

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jtvi-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php)

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute,  
OR  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

---

EDITED BY THE HONORARY SECRETARY.

---

VOL. III.



LONDON:

(Published for the Institute)

ROBERT HARDWICKE, 192, PICCADILLY, W.

1869.

---

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

have nothing whatever to do with religious differences or ecclesiastical controversy. Depend upon it that every polemical word—polemical I mean as regards religion,—that is uttered here, will prove a word in our death-warrant. Those higher spiritual truths which all of us, in some form or other, hold by and maintain, must not be brought up in our dealings with those with whom we are doing battle. We *must* keep religious schools and parties entirely out of our papers and our discussions, or we shall not be able to do our work in defence of Religion.

It is our privilege to hope that hitherto we have been doing something: that our Transactions have proved at least that there is something to be said on our side, and stayed a few waverers from a hasty acceptance of sceptical crudities; and last, not least, that we have shown all schools of thought that the firmest attachment to Scripture is not incompatible with the truest liberality.

A vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the Chairman for his Address, and he was requested to allow it to be published in the Journal of Transactions.

In the absence of the Author, the Secretary read the following paper :—

*ON ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY, IN ITS RELATIONS TO SCIENCE AND REVELATION. By the Rev. W. W. ENGLISH, M.A., Vicar of Great Wollaston. Mem. Vict. Inst.*

THE different branches of science and philosophy are all worthy of the closest study. But there seems to be, at this present time, somewhat of pride or conceit connected with scientific utterances. The theologian may be, and no doubt often is, at fault; but so is the professor of science. There are difficulties in seeing a perfect harmony of truths, because an acquaintance with truth, in all its branches, if attainable at all by any one man, is attained by very few men. We accomplish nothing, however, by sneering at one department of study, as metaphysics or theology, and by deifying another, as physical science. The vice of the Positivist is one-sidedness; and the Physicist is sometimes seen to be no other than a one-sided enthusiast. Men either cannot take in all the truth, or they have not the opportunity, or inclination, to study it in all its branches. Hence the scientific man is just as one-sided as the theologian, whom he is so fond of lecturing

in this age. Dr. Tyndall should have known, when he finished up one of his scientific lectures with a few lines from Carlyle about

“thy small nine and thirty Articles,”

that no theory of the “Universe” was to be found in them at all, and that he was quoting a dream, when a fact would have been more congruous both to his profession and his subject.

“Qui, ne tuberibus propriis offendat amicum  
Postulat, ignoscat verrucis illius.”

I regret to see Dr. Tyndall's example copied by Professor Huxley, and still more recently by Dr. Hooker, because neither science nor philosophy can ever receive benefit by dragging the “clergy,” or “religion,” or both, into essays of a professedly scientific character. If any of the “clergy” are “noble savages” as regards their knowledge of what constitutes Dr. Tyndall's specialty, they may have reason to think that learning in another direction, if not good manners, is capable of extension outside their own profession. Some time since learning was confined almost exclusively to the cloister. Roger Bacon, in the thirteenth century, was celebrated for his knowledge of physics, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, and the people looked upon him as a magician. But we have reason to be thankful that learning is now no longer a monopoly, nor peculiar to any class, though it is true that a committee, not of the “clergy,” but of the House of Commons, voted George Stephenson a madman, not very long ago, for devising a scheme of locomotion. (I am amongst those who believe that Stephenson has got much of the credit due to Mr. W. James: see proof of this in the *Mechanics' Magazine* for Oct. 21, 1848.) But let us all remember that knowledge in one department can never entitle any man to say proud things about another. No lecture on science can ever end well with a sneer at theology. At least I may well be pardoned for thinking that a wider acquaintance with the two branches of knowledge would lead to a dignified treatment of both.

When I undertook to write a paper for this Society on a former occasion, I was so fully convinced that the study of mind was being overlooked by some engaged with the properties of matter, that I made it a chief point to bring into prominence some of the phenomena of the soul (I use mind in a generic, and soul in a specific or individual sense), as thought, feeling, will, &c. And I rejoice to see that Dr.

Tyndall has been speaking of these phenomena lately with a modest hesitation. He is reported to have said:—

“Associated with this wonderful mechanism of the animal body, we have phenomena no less certain than those of physics, between which and this mechanism we discover no necessary connection. A man for example can say *I feel, I think, I love*; but how does consciousness infuse itself into the problem? Science is mute . . . But if the materialist is confounded and science rendered dumb, who else is entitled to speak? To whom has the secret been revealed?”

I am ready to admit that the “problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern phase as it was in the prehistoric ages”; but I should draw from the above admissions, with respect to the impotency of science, an argument in favour of a closer attention being paid to the soul and its phenomena, and also for the necessity of a revelation. Is there nothing “revealed” in God’s written book that is a “secret” to science? However, I think, when the “materialist is confounded, and science rendered dumb,” no sane man will ever again “decline to pray” to God, when cholera smites down by his side those whom he holds to be nearest and dearest. *Why* is the “connection” between body and soul severed by pain in so short a time, if that connection is not “necessary” in the eyes of science? Is “prayer” here, after all, suited for the philosopher as well as everybody else? I feel that I ought to apologise for beginning my subject by this digression; but so much has been said of late about the “clergy” and “theology,” that I am beginning to tremble for “science;” for it would be nothing short of a disaster if the British Association should take the place of a Church Congress or Synod.

#### ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY, ITS RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS.

