for duty, then, that actions be determined by respect for law. The character of the law, as Kant saw, must also be taken into consideration. Thus the distinction between inclination and duty can not hold in the absolute sense in which it was first given. Action from mere inclination there can not be (in ethics at least) and action from respect for law has not necessarily moral worth.

We now need to examine whether there is any ground for Kant's distinction. Duty can be defined as action from respect for the law, only when the law itself is defined. But Kant defined the law as the moral law, and his definition of duty must thus stand. His error on this side, then, consists in seeming to suppose that vicious action can not also be done from respect for law. On the other hand, can we in any sense speak of the actions of a rational being as actions from inclination? We have

already seen that a person may, as it were, identify himself with his inclinations, may seek his own satisfaction in their gratification as they from time to time arise. But while we have not yet attempted to define what the true self is which we should seek to realize, it is certain that we are not such beings as can find satisfaction in the mere gratification of inclinations. Self-satisfaction can not be found in the realization of such an ideal. But the gratification of the inclinations, like all other actions, may become habitual and so give character to the individual so seeking to satisfy himself. Moreover, such actions are characterized by the relative absence of any ideal end, and so of any ideal law from respect for which they are determined. Even if actions from inclination should outwardly conform to moral requirements, or in Kant's phrase, be legal, they still will not possess moral worth, because not arising from a conception of self in which morality can consist. We may even say with Kant that 'an action done from duty must exclude the influence of inclination,' because in the formation of our ideal inclination must not enter. "For the mind of the flesh is death:" "because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

In all this Kant's distinction finds justification, but he was wrong again in seeming to hold that all immoral actions can be classed as done from inclination. Yet in his second principle of duty he points definitely to the true distinction, when he says "that an action done from duty derives its moral worth * * * from the maxim by which it is determined." For he immediately adds that the character of the maxim is determined by the "principle of volition," that is, by the law derived from the ideal end in which the satisfaction is sought.

THE MORAL LAW.

We have already seen that it is only through the self-objectifying nature of the rational being that his actions can be said to have any moral character. The constant effort of such a being is to seek self-satisfaction, and it is from this fact alone that the conception of action or of conduct as good or not good can arise. With the various gratifications obtained the self is not satisfied, and so the feeling succeeds that there is something higher and something better, and finally the idea arises that in the realization of some form of self alone can true satisfaction be found. Thus to the conception of an ideal self which must be present in all forms of gratification, there succeeds the further conception of a true self, a true ideal, the realization of which alone can yield complete satisfaction. When man comes to seek what this true self is, he comes to realize that it must consist in the fullest development of his highest capabilities, in the perfection of his rational or moral nature. But before such a conception can take definite form, he has already learned that his truest satisfaction is found in yielding obedience to a law which he terms the law of duty. Hence the first necessity is to find the nature of this moral law, and this gives shape to Kant's first inquiry.

As man is distinctively a rational being and only as such moral, the moral law itself must be derived from the nature of reason. It can not be derived from the particular attributes of human nature, but must apply to man only because he is a rational being. But, as Kant has demonstrated in the Critique of Pure Reason, the essential nature of reason is its universality; hence the moral law must

be a universal law. It must command actions universally necessary, necessary for all rational beings under all conditions. We have already seen in the principles of duty that the moral quality of an action is not determined by the external end, but must lie in the inner or subjective principle of volition. If, then, the moral law is to be a universal law, all it can command is that the inner spring of actions be such as can hold for all rational beings under all conditions. In other words, the maxim must be universal, and the moral law can contain only the one necessity that the maxims thus conform to a universal law. This gives us what Kant calls the first form of the categorical imperative: "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law;" or "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a Universal Law of Nature." (Ab. p. 55.) As the first consciousness of duty is as conformity to a law, the statement of the law is the first and most immediate answer to the question of duty, but for this very fact it is also the most indefinite. This Kant saw. "It concerns not the matter of an action nor its intended result," but its form and principle alone. It is purely a formal law.

Kant's statement of the moral law and his further declaration that it is purely formal, give rise to a certain difficulty. A law that contains nothing but the form of command, can command nothing in particular, would seem to be meaningless or inconceivable. But this difficulty is not unanswerable. First we need to note that the term law is here used in a very different sense from that to which the scientific use of the term has accustomed us. We are apt to think of a law as a result, a mere uniformity, derived from the contemplation of objects already given us in nature. Applying the same method to morals, we seek to

derive the moral law from the contemplation and classification of the various particular ends or motives of action. We wish to classify the various ends of action and label them as 'right' or as 'wrong', or, failing of such absolute division, we seek from contemplation of particular motives to see which should be given moral preference as compared with the others. Or again, abstracting from their differences, we seek to arrange all moral actions according to some principle of agreement, or to state "the inexpugnable element of the conception," (viz. pleasure) on account of which all individual ends can be classified as good. But in either case we are overlooking the essential principle, and seeking for morality where it can not be found. Neither the individual actions nor ends of actions, neither the particular inclinations nor their particular objects, can in themselves be classified as moral or immoral, or fall within the field of morality at all. So far are they from constituting the moral law, or the data from which that law is derived, that whatever moral worth they can have is derived from that law. We must completely change our point of view, or the law will be a mere formula and can give us no command.

This is what Kant saw, and what he meant, when he said that we must abstract from all particular ends of actions, that the law must be purely formal. For such a law can not command any particular end or act, and so contains only the command. But the law left thus would mean nothing; when we ask what it does command, we find it impossible to give it meaning apart from the source from which it is derived. As this source is not the particular ends, we must next follow Kant in the inquiry as to what it is.

"The will," he tells us again, "is the faculty of deter-

joining oneself to action in accordance with the conception of certain laws." (Ab. p. 64.) "That which serves the will as the objective ground of self-determination is the end, and if this is assigned by reason alone, it must hold for all rational beings." If such an end is to be one in which complete self-satisfaction is found, 'it must have in itself an absolute worth' and 'being an end in itself it must be the source of definite laws,' the possible source of the categorical imperative. Or, in other words, "If there is a supreme practical principle or, in respect of the human will, a categorical imperative, it must be one which, drawn from the conception of that which is necessarily an end for every one because it is *an end in itself*, constitutes an *objective* principle of will, and can therefore serve as a universal practical law. The foundation of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself.*" (Ab. p. 66.) 'Rational beings are therefore persons,' and while the moral law does not command any action in particular, what it does command is now evident. It may be briefly expressed as 'Be thyself,' or in the fuller formula of Kant, "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person, or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." (Ab. p. 67.) And this principle must be the supreme law limiting all our subjective ends.

But we have not yet reached a statement of the moral law in which we can rest. The command, 'Be thyself,' implicitly contains the further imperative, 'Know thyself.' The two formulae for the moral law point definitely to a third which transcends and comprehends both. The subject of all ends is the rational being; the objective principle of morality lies in the rule and its form of universality by which alone it can be a law. Hence we have the essential or the true nature of the rational being:

"*The will of every rational being is a universally legislative will.*" (Ab. p. 70.) The will is not only subject to the law, but so subject that it must be regarded as itself giving the law.

