

OUR MONISTIC ETHICS

you." From this highest precept of Christianity it follows of itself that we have just as sacred duties towards ourselves as we have towards our fellows. I have explained my conception of this principle in my *Monism*, and laid down three important theses. (1) Both these concurrent impulses are natural laws, of equal importance and necessity for the preservation of the family and the society; egoism secures the self-preservation of the individual, altruism that of the species which is made up of the chain of perishable individuals. (2) The social duties which are imposed by the social structure of the associated individuals, and by means of which it secures its preservation, are merely higher evolutionary stages of the social instincts, which we find in all higher social animals (as "habits which have become hereditary"). (3) In the case of civilized man all ethics, theoretical or practical, being "a science of rules," is connected with his view of the world at large, and consequently with his religion.

From the recognition of the fundamental principle of our morality we may immediately deduce its highest precept, that noble command, which is often called the Golden Rule of morals, or, briefly, the Golden Rule. Christ repeatedly expressed it in the simple phrase: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mark adds that "there is no greater commandment than this," and Matthew says: "In these two commandments is the whole law and the prophets." In this greatest and highest commandment our monistic ethics is completely at one with Christianity. We must, however, recall the historical fact that the formulation of this supreme command is not an original merit of Christ, as the majority of Christian theologians affirm and their uncritical supporters blindly accept. The Gold-