I will here draw attention to the *combination of different facts or phenomena*—the *combination of laws*—and some inferences pointing to a universal philosophy and the doctrine of one Supreme Mind and Intelligence.

What is ethical cannot be separated from what is physical and theological, very frequently. There is a brotherhood of truths, and they combine and interlace in such wonderful order that it is often difficult to separate or distinguish between them. Mind is connected with matter, and both have

to do with morals. Nature has many sides, and truth many relations. Our present danger lies chiefly in the tendency to obliterate some of these sides, to overlook some of these relations. This is the vice of the Positivist. We are told by him that every branch of knowledge leads the inquirer through three stages; that the mind, on seeing phenomena, first desires to know the *causes* at work producing such phenomena, then leaving causes, it seeks after *abstract forces*, and lastly, confines itself to *laws*,—"the God of this world, which blinds the minds of them that believe not." The process is described as first theological or supernatural, then metaphysical, and then scientific. Supernatural agency gives place to abstract forces, and abstract forces in turn give place to the laws of phenomena. The scientific or positive stage is final and exhaustive, it swallows up all the rest. So that what is theological or metaphysical passes into imagination, and the only thing that remains for certain, is science—a conclusion opposed to facts of both a subjective and objective character. The human soul has its presentative faculties, by means of which thought becomes possible. The external senses present phenomena of a material kind, upon which physical science is built. The psychological facts of human consciousness present matter out of which metaphysical philosophy is formed. And the internal moral sense presents the facts of approbation and disapprobation, which arise on seeing the actions of rational and voluntary agents, supplying us with a foundation for ethical philosophy. Neither science nor philosophy is possible apart from facts or special faculties. The senses take cognizance of material phenomena—the intellect of causes or abstract forces—and the moral sense of qualities, feelings, purpose, &c. There are, therefore, different stages of thought through which we pass in pursuing the objects of knowledge, and the soul has its different faculties answering to the different classes of truth presented, according as that truth is of a physical, metaphysical, or moral kind. The soul of man stands in a pre-established relation to those external sources of excitement which call up thought and emotion.

There is then room for distinction and discrimination, whether we look at the nature of man or the nature of things—whether we analyze the subjective feelings and impressions in the human soul, or the objective nature of the truths sought. Interaction and relation, indeed, necessitate the special consideration of these presentative faculties which act, and of those truths which are related to one another; for we can only arrive at a correct general view through a knowledge of particulars. Generalization is possible only through abstraction. But,

while physical, metaphysical, and moral philosophy must first be studied as separate and distinct, yet when we come to the events of daily life, we find facts belonging to all these classes of truth, not seldom in close combination—so close, indeed, that it is impossible to view these facts aright from either a physical, metaphysical, or moral point alone. To take a case for illustration, one which may afford scope for a few passing remarks, and, as having already engaged our attention in this *Institute*, as well as the pen of Dr. Tyndall in the *Fortnightly Review*,—I mean the case or the fact of miracles. To have restored to him the power of vision, the blind man must “receive his sight,” which is so far physical and phenomenal. But the observer of this phenomenon cannot rest satisfied with seeing it; his mind rises by its own native force and energy to the cause or causes which gave sight where before it was not. Here the observer passes from what is physical to what is metaphysical—his mind no longer dwells upon what is visible and tangible, but is seeking after some cause or unseen force. “The scientific mind” (says Dr. Tyndall—though I really do not know that this principle of curiosity is confined to ‘scientific minds,’—I rather think it is in full play among children) “can find no repose in the mere registration of sequences in nature. The further question intrudes itself with resistless might—Whence comes this sequence? What is it that binds the consequent with its antecedent in nature? The truly scientific intellect” (I have a fair-haired boy of five, whom I feel in danger of regarding as ‘truly scientific,’ for he bothers my very life out to know the cause of everything) “never can attain rest until it reaches the *forces* by which the observed succession was produced.” The student of natural science, like the child, is impelled, no doubt, by his very nature, and the discoveries he makes, to seek for truths in other departments of nature. A physical fact sets him off in thought to inquire for an unseen cause, a metaphysical explanation—“*philosophia est scientia rerum per causas primas, recto rationis usu comparata.*”

It is most interesting to know the relation of forces, and it was truly said, “not until this relation between forces and phenomena has been established, is the law of reason rendered concentric with the law of nature, and not until this is effected does the mind of the scientific philosopher rest in peace.” (Dr. Tyndall.) But I am tempted to remark in passing, that the “relation” ascertained, leaves force itself still in the dark. *What is force?* Does the “scientific philosopher” throw any light upon facts by the use of this word “force”?—as much as, but not more so than when he calls sensation an