We have here now the most definite statement of the moral law which Kant has given us. He has sought further to elucidate his principles by his conception of the kingdom of ends. Morality, he tells us, consists in referring all actions to legislation which alone can make such a kingdom possible. 'Every maxim of will must be referred to every other will.' But were we to attempt to apply the law to particular examples, or to deduce from it particular actions or lines of conduct, we should still find it provokingly vague and unmeaning, and Kant in his illustrative examples always assumes more than the law itself contains. This indefiniteness of the law has caused much hostile criticism. Thus it has been said that as a rule of conduct Kant's imperative is much less definite than the Golden Rule. This is perfectly true, but it would be equally just to criticise the Golden Rule as a principle of morality. From the same cause, but with greater plausibility, comes the criticism of 'Duty for Duty's sake.' This phrase can be shown to have no meaning, but Kant, in his constant anxiety to show that morality can not be derived from the particular ends of action, has used language that would seem to justify such criticism. 'Aus Pflicht,' or 'handle pflichtmässig, aus Pflicht,' are frequent expressions, but he himself has explained their meaning, and it is not 'duty for duty's sake.' 'From duty' he has defined as 'from respect for the law,' and in explanation of these phrases he has given us the truest description of moral conduct: "The consciousness of duty shall constitute the sufficient motive for all actions in accordance with duty," (Werke. Ed. Hart.

vol. 7. p. 196.) or in the words of Green, "The spirit expressed in the law shall become the principle of action in man." (Phil. Works. ii. p. 310. Cf. Rom. viii. 1–11.)

The law, as we have said, can have no meaning apart from the end from which it is deduced, to which it commands. Its command is not 'duty for duty's sake,' but duty for the sake of the end, viz: self-realization. The definiteness of the law, then, must depend upon the definiteness of the conception of the self to be realized. This self is the rational self, which Kant has only defined as the universally legislating will, as 'the universal end,' 'the subject of all ends, that is, the rational being himself.' (Vid. Ab., pp. 80, 81.) The question that then remains for us is whether the conception of rational nature can be made sufficiently definite to serve as a significant ideal for the rational being. Can the idea of human nature as rational be given any definite content, so as to give rise to a law sufficiently definite to command one action or line of conduct rather than any other? It is no just ground of criticism on Kant that in the "Grundlegung" or Critique of Practical Reason he has not answered this question. Anything beyond the deduction of the formulae for the moral law was beside his avowed purpose. But it will be a just criticism if the question admits of no answer, because then his formulae must always remain as vague and unmeaning as they at first appear.

Were we to regard the conception of 'humanity' as a vague and unreal abstraction, a tendency which Kant may not always have fully overcome, 'to treat human nature as an end,' would be a phrase not capable of translation into any definite fact of life. But Kant tells us that rational or human nature means the rational subject himself, and so the question takes concrete form. What human nature

as thus understood ideally is we can tell only so far as we can tell what man's capability is, and what this capability is we can say with certainty only so far as it is already realized. Were it entirely unrealized we could say nothing about it. But it is not thus unrealized, and we can give definite content to the idea of human nature from the moral growth history has already illustrated. We are able to tell in a degree what human nature ideally and so really is from what it has already become, and thus to make the idea so far concrete and actual. Inasmuch as the true nature of man, as Kant tells us, is the universal, we can deduce the moral ideal from the actual humanity about us, and it thus becomes a sufficiently significant end of moral endeavor.

So, too, we can see the fuller meaning of the "universally legislative will," or of the kingdom of ends. Kant, it is true, said that such a kingdom could be only ideal, and ideal in the sense that it can never be fully realized it must always remain. But he conceived such kingdom as a system of individual ends, and its realization as their harmony. But this realization we must conceive as their integration in one Universal End. Moreover, this kingdom is being constantly though imperfectly realized in the moral growth of every people, and of the race. It is only from this realization, imperfect as it is, that we can form any conception of the universal end in itself, which is at once the end for every individual, and the true source of the universal law.

III.

THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE.

We have frequently spoken of the moral law as the Categorical Imperative. We have now need to inquire what Kant meant by calling the law a categorical imperative.

Kant derived the possibility of morality from the relation of two factors of human nature, viz: Sensibility and Reason. If man were a purely rational being without sensibility at all, there would be no such thing as virtue. The will, as always determined by the concepts of pure reason, would always be a universally legislative will, and holiness, not morality, would be its predicate. On the other hand pure sensibility can not give rise to morality. Sense is blind, can look neither before nor after, and so far as itself is concerned, can know no laws by which it is to be directed. Thus it is only when the sensible being becomes self-conscious by the supervention of reason that morality can arise, and the very nature of morality consists in the relation of reason and sensibility. The holy will is one that is absolutely determined by conceptions of pure reason, but it is characteristic of human will that it is not always so determined, but is often determined by inclinations instead of by reason. An opposition thus arises between inclination and reason, and from this opposition morality results. The nature of this opposition and its necessity for morality we now need to investigate.

First, then, how can the will be affected by the inclinations. "Will is conceived as a faculty of determining oneself to action *in accordance with the conception of certain laws;*" (Ab. p. 64.) that is, it is determined by reason, or is

reason, and can not be affected by the inclinations except as reason is thus affected. How, then, can reason be affected by the inclinations? The inclinations can affect the will only because the self-objectifying spirit is conscious that its own satisfaction will be found in their gratification. Will is always in some sense determined by reason, and the only question is whether reason as affected by the inclinations is pure reason.

To be determined by the inclinations was, according to Kant, to be determined by some conception of pleasure resulting from their gratification. Such pleasure can be known only through experience, and that experience must be the experience of the individual. Thus, when pleasure is made the end of action, it can not be the universal end from the very fact that it is empirical. Pleasure in general there can not be. What each one must seek will be his own pleasure, and that pleasure will consist in particular gratifications of particular inclinations. Such gratifications must depend upon the peculiar condition and nature of the subject himself. Pleasure must always be purely subjective, and can give no objective law. This fact is not changed, even if we say sentient human nature is essentially the same for all, and besides, the knowledge of that in which pleasure consists must still be empirically conditioned, and experience can never be universal. There can be no universal end of action, no universal conception of reason from which to derive universal laws, that is, no principles by which actions can be directed, with pleasure as the end of moral action.

On the other hand, the principles of pure reason must be wholly *a priori*, not derived from experience, not empirically conditioned. As pleasure can not be such a conception, what are the practical conceptions which reason

alone can give? The fundamental one is "I ought," the notion of obligation. From no empirical facts of life can this conception be derived; but when we seek to analyze it further, we see that it rises from the constant effort of the rational being for self-satisfaction. This satisfaction is not found because the true self is not realized, and, however vague the conception that gives rise to it, there supervenes the notion that it ought to be realized, the notion of obligation. Hence arise the conceptions of the laws of duty, or of various forms of what is conceived as the true self, which are the conceptions or laws determining the will.

But shall we say that these conceptions of self, or of the laws of duty, must be purely a priori, conceptions of pure reason alone? Kant sometimes uses language which would lead us to think this is his meaning. But he himself would be the first to point out that such conceptions are empty, and hence meaningless, and can not affect the will. We have already seen that it is only through the moral development of the individual and of the race, as brought about by experience, that moral ideals can take definite form. How, then, from a moral point of view, can we distinguish conceptions of pleasure from those of pure reason? Kant answers that from the former we should have 'the laws of a natural system to which the *will is subject*,' (Ab. p. 188.) because 'the objects [of the inclinations] must be the causes of the ideas which determine the will.' But from the latter we should have 'the laws of a natural system *subject to a will*,' because 'the will is the cause of the objects.' It is the old distinction, in other words, between the desirableness of objects derived from a true conception of self which must be universal in its nature, and that derived from their adaptation to mere

gratifications. From universal ends alone can the universal moral law be derived.

We now come to the distinctive question of this section. Why ought man to submit or subject himself to the moral law? The answer is not far to seek. As reason makes man what he is, the law of reason is the law of his own nature. He can be what in essence he is only by obeying its law. As reason is also the source of desire, the obligation to follow the law of reason is also the obligation to which desire impels, the obligation for man simply to be himself. Man must obey the moral law simply because it is the true law of his being, and through it alone can he fully realize himself. Hence is the law a true categorical imperative, and its command is absolute.

Thus from the very nature of the moral law Kant has derived the absolute necessity of moral obligation, and it has even been objected that 'his system of morals is too lofty and stern.' But we see that the sternness is in the moral law itself. With it there can be no compromise; from its commands there can be no exception, and in so emphatically insisting upon this Kant did incalculable service for ethical science. The repugnance to his system undoubtedly arose from the fact that many of his statements were misunderstood, because in form not in harmony with his system as a whole. But Kant himself undoubtedly tended to push his principles to an unwarrantable extreme. His own interpretation, and to some extent the principles themselves, were a reaction against the weak and sentimental morality of his day, which, as Hegel says, 'destitute of stability and consistency,' "left the door open for every whim and caprice." A less rigorous conception of duty would have failed of much of the wholesome result which Kant achieved.

We are now prepared to give in full the answer to the question with which we started: 'How can the will be the end of its own action?' The moral law is nothing more than the command to the rational being to realize his true nature. This nature is the rational self. It is realized in some form through the acts of will that issue from it. It is these acts in fact, but on their inner side. It consists in the disposition by which the will is determined. Each act of will is what it is through the disposition from which it arises; but the disposition is made what it is through the acts in which it issues. The will, which is identical with the self, realizes itself in its own actions, but it realizes itself in these acts on their inner side, as acts of will, not in the outward results which they may bring about. Any particular act of will may result outwardly in the achievement of some end, or it may not, but on its inner side it must result in the realization of some particular form of will or of self. Its character depends upon the conception of self in which satisfaction was sought, but this conception again is of an inner self, not of outward manifestation, and its character lies in the disposition which it both is, and which gives it form. Thus the will realizes its true self, or becomes the good will, in following the true law of reason. This law is the moral law and is itself derived from the conception of the good will as the universally legislative will. The "law which according to Kant regulates the good will derives its authority from the conception of a good will as an unconditionally good object." (Green. Phil. Works. ii. p. 10.)

THE DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM.

Underlying all the principles of ethics which Kant has deduced is one necessary conception without which they are meaningless, viz: the Notion of Freedom. Freedom in its primary signification refers to the relations of men with each other. Man is free to will or to do only when he can not be constrained by another. Its first meaning then when applied to man as self-related must be a similar one. It must mean that man has the power to do, the power to will, without reference to the nature of the objects to which his will is directed. To will at all is thus so far to be free; freedom of the will is a useless pleonasm. This sense of freedom, though no where stated, underlies the whole discussion of Kant. The rational being can be determined by inclination or by concepts of reason; 'the objective necessity of the latter is only contingent as a subjective principle of action;' and in any event the subject chooses the form of self in which satisfaction is to be sought.

But Kant saw that when man seeks his satisfaction in certain objects, as in sensual gratification, he is seeking it where it can not be found. He also saw that such gratification must always result in what St. Paul calls 'the bondage of the flesh.' For the body which he thus seeks to gratify is a body of 'warring members,' and of members warring with the spirit. It 'is no sooner sated than again wanting,' and can never be satisfied; much less can the true spirit be thus satisfied. Hence there must be a higher sense of freedom in which man will escape from this 'bondage' and from the ever increasing demands of the inclinations, and be truly master of himself. The realization of such freedom Kant called autonomy.

Freedom is in the first instance self-determination, and Kant tells us man surrenders this in yielding to the demands of the inclinations. Yet the inclinations are a part of the man, and it is difficult to see how in them man is not self-determined. But Kant explains that the inclinations belong to the sensibility. Each one in particular is but one term in a never-ending series; it depends on what has gone before; it has its determination in time past, so not in itself; is determined ab extra, not self-determined. Man then as sentient belongs to the sensible world, a world of mere phenomena, in which the law of determination ab extra, natural causation, has absolute sway. As sentient then he can not be self-determined.

Before examining this exposition let us see in what on the other hand true freedom consists. The phenomenal world is the world of mere appearances, not appearances of things as they really are, but of things as constituted by the understanding. Out of the manifold presented to it by the sensibility the understanding constructs for us that connected system we call nature, or the Cosmos. What things-in-themselves really are we do not and can not know, nor can we know the laws of the noumenal world. Though forced to posit it to explain the phenomenal, all we know about it is that the laws of the latter do not apply to it. So the law of natural causation, of determination ab extra as opposed to self-determination, does not apply to the noumenal world. Now reason can not belong to the phenomenal world, because for man at least it makes that world, and so as rational man must be a noumenon. So we have two points of view from which to regard man. On the outward side he is known or knowable, is one object among other objects, and belongs to the phenomenal world. On the inner side as knowing and

self-conscious, as conscious of himself as distinct from the separate activities by which he knows and is known, he belongs to the noumenal world. Outwardly again all his acts are known or knowable, are phenomena determined as other phenomena. But on the inner side, as the expression or realization of the conscious self, they are noumena and as such not known to the outer sense.

Now as noumenal, as self-conscious, man is necessarily determined in action to some conception of self which he seeks to realize, and hence he acts under the conception that he is free. By that very fact he is free, for action under such a conception is the realization of the self to which the action is determined. Thus man as rational is free, determined, not by the law of natural causation, but by the law of self-causation. This gives us the conception of freedom. For freedom is, in the first place, not determination ab extra. But this is a negative result, mere indeterminism, yet it leads at once to a positive one. Freedom is self-causation; but causality is an immutable law, and so freedom is the law of self-determination. The law of freedom we have already considered as the moral law, the law through which alone true self-realization is achieved, and so freedom as thus conceived becomes autonomy.

The contrast here drawn between man as determined by inclination and as determined by reason presents some peculiar difficulties. Autonomy includes all Kant's previous principles of morality, and so becomes the one true principle. Actions are moral only as springing from the autonomous will. But Kant himself admits that a pure example of such a will has probably never been met with, and teaches that for us perfect self-realization is impossible, even to all eternity. As he none the less teaches that

man is not determined merely by the inclinations, man must fall somewhere between this and pure autonomy. Two cases are then possible. Either man is determined as to part of his acts by pure reason, as to others by inclination, or as to one and the same act partly by inclination, partly by reason. (See Green. Phil. Works. ii p. 107.) The latter of these Kant himself rejects by regarding the 'causality of reason as complete within itself.' (Crit. Pure. Reas. Mül. Tr. p. 479.) The former is not in accord with his theory. We have, then, as posited by Kant, the absolute opposition between inclination and autonomy, with nothing that can come between, and so the Good Will becomes absolutely unrealizable. Moreover, morality seems to be placed in such absolute opposition to inclination that, though Kant himself does not thus interpret it, there are at least some grounds for an ascetic interpretation of his doctrine.