affection of the "sensory," and intelligence the action of the "cerebral" *ganglia*. Philosophy wants not new names, but to know *what* force itself really is, *what* sensation is, *what* intelligence is, *what* thought is. These are questions that are not answered, in a philosophic sense, by a mere sophism or change of terms. Until we are told what force is, "the law of reason" cannot be said to be "concentric" with the "law of nature," and the mind of the philosopher, like that of the child, cannot "rest in peace." A miracle, like other phenomena, has its forces proximate and remote—and that which binds the consequent to its antecedent, is also here, as elsewhere, neither seen nor weighed. The theologian, therefore, may be said to be as much, but no more, in the dark, than the natural philosopher; for both are crying out in the old language of nature's felt wants, showing us how little we have, after all, as yet advanced, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! . . . Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." \* *Force!* why who has ever tried to conceive what this word can mean further than his own conscious efforts of volition, as by a sort of figure, enable him? This very word, upon which so much empty eloquence has been lavished, is borrowed from personal agency and transferred by the natural philosopher to an impersonal, unseen, imponderable something, which he can neither see, nor hear, nor weigh. How then can he "rest in peace" by the mere transference of what, after all, may be, so far as he can prove, a misplaced title? "As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, to The UNKNOWN GOD." Might not St. Paul have said as much of "certain philosophers of the Epicurean" sort in this age? Force, so far from throwing any light upon the pathway of the natural philosopher, may be a word serving but to conceal from his gaze that light of heaven which in his pride or self-sufficiency he spurns. I say this *may* be so in some cases; it is not so in most cases: for example, Sir John Herschel regarded force—yes, even the "force of gravitation—as the direct or indirect result of *consciousness* or *will* existing somewhere." † But behind the phenomenal, there is not simply the cause or force producing it, but also, in the case of rational agency, purpose, qualities, &c.; in other words, that which is ethical or moral, that which arouses a third kind of operation in the beholder's mind. The miracle

\* Job xxiii.

† *Outlines of Astronomy*, fifth ed., p. 29.

does this without any risk of "eating the Christian religion up." But as I am concerned with the interactions and relations of ethical philosophy, it is no business of mine here to notice Dr. Tyndall's remarks upon the ethical features of a miracle, nor the argument from ethical considerations in favour of miracles, nor yet to point out the illegitimacy of his criticism, which substitutes the word "doubtful" for the word "invisible," and then proceeds to argue upon the change of terms, as if it were warrantable. My present object is simply to show how the different faculties or powers of human nature are called into exercise by the different kinds of objective truths that interlace and confront us as we contemplate, very frequently, one fact or event as that of a miracle. This shows the interactions and relations of what is ethical, that "all things are double (as said the Son of Sirach), one against another."

And as *facts*, viewed in their isolated character, present this complication of truths, it is the same with *law* in its interlacings and workings. Each separate branch of philosophy has, of course, its own system of laws; yet law, in the sense of order, may be said to be common to all branches of philosophy. There is an order of thought as well as an order of material sequence. And there is also an order of wisdom, purity, and rectitude. When I have spoken of miracles as coming under a system of moral law, I have been asked, "Do you in fact use the term law in the same sense as when you speak of physical law?"\* and I am bound to say that I do. Law denotes *order*, not *force*, and it is common to all branches of philosophy, metaphysical, moral, and material. It is, in fact, only through material organization and arrangement that moral truth is made intelligible to man. Every one truth is connected with some other truth, and every distinct law in nature has its relation to some other law, and so each system of laws appears to bear an appointed relation to the universal cosmos. Every result, therefore, in nature may be regarded as the consequence of a balancing of contrariant forces. That which comprehends all things is not the science of the Positivist, but the philosophy of the metaphysician. Metaphysical philosophy has to do with the whole of things, their principles and causes; it seeks to blend into a harmonious whole that which is common to all branches of philosophy, but peculiar to none. Hence it was justly termed, in ancient times, the first or universal philosophy.

But the interactions and relations of ethical philosophy

\* *Journ. of Trans. of the Victoria Institute*, vol. ii. p. 202.

extend beyond the natural to the sphere of the supernatural, if miracles are to be included. And why not take in Revelation and Christianity—whole and entire? I will quote a passage here in reference to miraculous agency from Principal Tulloch:—

“The stoutest advocate for interference can mean nothing more than that the supreme Will has so moved the hidden springs of nature that a new issue arises on given circumstances. The ordinary issue is supplanted by the higher issue. The essential facts before us are a certain set of phenomena, and a higher Will moving them. How moving them? is a question for human definition; but the answer to which does not and cannot affect the Divine meaning of the change. Yet when we reflect that this higher Will is everywhere reason and wisdom, it seems a juster, as well as a more comprehensive view, to regard it as operating by subordination and evolution, rather than ‘interference’ and ‘violation.’ According to this view, the idea of law, so far from being contravened by the Christian miracles, is taken up and made their very basis.”\*

The Christian miracles are but a species of the supernatural, like prayer, regeneration, conversion, and the fundamental doctrine of atonement. And I venture to think that the interactions and relations of ethical philosophy extend to all these forms or phases of the supernatural. In the great central fact of atonement, we see the highest form of that friendly help and mediation, which, by nature, God has taught us to render to each other. In the spiritual regeneration of the soul, we see that new birth into the Church of God in which the child is as helplessly passive as when nature gave it to the world. In the spiritual conversion of the sinner to God, we see a return bearing a strict analogy to that of the reckless son who came first to himself and then to his father. In that great principle of action, faith, we see an extension to what is spiritual, of that confidence, which, by nature, man was formed to repose in his fellow-man. In fact, the whole system of Christian edification is governed by those same general laws of assimilation, according to which we become like those we love, and with whom we associate. The same great principles of social and personal morality which interpenetrate the natural, extend also to the system of the supernatural. In short, the relations and interactions of ethical philosophy may be said to be universal, showing us that all truth originates in God, and that ethics, physics, metaphysics, and theology, natural and revealed, have one common source. Nay,

\* *Beginning of Life, &c.*, pp. 85, 86.

passing from the region of subjective facts in Christian experience, I seem to find in the ritual or objective form of worship prescribed by God in the Old Testament, not that which is unphilosophical or superstitious, but an application to Divine worship of those very principles of æsthetics which Kant, Hegel, Schelling and Fichte have sought to apply in philosophy. There is such a thing as "the beautiful" in religion as well as in philosophy, such a thing as worshipping God "in the beauty of holiness."\* There is a Christian as well as a natural philosophy. The same great principles, the same eternal and immutable laws of morality, underlie what is natural and supernatural, showing us that these are but distinct species of truth under some common genus, and therefore indices of one supreme mind and intelligence.