The difficulty here emerging results from what we have already pointed out to be the unreal opposition between inclination and reason. The duality of human nature can never be maintained as Kant at times seemed to maintain it. Sense without reason, or reason without sense, is an unmeaning abstraction, whether in the realm of knowledge or of morals. Mere inclination is as impossible in the latter as is mere sensation in the former. In truth Kant's greatest achievement was the demonstration of this very fact; but what in the field of knowledge he so clearly demonstrated, he seems to have forgotten in the field of morals. The distinction between man as a sensible and man as an intelligible being, though legitimate and necessary when properly understood, becomes positively misleading when grasped as an absolute contradiction. In discussing the phenomenon and thing-in-itself Kant

seems both to have made and overcome this distinction. (See Kuno Fischer. Jour. Spec. Phil. April. 1886.) For he seems to have regarded the latter as Will, and to have considered it to be always present in the former, and in some sense its cause or determination. Had he consistently applied this conclusion in his ethics, the above opposition could not have resulted, and we can indeed learn all that we need to overcome it from Kant himself.

In the first Critique Kant regards the sensibility as the receptive faculty, and if this means anything at all, it must be the receptivity of reason, and human reason at least is constituted what it is by this fact. But, on the other hand, from this same relation sensibility acquires its own peculiar character. It is by no means what it would be as the sensibility of a non-rational being. Thus of human sensibility and reason we may say that each is what it is in and through the other. Apart from sensibility there may be reason, but it is not human reason. Apart from reason there may be sensibility, but it is not human sensibility. The human being is not the mere combination of these two factors, as factors which may, and in one case do, have a separate existence. The factors themselves are what they are only in their union, and apart each is an unmeaning abstraction. From the side of reason Kant himself has insisted most emphatically upon this very point. But on the other side he does not seem to have appreciated its full meaning, but seems to have thought that human sensibility, at least from an ethical point of view, is identical with that of non-rational animals.

The opposition then between inclination and reason, as constituting the distinction between the autonomous and heteronomous will, we must now abandon. Man is never purely autonomous in the sense of purely independent of the inclinations, nor wholly heteronomous in the sense of wholly subject to the inclinations. He is always deter-

mined by desire, and desire is what it is only through inclination and reason. So we can not say that he is ever purely phenomenal nor ever purely noumenal. As the distinction thus breaks down, the question that remains is whether for moral purposes there can be such a distinction as that between the autonomous and heteronomous will.

We have seen that Desire arose from the effort for self-satisfaction; but it is that same effort, or the feeling that prompts to it, that makes morality possible or conceivable. Now when the will is determined by reason to a conception of self in which true satisfaction can not be found, from the very nature of its effort a constant unrest must result which may be truly likened to a bondage. "The feeling of oppression which always goes along with the consciousness of unfulfilled possibilities, will always give meaning to the representation of the effort after any kind of self-improvement as a demand for 'freedom'" (Green. Phil. Works. ii. p. 329.), and a sense of freedom must always accompany the realization of such improvement. If this true freedom we designate as Autonomy, Heteronomy may well be used to designate the failure of its achievement. Such heteronomy, too, will always have additional meaning in connection with mere inclination, and autonomy will ultimately be seen to consist in conceiving the true good as an end in which such inclination has not entered. The absolute opposition then disappears. The will can be regarded both as autonomous and heteronomous; heteronomous in the sense that the true self has not been perfectly realized, autonomous so far as it has been realized and true freedom achieved. From this relation true moral progress is possible, progress in bringing the inclinations in harmony with the higher conceptions of reason, in developing that disposition which can find no pleasure in the gratification of inclinations that in any way hinder the realization of the true self.

BUTLER.

I.

BUTLER'S CONCEPTION OF VIRTUE.

"There are," says Butler, "two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things; in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature." Butler has the wisdom to choose mainly the latter method, and his first inquiry is into the nature of man. Though man must in some sense be included in the nature of things, yet what the nature of things is we know only through the interpretation of our own nature, and it is through the consideration of this alone that ethics can hope to make progress. But too narrow a view of human nature would lead to one-sided results, for in its consideration we find ourselves constantly led outward, not merely to the relations of men with each other, but to those

very 'relations of things' among which man is, to those universal relations in which he must seek to find himself. This Butler saw, and he does not confine himself too closely to the method chosen, but with much true insight seeks through the knowledge of human nature the universal relations of the human being.

What then is the nature of man? If we analyze his nature we find various inclinations, passions and desires, much like those the brutes have, and we also find reflection or understanding, by which he distinguishes himself from the brutes. But we must not think that human nature is a mere aggregate of such parts. The nature of man "is one whole made up of several parts; but yet the several parts considered as one whole do not complete the idea unless in the notion of a whole you include the relations and respects which these parts have to each other." (Preface to Sermons, p. viii.) The parts have a certain necessary relation, and even with the same parts in different relation, we should not have human nature at all. Human nature is thus a system which Butler illustrates by means of a watch, and as every such system has some end or purpose outside of it to which it is adapted, just as the nature or the constitution of a watch is adapted to measure time, so human nature has its purpose and is especially adapted to virtue. Vice then is what is contrary to this nature, and the moral law is our natural law. It is a moral law because we are 'agents' and our constitution has been placed in our own keeping.

To be moral then is to be natural; but does not this open the door to all sorts of indulgence? Are not all our appetites and passions natural? legitimate and necessary parts of our nature? Is not their indulgence natural? Are we not following laws of our nature to whatever extent

we indulge them? Such questions are founded on a misapprehension of what is meant by nature. The law of nature is the law of the whole, not of any particular part. The law of every passion is to seek its own end, and in that end its own gratification. But to substitute this law for the law of nature would be to substitute a law of a part for the law of the whole, and such a course must be contrary to the economy of the whole. Yet on the other hand the conception of the nature of man as a whole of related parts gives to each part its legitimate place and function. So conduct accordant with the law of man's nature must have regard in due proportion to each of the elements of his economy, and while allowing to each its proper satisfaction, must yet forbid to any the undue usurpation of power.

In the first part of the "Grundlegung" Kant makes this use of the argument of teleology. "In the physical constitution of an organized being, we assume it as a fundamental principle that no organ for any purpose will be found in it but what is also the fittest and best adapted for that purpose." (Ab. p. 13 and 23, etc.) Now if reason were given to a being for its conservation, its welfare or happiness, nature would have hit upon a very bad arrangement, as instinct would have been a much better and safer guide for that purpose. So Kant argues that reason was given for some nobler purpose than mere happiness, that it was in fact intended for a moral faculty, that its real purpose is to produce the Good Will. So Butler similarly argues that man is especially a moral being. "If the real nature of any creature," he says, "leads him and is adapted to such and such purposes only, or more than to any other; this is reason to believe that the author of that nature intended it for those purposes," "and the more

complex any constitution is and the greater variety of parts there are which thus tend to some one end, the stronger is the proof that such end was designed." (Ser. ii. p. 37.) 'So the inward frame of man may be considered as a guide in morals,' and 'we may attempt to show men what course of life and behavior their real nature would lead them to,' 'and we may argue from our inward feelings to life and conduct as well as from external sense to absolute speculative truth.'

So Butler proceeds to a more special inquiry into the 'inward frame' of man, and its resulting good. First we find that man is an individual composed of many members, and as so composed he is especially adapted to happiness, and considers it his chiefest good, and as his nature as a whole is composed of various 'members,' this good must consist in the good of these 'members,' and happiness must consist in the gratification of the various appetites, passions, affections, which are the 'members.' The principle by which man seeks his own good or happiness is self-love. But on the other hand man is not a mere isolated individual, for he stands in intimate relations with other men, and "there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature that we were made for society, and to do good to our fellow-creatures; as that we were intended to take care of our own life and health and private good." (Ser. i. p. 27.) "We are every one members one of another," and Benevolence, by which we seek the good of others and of the whole of society, is just as much an inherent principle of our nature as is self-love.

We must not mistake the meaning of the terms self-love and benevolence as used by Butler. We are apt to regard both as particular affections among other particular affections. We identify self-love with vicious self-seeking

and think benevolence as much a weakness as a virtue. But both self-love and benevolence are here used to designate, not particular affections, but general principles of our nature. It is the nature of particular affections to rest in particular objects as their end, but neither self-love nor benevolence has any particular object to which it compels us. We may hate ourselves and others, and yet feel the pain of hunger and shame. Hunger seeks its gratification in food, desire of esteem in approbation, but neither is self-love or benevolence, though the one tends to the good of the individual and the other of society. 'Men have various appetites, passions, and particular affections, quite distinct both from self-love and benevolence. Some of them seem most immediately to respect others or tend to public good; others most immediately respect self, or tend to private good. As the former are not benevolence so the latter are not self-love.' (Ser. i. p. 30.)

By this conception of self-love and benevolence Butler overcomes a serious difficulty. For self-love as mere self-seeking would always stand in direct opposition to benevolence as a mere generous affection. One would be purely 'egoistic' and the other equally 'altruistic,' and a conflict or 'trial' would result which could only be settled by a 'compromise.' The end to which self-love tends is the good of the whole man and is exactly the same as that to which benevolence tends. For the greatest good of the individual is the greatest good of all, and it is not by repressing self-love that we follow the dictates of benevolence, nor is benevolence forgotten in seeking the true good of the self. There is no 'conflict,' no 'trial' and no 'compromise.' "They are so perfectly coincident that the greatest satisfactions to ourselves depend upon our having benevolence in due degree, and that self-love is one chief

necessity of our right behavior towards society." "We can not promote the one without the other." (Ser. i. p. 28.) Butler needed to go but little farther here and say that either term is meaningless except as implying the other. True self-love always looks to others, and true benevolence always looks to self. In fact there is but one principle, as Butler imperfectly saw. Regard for others must form one of the necessary elements of our nature. Were we to throw it away and live for ourselves alone, we should lose all the common enjoyments of life; nor should we thus get rid of restraint. We can gain no end except by one course of action, by submitting to restraints that must often prove painful. It may often cost more pain to gratify some passion than would have been necessary to conquer it. Self-love must not only have the same end as benevolence, but it must include benevolence, just as we might say benevolence must include self-love, and we have but the one general principle of our nature which must have due regard for the good of all.

But there is another general principle of our nature of even greater importance. "We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections, as respecting such objects and in such degrees; and of the several actions consequent thereupon. In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is quite indifferent." (Ser. i. p. 31.) From the action of this principle certain affections are greatly strengthened or even elevated into permanent principles of action. We approve every good action that we do, and we also approve good actions in others though we may not do them. This principle is conscience, the presence and influ-

ence of which is indisputable. Another term Butler used for this principle is 'reflection,' which indicates more specifically what he conceived to be its nature. "The nature of man is adapted to some course of action or other" he tells us. (Ser. iii. p. 52.) "Upon comparing some actions with this nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: from comparison of other actions with the same nature, there arises to our view some unsuitableness or disproportion." It is by reflection that we determine what is suitable or unsuitable, proportionate or disproportionate, and such reflection is conscience. Conscience is thus merely reason in the specific function of determining the relation of our various actions to our constitution or nature. To this we might add moral feeling, or make conscience wholly this feeling. But conscience according to Butler is only reflection or reason, it is not the moral sense and does not belong to the sensibility at all.*

From this general survey we have human nature as composed of various particular appetites and passions and the general principles of self-love and conscience. This nature is constituted by these as independent elements taken in their proper relations. It is a system of such elements, and in his various sermons Butler endeavors to show what is the peculiar function of each principle and particular affection in the economy as a whole. Through his acute and interesting psychological analyses we do not need to follow him in detail, but need only some of the more general relations.

First then we need to note that certain principles are superior to others and should therefore in general control our actions. This does not mean that certain appetites

*In the Dissertation on the nature of virtue he inclines to the opinion however that moral feeling should be included.

and passions have greater strength, for though they do, they should not for that reason determine conduct. If, for example, a certain strong passion determines action in line of its excessive gratification, we have already seen that such action is against the economy of the whole. But if such a passion, however strong, is brought into conflict with cool self-love, no one can doubt which ought to prevail. Any particular passion can be violated without contradicting our nature. But self-love, from its very nature, can not. The difference between self-love and any particular passion is not a difference of strength or degree, but one of kind. The former should prevail over the latter no matter what their relative strength. But if we can say this much of self-love, what can we say of the highest principle of our nature, the 'principle by which we survey and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, actions,' viz: 'Conscience.' From its very nature this must be superior to all others. 'We can not form the notion of conscience without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency.' 'From our very economy and constitution its function is to guide and to govern,' 'to direct and regulate all under principles and passions and motives of action.' Conscience, as reflection, prescribes the law to the whole man, or in Kant's phrase, 'confronts the man with the law of duty.'

The view of human nature thus reached Butler likens to a civil constitution, uniting various subordinations under one supreme authority. Leave out the various subordinations, the union or the supreme authority, and we have no civil constitution at all. 'So reason, and the several appetites and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength is not the notion or idea of human nature.' That nature consists of the various other propensions and

principles in their subordination to the one superior principle of reason or conscience. Hence we may conclude that man is not "to act at random and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humor, willfulness, happen to carry him, which is the condition the brutes are in: but that from his *make*, *constitution*, or *nature*. he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within: what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it." So Butler says with Kant, every plain honest man will determine with truth what is right or wrong.

One other question remains. What is our obligation to obey this law? Butler answers, "Your obligation to obey this law is its being the law of your nature." (Ser. iii. p. 49.) Conscience has authority because it is the natural guide, the guide assigned to us by the Author of our nature. But Butler supplements this answer with another, both in his sermons and more especially in the first part of the Analogy. Life, as he conceives it, is a state of discipline, of moral probation. Presiding over us, like a ruler over his people, is God, who wisely administers everything for the good of his subjects. His ways are for us inscrutable, but from our own make and the fact that he is infinitely good and just, we may rest assured that He will direct all so that we shall ultimately realize the greatest possible happiness. While we can not say just what will lead to our happiness here, He has given us a sure guide, for conscience is his 'voice within us.' Moreover His government is a system of rewards and punishments, and so we must obey the law, not simply because he has implanted it in us and it is the law of our nature, but also because he will reward or punish us according to our obedience or disobedience. He has so

arranged things that through obedience alone can we reach happiness, and "Duty and interest are perfectly coincident: for the most part in this world and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things." (Ser. iii. p. 63.) The 'Deus ex Machina' becomes the fundamental principle of Butler's ethics.

II.

BUTLER AND KANT.