Law "reigns" everywhere. The Duke of Argyll, in what has been termed "a delightful book," says—

"I had intended to conclude with a chapter on 'law in Christian theology.' It was natural to reserve for that chapter all direct reference to some of the most fundamental facts of human nature. Yet without such reference the reign of law, especially in the realm of mind, cannot even be approached in some of its very highest and most important aspects."†

The Duke shrunk from the task of completing his design, because it would have brought him face to face with "questions so profound, of such critical import, and so inseparably connected with religious controversy." Yet I feel persuaded that nothing will tend more to allay religious controversy, than a faithful consideration of the mutual bearings of different branches of science or philosophy, referring them as branches to some more "comprehensive and fundamental principles" based upon "faith in one Eternal God." With this persuasion it is that I have prefaced my remarks upon ethical philosophy proper, with some more general observations upon its interactions and relations. The consideration of the mutual bearings of the different branches of science and philosophy was a main object with this Society, as stated at its foundation, yet I am not aware that a paper has yet been contributed with this end specially in view. Might not some member take up the subject of "Metaphysics" not in the absurd sense of the schoolmen, but as embracing what is more general in nature,—principles, and the whole of things? "Leaving particular subjects and their several properties to particular sciences, this universal science compares these subjects together; considers wherein they differ and wherein they agree; and that which

\* 1 Chron. xvi. 29.

† *Reign of Law*, Preface.  
2 E 2

they have in common, but belongs not in particular to any one science, is the proper object of metaphysics."\* The Duke of Argyll spoke of law in five senses, in the book referred to; from the "lowest sense" in which the term can be employed he comes up to a "higher sense," then one "more exact and definite," and lastly to "purpose," "function," "abstract conceptions," in other words, to will and intelligence. From what is purely physical he passes to what is moral and metaphysical—the idea of law or order carrying the mind upwards, till order itself brings the writer face to face with the fact or doctrine of one Supreme Will and Intelligence.

#### ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY PROPER, CONSIDERED AS A DISTINCT BRANCH OF STUDY.

Ethical or moral philosophy is the science of right and duty—the "habit of virtue," according to Aristotle—"the art or science of living well," according to Cicero—the "science which relates to our mutual affections, not simply as phenomena, but as they are virtuous or vicious, right or wrong," according to Dr. Thomas Brown—and that "science which is founded on that hitherto unnamed part of the philosophy of human nature (to be constantly and vigilantly distinguished from *intellectual* philosophy) which contemplates the laws of sensibility, of emotion, of desire and aversion, of pleasure and pain, of happiness and misery; and on which arise the august and sacred landmarks that stand conspicuous along the frontier of right and wrong," according to Sir James Mackintosh.

In speaking of moral law as a system, of course what is material is not excluded, but subordinated to the higher aims of wisdom, justice, purity, and order. And if ethical philosophy has its foundation, as I believe it has, in facts of human nature, then it has not been, and cannot be, superseded by revelation. I say this because there is a feeling—I am sure it is only a feeling—that however useful ethical philosophy may have been in ages before Christianity was given to the world, now that it has been given, there is no further need of this once special department of study. And perhaps this may be one reason why it forms so small a part of the curriculum of study prescribed for the learned professions. In Oxford it is not required for a degree, though Aristotle and Plato are read. In Cambridge it is relegated to the few who aspire to the distinction which the moral sciences

\* Monbodo, *Ancient Met.*, book iii. ch. 4.

tripos offers. In Dublin, I believe, Stewart's "Outlines" are got up. In London, a few books of one-sided and utilitarian bias are, or have been, prescribed. In Durham it is not thought of, or in any of the theological colleges. In Scotland more attention is paid to it, for it forms part, I believe, of the curriculum in all the universities for ordinary graduation. But it is a grave error to suppose that it has been, or can be, superseded by the utterances of revelation. To say that it has been, or can be, superseded, is to affirm either the uselessness of its facts as a department of study, or to deny that it furnishes of itself and alone a legitimate object of study at all. But it rests upon *facts* in human nature, and this is not an age when any facts ought to be left unnoticed. Our duty is to investigate, and take the consequences of investigation. If this course land us in results that do not seem to harmonize with the utterances of revelation, then, before we proclaim any discrepancy, let us remember that we are not infallible, and begin to verify every step of the course we have taken. I feel persuaded that in principle, and in facts of detail, the New Testament will be found an exponent of the purest ethics.

#### THE SPRINGS OF MORAL ACTION.

"But do not those impulses which lead and urge men forwards, spring from affections and evils?"—*τὰ δὲ ἄγωνα καὶ ἔλκοντα δὲ ἀπαθημάτων τε καὶ νοσημάτων παραγίγνεται.*\* Aristotle, referring to Plato's classification, mentions five powers of the soul,—the vegetative, the sensitive, the appetitive, the motive, and the intellective, and this did not add to his own clearness or perspicuity upon the subject. Plato's "reason, desire, and anger,"—desire being manifold in form, was a better classification. But human actions may be said to spring from certain impulses of an implanted kind, such as those which underlie instinct, appetite, desire, passion, emotion, affection, disposition, and opinion. Disposition and opinion are not, as manifested among men, implanted, still they exist in all in a primitive type or form, ready for development when external circumstances call them forth. And here I may remark that experience and observation, as regards these parts or facts of human nature, wonderfully coincide with the statements of revelation. With the greatest accuracy we might take up these statements and compare