We have here then a general view of Butler's concep-ception of virtue, and at first, both in method and spirit, he seems to be the opposite of Kant. For Kant has said the moral law can not be derived from the study of the particular nature of man; it must he universal and apply to man only because he is rational. But Butler starts from man's nature, inquires what in particular that nature is, and the moral law is the law of his own proper nature. But this is only a seeming opposition, for Kant was working upon the same principle as Butler. He conceived the real nature of man as his rational nature, and so universal, and hence its true law must be the universal law of reason. Each, in other words, regards the moral law as the natural law, though Kant would have rejected this expression as implying physical necessity. So when it is asked why man should obey the law, both Kant and Butler return the same answer. He must obey the law because it is the true law of his nature, the law of his real being, and obligation has for both the same source.

Moreover Butler also approximates to Kant's conception that the law must be universal. He sees that man is one member in a whole of society, and his actions must have due regard to others as well as to self, just as Kant enjoins that man must always have equal regard for human nature, whether in his own person or that of another. Moreover for Butler this regard for others belongs to the very nature of man and so to the law derived from that nature. Allowing indeed for the concreteness of Butler's method and the abstraction of Kant, it is at first difficult to see wherein the conclusion of the former as to the nature of the moral law differs from that of the latter. The universal law can, after all, be only that law of conduct that has due regard for self and all other rational beings.

Reason or conscience again is regarded by both Kant and Butler as the highest principle in man's nature. We remember that Kant assigned to reason supreme authority in all conduct; it dictates the law to the rest of man's nature; its command is absolute; it gives us the categorical imperative. So for Butler conscience as reflection or reason, contemplating man's nature and deducing therefrom its proper law, has the same absolute authority. 'Had it power as it has right it would rule the world.' What is more his conception of conscience is practically identical with that of Kant. Conscience is one of the natural principles of our nature, and should guide in conduct because it is the natural guide, he tells us, just as Kant says that conscience is original and there can be no duty to produce one. So, too, Kant defines conscience as '*man's practical reason*, which in all cases holds before him his law of duty' (Meth. of Ethics, "Elements of Doc. of Virtue," xii. B; Semple Tr. p. 217.), a definition exactly fitting

Butler's description. The resemblance here is even more profound. We remember that Kant defines duty as the necessity of acting from respect for the law of reason. But, as we also saw, the law of reason is the law of the true self, and respect for this law can only mean respect for the self to which the law commands. So 'respect for the law' corresponds to Butler's self-love. Thus for both Kant and Butler reason and self-love are the two principles without which morality is inconceivable, and Butler is constantly arguing, what results from the very nature of Kant's conception, that conscience and self-love must always ultimately have one and the same end.

Kant in his 'Metaphysic of Ethics' treats of the duties owed by man to himself and of the duties owed to others, a division corresponding to Butler's self-love and benevolence, as the general principles given in his earlier sermons. The latter showed also that true self-love and true benevolence were really one, and Kant derived the morality of all actions from the fact that they are done from respect for the law of the true self. Thus for both self-love and benevolence were run up into one higher principle, in which they are included, which must always be the true spring of action, and which we may call love or respect for self.

In the Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue Butler makes even more striking approaches to Kant's conclusion. He carefully distinguishes between 'actions' and 'events,' and the former alone are subjects of moral judgment. "Acting conduct, behavior, abstracted from all regard to what is in fact and event the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of moral discernment." (Diss. II. (*First*) p. 205.) 'Will and design are the object and only object

of the approving faculty,' and constitute the very nature of action. Here we are reminded at once of Kant's discussion of the 'Good Will,' and of his second principle of duty, and, just as Kant says, that man blames himself only because he attributes actions to himself, Butler adds 'We never in a moral way applaud or blame either ourselves or others for what we enjoy or what we suffer, but only for what we do, or would have done, had it been in our power.'

Finally we remember that Kant everywhere argues that happiness can not be the aim of conduct that is moral. He says that such conduct can not result from self-love on the one hand, and on the other that it can not be the result of a desire for universal happiness. As to self-love we shall see later, but why can not general happiness be made the end for moral action? Kant replies that we can not tell what the result of actions will be. From such an end morality would be reduced to a mere system of reckoning as to what actions would result in most pleasure; but our data are absolutely insufficient to determine this result, and no line of action could be determined; much less could we derive any universal rule or law. Again, such an end could not be the source of the necessary authority to give us the categorical imperative. So Butler argues that virtue can not consist in aiming to promote the happiness of mankind in the present state because we can not tell what actions will most promote happiness. So also he says with Kant, the notion of ill-desert which accompanies our notions of vicious actions, can not arise from the mere contemplation of actions with regard to some external result, but must arise from the very constitution of our nature. Both Kant and Butler saw that the requirements for happiness can not always be understood and can not

always be fulfilled, but the commands of duty all can understand and obey. (Ab. p. 28.)

But while there is this external resemblance in the two systems of ethics, and this general approximation in the conclusions reached, there is in reality a profound and fundamental difference, which gives to the respective conclusions absolutely different meanings and values. As in both cases the moral law was conceived as the law of man's nature, this difference must arise from the different conceptions of human nature, and this difference we now need to examine.

We have already seen the meaning of Kant's conception of man as distinctively rational. Kant rightly understood and defined the nature of reason as the self-conscious principle in man, and it was from this conception that he derived all his great moral principles. To reason as this self-conscious principle he expressly attributes what Hegel calls 'positive infinity,' and it is from this that it gives to man his especial character as a moral being. Moreover, he clearly saw that reason as self-conscious must affect the whole nature of man, and constitute it what it is. In spite of the opposition of sensibility and reason, he himself sufficiently demonstrated that human nature is not dualistic, that we can not speak of man as mere sensibility and mere reason, but that (though he seems at times to have forgotten this conclusion) we must regard him, according to our point of view, as rational sensibility or sensible reason.

Thus Kant gave to human nature an essential unity, a unity constituted by reason itself. But we have already found from our examination of Butler's conception, that reason though the highest, is only one among the several factors in its constitution. He regards human nature as a whole

composed of these factors, and is careful to tell us it is not a mere aggregate. But their union as he conceives it is nevertheless not truly organic. For while the constitution of man subsists in the relation of the parts, this relation when defined is the mere subordination of certain factors to certain higher ones. Butler's view is purely analytic; each part is not made what it specifically is through the relation. The union of parts is a mere federation in which the good of the whole is to be consulted only in order that the good of each may be properly conserved. Even his illustration by means of a civil constitution does not remove this criticism, for the state itself is not more organically conceived, and so human nature from his conception has no real unity. There is no real whole, no true self, but a combination in various relations and proportions, of the individual elements of reason, self-love, and the various propensions. So far then is Butler from conceiving reason as giving distinctive character to man and constituting his real unity, that he derives his notion of reason itself, together with that of self-love and happiness, from his analytic conception of human nature.

As a first result of such a conception of human nature, Butler does not seem to have departed very far from Kant. For we have seen that the latter regarded the sensibility as purely phenomenal, and so for him the various appetites, passions, and affections would stand in much the same relation to the whole of human nature as for Butler. In other words their nature would not be essentially different from that of corresponding propensions of other animals. We now know, however, that, had Kant been consistent with his own conceptions, the inclinations themselves would have derived their essential nature from the real unity of man's nature, while Butler's analytic view

must leave them unaffected by their relation to other principles. But when we come to the conception of reason, the real difference begins to manifest itself. By Butler reason, as conscience, was looked at from the purely individual side. Conscience is reflection, it looks within, not upon itself, but upon the whole nature of man, a whole with many other factors besides reason; it seeks from knowledge of the parts and their relation to the economy of the whole, the law of the whole, and in its search it is guided by the principle of self-love, the principle that looks to the highest good of the individual. It is thus that reason can designate the law of human nature, is the natural guide and has absolute authority. The rational being is for Butler a mere individual, and reason, though distinguishing him from the brutes, is individual reason, reflection. It is not self-conscious. It does not prescribe to man its own pure law. What it does prescribe is a law derived from the consideration of a nature in which it is only a factor, and the other factors of which are not essentially modified by their relation to it; what it does prescribe is in reality the law of sensible nature.

This may at first seem an unjust view of Butler's conception. He himself tells us that morality arises from the relations of men with each other, and treats conscience and self-love as if they were in a measure opposed. Moreover he tells us that if we look at man from the side of self-love alone, or from the side of benevolence alone, we shall get a one-sided view. (Sermon I, last paragraph of page 36.) If a man acts on either principle alone he can not fulfill his whole nature, and he adds that "men are as unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most part are equally so by the same actions." All this would seem to imply that man stands in a really organic relation

to other men, that his true self is universal, and he must so act as to realize this self. But this is not Butler's conception. For he tells us almost in the same breath that man from his various propensions is adapted to happiness; it is happiness he must seek, and he is unjust to himself only when he acts against this happiness. That conscience will lead to the greatest happiness he is sure, only because it was implanted for that very purpose. Thus we come back to the purely individualistic view of human nature.

We have already indicated that Kant defines conscience as individual reason, but he carefully distinguishes between this and universal reason, which human reason also essentially is. At this point then, which indeed marks the crowning achievement of Kantian ethics, Kant shows his immeasurable superiority to Butler. For while reason is truly individual, as Butler conceived it, it is just as truly universal, and as universal, is self-conscious, and makes man a moral being. But this point has already been sufficiently dwelt upon and we pass to another.

From his failure to grasp the essential nature of human reason, and so the essential unity of human nature, Butler failed to find any true end for moral conduct. We have seen that Kant found this end in the development of the Good Will, the realization of the true self. But as for Butler there was no essential unity, there could be no true self to realize, and he was forced to look elsewhere for a reason for right action. So Butler conceived that man must be destined for happiness. Into the nature of his conception of happiness we shall inquire more fully later. It is sufficient for the present to state that happiness for Butler consisted in the gratification of the inclinations, and from this conception we can determine the fuuction of reason as a moral faculty. The nature of any inclination is

to seek it send immediately, without reference to the means, and if the inclinations are permitted to work blindly, it is manifest that their ends can often be attained only with manifest injury to the individual as a whole (an injury consisting in depriving him of higher gratifications) or with injury to other individuals. Conscience or reflection in such cases disapproves. Thus while conscience is an inward rule of action, and the man is in this sense a law unto himself, and while furthermore we can, from the individual's point of view, only judge of the action from the motive by which it was actuated, that is, by its degree of conformity to the law of conscience, yet the real standard of right and wrong is an external one. The morality is not determined by the conception of self by which reason determined the action, but by the external result which the action is to produce. As conscience is always looking to external results we see why Butler can oppose it to self-love. This opposition, if properly conceived, is an entirely just and necessary one. If for Conscience we put Universal Reason and by self-love we mean love of the true self (though Kant's term 'respect' is better) these two principles must be kept distinct, and must yet both be present in every moral act. But from the side of conscience it is precisely here that Butler fails, and so fails to account for moral worth. Conscience is not universal reason; its only function is 'to direct and regulate all under principles, passions and motives of action.' Thus reason does not constitute motives what they are, and can only direct and regulate them with reference to some standard external to itself. While Butler here avoids the Kantian tendency to asceticism, he also fails to posit the necessary distinction between sense and reason, fails to see that reason alone can give actions moral worth.

We have now seen that Butler's conscience fails to meet the full requirements of reason as a practical faculty. We now need to see how far his principle of self-love can be regarded as a truly moral principle. Kant rejected self-love in name as an ethical principle, but substituted a similar principle under a different name. This other principle Kant designated in various ways, which also serve as its sufficient description. Thus he speaks of it as 'respect for the law,' which he says amounts to genuine pleasure in contemplating the law; as 'reason which is itself a higher desire to which lower desires are subordinate;' or as the 'respect-inspiring idea of personality, which sets before our eyes the sublimity of our own nature.' (Ab. p. 258.) Such a principle we may call 'love,' or better, 'respect for the true self' and we see from his description that Kant seeks carefully to discriminate it from the other principle called self-love, whose only end is selfish gratification in whatever way obtained, or which looks only to the greatest possible gratification of the inclinations. Now Kant has sufficiently proved that this latter principle can have no place in morality, and we need not go into this proof because it necessarily results from his distinction between sense and reason. In judging of Butler's principle therefore we only need to know under which head it falls.

Now from Butler's statement of his conception of human nature as a whole, this whole would seem to be the self, and self-love would thus be determined as Kant's true principle, and in this view we are strengthened by the care he has taken to distinguish it from all subordinate propensions. But when he comes more especially to treat of self-love, we find this is not Butler's conception at all. For he tells us, "every man hath a general desire for

his own happiness" (Ser. xi. p. 126.), and this desire 'is self-love.' This would seem to exclude self-love as a moral principle, yet if happiness is conceived as true self-satisfaction, it might yet be retained. At first again Butler's general view of human nature would seem to imply some such notion of happiness, but Butler dispels all such anticipations by the definition of happiness which he himself has given. For happiness "is the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions and affections" (Ser. xi. p. 128.), and so "consists in the gratification of particular passions." (Ibid. p. 129.) This conception of happiness and the resulting conception of self-love are in fact, as is evident on more careful consideration, the only ones Butler's analytic view of human nature will allow. For from that view there is no true self whose satisfaction can give happiness, no true self to respect. All in fact there are to be gratified are the individual propensions, and the principle of self love itself, which is only a general desire and can find its gratification only in the gratification of particular passions. Now this conception of happiness is substantially the same as Kant's, and he has shown us that such happiness can not give a moral motive. And this principle of self-love, for Butler one of the chief moral principles, is the very principle which Kant rightly excludes.

It may be important to note that this conclusion breaks down the distinction which Butler, in his early sermons, drew between self-love and the particular affections. The difference which in sermon XI Butler takes pains to state, the only one again his conception of human nature will allow, is simply this: A particular affection rests in a certain object as its end. This object is never pleasure, as the pleasure results only because the object is suitable

to the affection, that is, is the end in which the affection rests. Self-love on the other hand has no particular object or end in which it rests, but as love of happiness which can consist only in particular gratifications, it becomes the love of the pleasure resulting from the gratification of the particular affections. The true following of such a self-love, then, must consist in such a course as will yield the greatest pleasure, and so will find its true end in the gratification of the strongest and most prevailing passions. The repression of such passions would thus be a violation of the principle of self-love, and so, according to Butler, of man's whole nature, a conclusion in direct opposition not only to what we have seen to be his own express assertions, but to the whole spirit of his own better teachings.