\* *R. pub.*, lib. iv. cap. 15.

them with actual experience, and we should be constrained to say "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thoughts long before. Thou compassest my path, and art acquainted with all my ways." \* In the parables and addresses too, recorded in the Gospels, the Founder of Christianity appealed to the springs of human action in such a manner that we cannot fail to see the truth of that statement, "He needed not that any should testify of man; for *He knew what was in man.*"† Even judged from a human point of view only, our Lord's knowledge of human nature was marvellously perfect or philosophical. And as ethical facts and revelation here agree, so it may be said that the difference among men is small as regards the place these springs or primary motives occupy in our moral nature. Plato's little state or republic had its appetites and passions to trouble it, its "irrational parts," the "unruly wills and affections" of the Prayer-book, where will is used in the sense of *desire*, as Priestley, Bentham, James Mill, and Dr. Brown have erroneously used it—but the disturbances occasioned by these parts of human nature have been such as to call for the interference of the police officer rather than the philosopher. It is when we come to the higher regulative powers of reason and conscience, and the nature of virtue, that we find philosophers most at variance with each other.

#### THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES OF MORAL ACTION.

The springs of action excited, it is the office of the higher powers to regulate human conduct, reason giving to man a sense of prudence, enabling him, that is, to select right means, and conscience giving to him a sense of duty, or aiding him in the selection of right ends.

It will not, I presume, be expected that I should here enter into all the points of disputation that have arisen in reference to the nature and functions of reason and conscience. Aristotle was right when he separated morality from what is strictly intellectual or speculative. The reason, of course, has an office to fill, but in morals it is directive, not motive, practical, not speculative. How far it enters into the subjective operations of the conscience or moral faculty I will not take upon me to say further than this, that it seems to hold a posterior

\* Ps. cxxxix.

† John ii. 24, 25.

rather than a prior office in our moral perceptions. And for this reason, if virtue as an object be presented to the mind as an individual thing, and not as a general notion, then it must be cognizable by some proper sense and not by the reason or intellect, for reason implies an exercise of thought. Virtue as an individual thing, to come within the field of possible experience, would seem to require a moral sense to discern it, just as colour requires the sense of sight to perceive it. When it has been seen or perceived, virtue no doubt may give rise to comparison and general notions, and so provide material for the exercise of the reason; but the question is, how is virtue as an object perceived in the first instance? Can the reason grasp an external object without a proper sense to bring it within its reach? Ideas of right and wrong are simple and intuitive, they provide materials for the exercise of reason; but it seems to me that without an intuitive moral faculty we could never have such ideas at all. In our moral researches, therefore, I should feel disposed to assign to the reason an office posterior to that of a moral sense. Conscience includes both, no doubt; but feeling takes precedence of the reason in its exercise, rather than the reason precedence of feeling.

#### THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF HUMAN ACTION.

The appetites, desires, affections, &c., forming that part of human nature called the sensitivity, were designed to be under the direction and control of reason and conscience. Yet these springs and guides are also dependent upon the *will* as the last link in the chain of intention and the first of action. But what is volition? how comes it to pass? Do the sensitivity and intellect invariably guide and *necessitate* the will? We are supplied with motives through the sensitivity. We acquire, retain, and extend our knowledge through the intellect. In what, then, consists the act of volition? How stands the will in its relations to the sensitivity and intellect? Is it controlled? or does it control? Is it in bonds? or does it act freely?

There is law, doubtless, an order of working, in the realm of mind, as well as in the world of matter. Indeed the two worlds are here very wonderfully connected. Material organization is made not only to assist the operations of mind, but the faculties of mind depend upon material organization for the performance of their functions. The power of mind is

found to be commensurate with the strength or degree of cerebral organization. Yet thought is not cerebration, but something which runs along by means of it. Sensation is distinct from the "sensory ganglia" or nerves, yet it is made possible through them as instruments. The mind or soul is made to depend upon physical conditions, and the slightest disarrangement in our material economy may derange the whole of our mental operations, and throw the laws of the human soul into confusion. But nothing is hereby proved, nor even suggested, as to the non-existence of soul as a distinct part of man. Confusion may take the place of order, but this proves nothing against, if it does not in favour of, the soul's separate existence. The will, which has been termed the efficient cause of action, like other parts of the human constitution, has its relations to the whole framework. What are these relations? Much controversy has been excited by this question. Indeed, the difficulties suggested by the Will and its relations to the human framework, have been increased, by adding to them the further difficulty of reconciling the foreknowledge of God (which is a distinct question altogether) with human freedom, supposing it to exist. Predestination has been linked with the problem of free-will, and these together have supplied Mahometans, Jews, philosophers, and divines, in ancient and modern times, with matter of contention that has been pronounced inexhaustible. That motives act upon the will is a fact as certain as that we have springs of action within us. To deny this would be to render a philosophy of ethics impossible.