Closely connected with this point is another with regard to which Butler and Kant are in direct opposition. Kant says that in this world virtue and happiness have absolutely no connection, while Butler everywhere maintains that the man who does right will have reasonable assurance that happiness will thereby follow. Butler's argument would seem to be as follows: We have already seen that his ultimate standard of morality is an external one, viz: happiness, and indeed as the pupil of Shaftsbury he must consider the purpose of creation to be to increase the sum of happiness. This conception in substance was that God, out of the goodness of his heart, decided to increase the total sum of happiness, and for that purpose created all sentient beings. But Butler saw well enough that the whole sum of happiness can be increased only through the happiness of the individual, and hence the purpose of every one's life must be to obtain the greatest possible happiness for himself, and by so doing he will best serve the purposes of the Creator. Thus universal

happiness is ultimately reduced to the happiness of the individual, and actions outwardly correct must certainly lead to greater happiness because such happiness must be the only outward standard of correctness. Still Butler saw that this argument is not sufficient, because we can not tell what the outward result of actions will be. But he found an easy way out of the difficulty. Conscience within us is the voice of God; His aim is to increase the sum of happiness, and so if we follow His lead we may be sure of obtaining the greatest happiness.

Nothing can be more thorough than the refutation which Kant gives us of this whole conception. With him the only purpose of moral conduct is the realization of the Good Will. This is the supreme moral principle. The will, reason as practical or universal, is the true self of man, and the whole end or purpose of his life is the proper development of this self. To be moral he must always act from the conception of what this true self is, and this conception must give color, meaning and distinctive character to every motive, end or purpose of his action. Thus every such purpose or end or motive must always be judged from its inner side, from the side of the self, from that conception or ideal which reason seeks to make real, and the moral agent is moral only so far as he consciously seeks through his actions to realize the true ideal, which in Kant's phrase is to act from duty. Now we have already seen in our discussion of Kant, that so far as man seeks merely sensuous gratification, or seeks such gratification as Butler conceived to constitute happiness, he is not acting from the true ideal, is not acting from duty, which is respect for the law of that ideal, but is seeking merely individual gratification, and his actions are not moral. Thus Butler's conception of happiness is not the true

moral end and he has failed to find any true basis for morals. Moreover we can not say that happiness, as he and Kant both conceived it, will necessarily follow from moral action. For, as Kant everywhere argues, so far from resulting in greater gratification of the inclinations, moral conduct may have no such result, but may, and in fact will, involve the very opposite. There is no connection, as Kant rightly saw, between such happiness and morality. Yet it is curious to note that Kant in the end resorted to just Butler's expedient, and conceived that God, though in some other world than this, would attach happiness to the realization of the Good Will.*

But is there no significance in the fact that Butler everywhere, and Kant ultimately, seemed to feel that happiness must in some way be connected with virtue? Both were in fact right in believing that happiness and virtue must necessarily go together. The difficulty in their connection arose from an imperfect, or essentially untrue, conception of happiness. Yet Kant saw, what the conception of the moral law as the true law of man's nature necessarily implies, that with the realization of the good will as the true self there results a true self-satisfaction, such that 'even the epicurean might choose the moral life as the happiest.' Thus Kant practically overcame the difficulty, and had he realized the full meaning of his conclusion, he would have had no need of Divine assistance, which he elsewhere so strenuously rejected, to help out his ethical theory. Happiness as true self-satisfaction, as he in substance concluded, is the necessary result of true self-realization, and this is the only happiness about which we need to concern ourselves.

*See Kant's conception of the Summum Bonum. It is important to remember, however, that this connection of happiness with morality has no necessary connection with his ethical system as a whole, or with its fundamental principles.

So also we find, that Butler everywhere, but especially in his Analogy, is confusing with his explicit theory a deeper, truer conception of happiness than any that theory can account for. "Virtue as such," he tells us, "naturally procures considerable advantages to the virtuous, and vice as such naturally occasions great inconvenience to the vicious." 'Uneasiness' or 'remorse' follows from the contemplation of actions as 'wrong or unreasonable,' 'inward security and peace are the natural attendants of innocence and virtue.' But such uneasiness or remorse can be nothing but the constant longing of the moral being for a truer form of self than he has yet realized, or the natural disgust with self for the conscious violation of its true laws. So, on the other hand, 'inward security and peace' are only the self-satisfaction resulting from the truer self which in virtuous actions has been realized. Thus the Analogy, a later and riper book than the sermons, seems to imply a much truer conception of human nature, because it employs a truer conception of human happiness, a conception of happiness as the resulting satisfaction of conduct in harmony with the true law of self. Yet the use which Butler makes of this conception shows us that he has really made no great advance on his first position. For his 'uneasiness' and 'peace' are presented as the punishment or reward of vicious or virtuous conduct, as the means which the Moral Ruler of the Universe employs for the discipline of His wayward subjects. The same motive of action is still presented, to avoid wrong for the sake of escaping punishment, to do right for the sake of the reward or gratification to follow; so Kant's objections still apply, that such actions are not moral because not done from a true conception of self, that is, from duty, and the self-satisfaction which Butler attaches to them could not follow.

Finally we are now enabled to see one other important and fundamental difference between Kant's and Butler's conceptions of virtue. The purpose of the moral being is, according to Kant, the development of the good will, true self-realization, realization through a process. Thus there comes into view the notion of a perfect self to be realized, and of progress towards a final end of perfection. But this end is one which by man can never be reached, and if it could, he would cease to be moral, and become holy. Thus the notion of virtue is the notion of this progress toward perfection, of the constant, progressive effort by which man seeks his own complete self-realization in perfect holiness. But Butler's conception of virtue is, from his conception of human nature, necessarily static. Morality can consist only in maintaining the proper relations between the various parts of the whole system which man is. There being no true whole, no true self, there can be no progress towards self-realization. To maintain among all the various particular appetites, passions, affections, both those that look to self and those that look to others, that even balance which will result in the greatest sum of gratifications, must be the highest aim of the moral being.

The result of this study of Butler's ethics may seem for the most part only disappointing. For with the exception of the single point that the moral law must be the law of man's own nature, he seems scarcely to have reached any fundamental ethical principle. Yet the method we have applied to him has not been a true test of his real greatness. To understand him as he is, and to appreciate the real significance of what he has given us, we must study him in his relation to his times and to what immediately preceded him. This has been no part of our present purpose, yet even for what we have studied him there has been a finer, truer spirit in the man than the mere analysis of his writings has been able to reflect.

From an ethical point of view we may say of him what Matthew Arnold has said from a religious (and the two are not really separable), "The power of religion which actuated him was, as is the case with so many of us, better, profounder, and happier than the scheme of religion which he could draw out in his books" (Last Essays on Church and Religion, p. 147.), and in almost the last words he ever wrote, he has expressed what must be the only true spirit of every form of moral endeavor. "Hunger and thirst after righteousness till filled with it by being made partaker of the divine nature."

THESES.

I. 1. Kant rightly conceived the true essence of morality to lie in the universal and self-conscious nature of reason, and derived therefrom his principles of duty, his conception of Freedom, and of the Good or Autonomous Will. Virtue thus consists in the development of the Good Will and the moral law is the true law of man's nature.

2. His error consists in not overcoming the unnatural opposition between Sense and Reason; thus he failed to realize the full nature of human desire and of human motives, and rendered both Autonomy and Morality impossible of achievement.

II. Butler with Kant conceived the moral law as the true law of man's nature but he failed to grasp the full nature of reason as universal and self-conscious and so failed to find any true basis for morality.

III. From Butler's conception of human nature morality is essentially static and consists in maintaining the proper balance and subordination among the various propensions and principles.

With Kant Morality is essentially progressive and consists in the constantly fuller realization of man's true nature and his continual development toward human perfection or holiness.

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