The forces or motives acting upon the will are various in nature and in their degrees of strength. The aggregate of these forces, or motives, which are all but endless in number and variety, may be said to move the will to action. We know not their number, we see not their character, and therefore we cannot estimate their resultant force or direction. Not that such force or direction is to be calculated as forces in mechanics, else we might suppose a person impelled by a given weight or number of motives to go a certain distance in one direction, say to the north, while an equal weight or number of motives were pulling him in another direction, say to the east; in which case he would exhibit the singular perverseness of obeying nothing and nobody, by walking straight off in a diagonal, halfway between the two points, towards which we have supposed him at the same time to be impelled. There is a difference between mechanics and living agency. The law of necessity is admitted to guide things without life; the law of freedom, it is contended, guides

creatures that have life. Brutes have freedom in a prescribed groove. And the higher we get in the scale of intelligence, the wider is the groove of freedom assigned. Man, the crowning work of creation, has a larger freedom than the brutes, corresponding to his higher order of intellect. This shows that motives stir the man, but do not govern or control him. The higher the regulative powers, the wider is the freedom. And here I feel myself compelled to take exception to a passage which I shall quote from the Duke of Argyll's *Reign of Law* :—

“Accordingly we may see that, in proportion as there is an approach among the lower animals to the higher faculties of mind, there is, in corresponding proportion, a difficulty in predicting their conduct. Perhaps the best illustration of this is a very homely one—it is the effect of baits and traps. Some animals can be trapped and caught with perfect certainty ; whilst there are others upon which the motive presented by a bait is counteracted by the stronger motive of caution against danger, when a higher degree of intelligence enables the animal to detect its presence. Yet the will of the cunning animal is not more free than the will of the stupid animal ; nor is the will of the stupid animal more subject to law than the will of the cunning one. The will of the young rat which yields to the temptation of a bait, and is caught, is not more subject to law than the will of the old rat, who suspects stratagems, resists the temptation and escapes. They are both subject to law in precisely the same sense and in precisely the same degree—that is to say, their actions are alike determined by the forces to which their faculties are accessible. Where these are few and simple, the resulting action is simple also ; where these are many and complicated, the resulting action has a corresponding variety. Thus the conduct of animals is less capable of being predicted, in proportion as it is difficult or impossible to foresee the number or nature of the motive forces which are brought to bear upon the will. Man's will is free in the same sense, and in the same sense only. It is subject to law in the same sense, and in the same sense alone. That is to say, it is subject to the influence of motives, and it can only choose among those which are presented to it, or which it has been given the power of presenting to itself.”\*

With the facts here posited there is no room to disagree. With the *inference* drawn, that an equal freedom only is enjoyed in an ascending scale of intelligence, I must differ. I fail entirely to see its legitimacy, or the grounds for the assertion “the will of the cunning animal is not *more* free than the will of the stupid animal.” Man, it is admitted, has the “power of bringing to bear upon himself motives, arising out of his power of forming abstract ideas, out of his pos-

\* *Reign of Law*, pp. 332-3.

session of beliefs, and above all, out of his sense of right and wrong." And, further still, it is admitted—

"Among the motives which operate upon man, he has a *selecting* power. He can as it were compare them among each other, and bring them to the test of conscience. Nay more, he can reason on his own character as he can on the character of another being—estimating his own weakness with reference to this or the other motive, as he is conscious how each may be likely to tell upon him. When he knows that any given motive will be too strong for him if he allows himself to think upon it, he can shut it out from his mind, 'keeping the door of his thoughts.' He can, and he often does, refuse the thing he sees, and holds by another thing which he cannot see. He may, and he often does, choose the invisible in preference to the visible. He may, and he often does, walk by faith and not by sight. It is true that in doing this he must be impelled by something which in itself is only another motive; and so it is true that our wills can never be free from motives, and in this sense can never be free from law."\*

No man contends for freedom from motives, nor freedom from law. The contention is, that there is power of *control* over motives, not *freedom* from them, and that this power of control is greater in proportion to the higher character of intellect. Why is the old rat more difficult to catch than the young one, who falls a victim to the bait the first go-off? Because, says the Duke, the "motives" or "forces" at work are more numerous, and consequently the action more uncertain and less easy to calculate. But this is not the *whole* truth; experience has made the old rat, like the old bird who sees chaff, more wary; he is more intelligent, better instructed, and with his advance in the power of intelligence, he becomes *more* free—freedom keeping pace with increasing intellectual power. It is so with the child as it grows up from infancy of knowledge to an acquaintance with men and things. There spring up with its growth, not simply an increase of the number of motives, but of the power of "selecting" from among the number present at a given time, the power also of dismissing those that are present, and of calling up others which were not present; and this power is just that for which we are contending—*freedom*. The connection between the enlarged number of motives in the adult rat and the enlarged groove of freedom, appears to have led the Duke of Argyll to argue occasionally as if the will were *necessarily* swayed by the motives present at the time, whether such motives be many or few. But this cannot be the case with man, who is admitted to have the power of "selecting," and calling up

\* *Reign of Law*, pp. 334-5.

and putting down motives at will—"he keeps the door of his thoughts"; his thoughts or motives do not keep him—that is to say, he has *control* over his motives; his motives do not control him, which is all the freedom that is contended for.

But it is said, "the will can only choose among those motives which are presented to it, or which it has the power of presenting to itself." *Choice*, however, in any form, implies *freedom*, and the freedom of choice here is wide, for this "power of presenting to himself motives," which man has, is incalculable, if not unlimited.

But if we could calculate, it seems to be put hypothetically, the number and weight of motives which are "presented," and which man has the "power of presenting to himself," then volitions could be foreseen, and we could calculate the course of conduct that would follow. If we could tell beforehand how a man would reason with himself, what motives he would dismiss, what he would call up, no doubt we could tell how he would act. But why not say, in plain language, that if we knew beforehand what his course of conduct would be, we could tell other people what it would be? This is all the argument really amounts to.

So hard, however, is it for man to be reasonable when he undertakes to discuss free will, that the Duke of Argyll has actually said, that in calling up one motive and putting down another, man is "*impelled* by something which in itself is only *another motive*, and so it is true that our wills can never be free from motives, and in this sense can never be free from law." Jonathan Edwards would have an "antecedent volition" to produce every given volition, and so on to all eternity. The Duke of Argyll first invests man with the power of calling up one motive, putting down another, making a "choice" or "selection" from those which remain, and I had fancied that this was *freedom*; but it now seems that "selection" was not what we ordinarily mean by that word, for man was "*impelled*" to "*select*" or "*choose*" by something else, "which in itself is only another motive." This is tiresome, like most arguments in a vicious circle; and I do think his Grace, in the next edition of his *Reign of Law*, should define his terms and use them consistently. He is very hard upon Mr. J. S. Mill, for "ambiguities and obscurities of language,"—is it unreasonable to ask what an "*impelled*" "choice" or "selection" of motives was intended to mean?—and if in "selecting" or "choosing" one motive in preference to another, if in dismissing this and calling up that, if in "keeping the door of his thoughts," man is really "*impelled*" by "something else," is it too much to

ask what that "something" is?—and if that something be "only another motive," may it not be demanded *how* it came to be where a moment before it was not? In arguing against such a common fact of every day's experience, as human freedom, it is incumbent upon the writer to state his grounds for so doing. The Duke of Argyll, under pretence of upholding freedom, has fallen into the argument for necessity; but I cannot find that he had any grounds for so doing, further than a fallacious use of words in opposite senses, and a hypothetical assumption of facts which cannot be proved to have existence.

On page 13 of the *Reign of Law* it is said:—

"The same lecturer (Dr. Tyndall) who told his audience that there was nothing spontaneous in nature, proceeded, by virtue of his own knowledge of natural laws, and by his *selecting* and combining power, to present a whole series of phenomena—such as ice frozen in contact with red-hot crucibles—which certainly did not belong to the 'ordinary course of nature.'"

But if "selection" of motives is to be explained by "something else," which is "only another motive," "*impelling*" man to make the selection, was not Dr. Tyndall right, after all, when he began, as the Duke of Argyll says he did?

"Not long ago a course of lectures on the phenomena of heat by a rapid statement of the modern doctrine of the correlation of forces—how the one was convertible into the other—how one rose out of the other—how none could be evolved *except from some other as a pre-existing source*. Thus (said the lecturer) we see there is no such thing as spontaneousness in nature."\*

The Duke of Argyll exclaims "What! not in the lecturer himself? Was there no *spontaneousness* in his *choice* of words—in his *selection* of materials—in his orderly arrangement of experiments with a view to the exhibition of particular results? It is not probable that the lecturer was intending to deny this; it simply was that he did not think of it as within his field of view. His own mind and *will* were then dealing with the laws of nature, but it did not occur to him as forming part of those laws, or in the same sense, as subject to them." But if the Duke is right in his chapter on the "Reign of Law in the Realm of Mind," Dr. Tyndall could not have been far wrong in saying "there is no such thing as spontaneousness in nature." *Spontaneity*, like choice, is not compatible with the doctrine of "another motive" *impelling* it; but "another motive" *impelling* it is in harmony with the "modern doctrine of the correlation of forces." A "spiritual antecedent" is

\* *Reign of Law*, p. 7.

just that which excludes "spontaneity," "choice," or "will," and makes good the doctrine of Dr. Tyndall, against which the Duke of Argyll argues on page 7, and in favour of which he writes on pp. 334-5 of the *Reign of Law*.

I feel that I ought to apologize for criticising thus far a work which has received so much praise from the *Times* newspaper downwards, and which the President of the Royal Astronomical Association called a "delightful book." But while I can say most truly that I have myself felt great delight in reading it over, and can most heartily enter into and go along with much that it contains, I have always thought that its weakest chapter was that on the "Reign of Law in the Realm of Mind," and that its weakness consists in its being neither consistent with itself, nor with the rest of the book which contains it.

#### THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

The active and moral powers of man, or the springs and guides of action, have their correlative *virtue*. What is this?

The various answers to this question, which have been given in ancient and modern times, have been classified according as the different authors have placed the foundation of virtue in the nature of things or in the nature of man. My subject, namely, "Ethical Philosophy and its *relations* to Science and *Revelation*," naturally directs to the New Testament, from which Mr. John Stuart Mill has said, "it has never been possible to extract a body of ethical doctrine."\*

If by a "body of ethical doctrine," is meant, in this quotation, a body of *rules*, I should agree with its author, for it is not the business even of the philosopher to lay down rules, ethical philosophy being a science of facts, and not a body of rules. But if it is meant that the New Testament does not contain the *principles* of a pure philosophy, then I would join issue with Mr. Mill and challenge him to prove his position.

The Founder of Christianity sought to stir up morality by an appeal to the springs of moral action; *love for mankind* ( $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\eta = \phi\iota\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\acute{\iota}\alpha = \textit{humanitas}$ ) being the foundation of virtue which He laid down; not love for beings in general, as Jonathan Edwards absurdly put it, but love for the *race*, love for man *as man*. He worked not upon the heads, but upon the hearts of men. Other teachers may have proposed a body

\* *On Liberty*, people's ed., ch. ii.

of rules, and given to man reasons for them; Christ's was a more philosophic way. He entered into the chamber of the heart, touched the *springs* of action with a holy fire, and thus sought to establish practical morality by kindling up an enthusiasm for the race. "Make the tree good" was the way by which He sought to obtain "good fruit." And in this His teaching was strictly philosophical. Not that I mean it to be understood for one moment that the doctrines of grace are or can be superseded; what I mean is this, that grace is made to work in man's moral nature *as God has formed it*. The powers of reason are treated by the Founder of Christianity as regulative merely, and the mere intellectualist, such as Mr. Mill, misses the root of the matter when he seeks to build up an ethical system upon merely rationalistic grounds. The springs of moral action are seated in the affections,—the sensitivity, to use a good general term; and they have their incentive, their correlate in "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report," which St. Paul bade the Philippians "think on," if there be any such thing as *virtue*.

No doubt it may be said that such an object as virtue, pure and simple, is hardly, if ever, seen among men. But it was seen, I believe, in the person of Christ. And it is worthy of remark that He, the great Moral Teacher, who is called the "Son of man," the type of mankind in its pure form, was the very *object* which He bid his followers look at. Individual cases were to be viewed as through Him, the perfect type. To feed the hungry was to be regarded as feeding *Him*. To visit the afflicted and relieve the needy is called the visiting and relieving of *Him*. "*I was an hungered, I was thirsty, &c.*" Thus we find the active and moral powers of man directed in theory to a perfect objective model of virtue. Christianity is hereby shown to be not simply practical but sublimely ethical. It strikes an inward personal chord, which is *love*, and it points to the establishment of a universal brotherhood, where the ruling principle shall be a spirit of universal benevolence. To lay hold of these great principles is to have, in an ethical sense, "Christ formed within," to advance to the "measure of His stature;" that is to say, ethical perfection.

Now of all the systems of virtue, the theories propounded respecting it, there is not one that can be said to rival the teaching of Christ. But there is one which comes very near to it,—I mean the eclectic system of the Platonists, which, after the age of Augustus, made virtue consist in *benevolence*. Dr. Adam Smith thus describes it:—

“In the Divine nature, according to these authors, benevolence or love was the sole principle of action, and directed the exertion of all the other attributes. The wisdom of the Deity was employed in finding out the means for bringing about those ends which His goodness suggested, as His infinite power was exerted to execute them. Benevolence, however, was still the supreme and governing attribute, to which the others were subservient, and from which the whole excellency or the whole morality, if I may be allowed such an expression, of the Divine operations was ultimately derived. The whole perfection and virtue of the human mind consisted in some resemblance or participation of the Divine perfections, and consequently in being filled with the same principles of benevolence and love which influenced all the actions of the Deity. The actions of men which flowed from this motive were alone truly praiseworthy, or could claim any merit in the sight of the Deity. It was by actions of charity and love only that we could imitate, as became us, the conduct of God; that we could express our humble and devout admiration of His infinite perfections; that by fostering in our own minds the same Divine principles, we could bring our affections to a greater resemblance with His holy attributes, and thereby become more proper objects of His love and esteem, till at last we arrived at that immediate converse and communication with the Deity to which it was the great object of this philosophy to raise us.”\*

In this beautiful passage I seem to find the very soul of New Testament teaching. Dr. Adam Smith proceeds:—

“This system, as it was much esteemed by many ancient Fathers of the Christian Church, so, after the Reformation, it was adopted by several divines of the most eminent piety and learning, and of the most amiable manners, particularly by Dr. Ralph Cudworth, by Dr. Henry More, and by Mr. John Smith, of Cambridge. But of all the patrons of this system, ancient or modern, the late Dr. Hutcheson was undoubtedly, beyond all comparison, the most acute, the most distinct, the most philosophical, and, what is of the greatest consequence of all, the soberest and most judicious.”†

The late Dr. Whewell has also said:—

“Since virtue or goodness must be a law and a disposition which binds man to man by the tie of a common humanity, and excludes all that operates merely to separate men, all affections which tend to introduce discord and conflict; it excludes malice and anger, as we have said, and directs us to mildness and kindness. The absence of all the affections which place man in opposition to man, and the aggregate of all the affections by which man clings to man, may be expressed by the term *benevolence*, understood in its widest sense. ‘All these dispositions, Benevolence, Justice, Purity, and Order, may be conceived to be included in a love of goodness.’”‡

\* *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, part vii. ch. iii.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Elements of Morality*, book ii. ch. ii.

Here, then, we find the ethical principles of the New Testament in exact accord with the purest and best which philosophers have laid down, or rather I ought to say, the purest and best which philosophers have laid down accord with those of the New Testament. "Love" (*ἀγάπη*, equivalent to *humanitas* and *φιλανθρωπία*) "is the fulfilling of the law"; "subjective humanity" being, as Dr. Whewell affirmed, *benevolence*, and "objective humanity," *the good of mankind*.

Having thus far shown that there is an agreement, as to main principles, between New Testament teaching on the subject of virtue and that of the best philosophers, I will compare its teaching first with the more ancient doctrine of Plato and Epicurus, showing its practical agreement with and superiority over them, and secondly, with the recent utterances of Mr. J. S. Mill in his "Essay on Liberty."

I will not refer to the main principles or theories of virtue held by Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus. I choose rather to take up details, and show that what was good in the systems of Plato and Epicurus, the most opposed of the ancients, is to be found in the New Testament. Plato's little state or republic, with its reasoning, irascible, or concupiscible parts (its *λογιστικὸν*—*τὸ θυμικὸν*—and *ἐπιθυμητικὸν*) working in due order and subordination, is not displaced by the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Neither is that of Epicurus, with its pleasure on the whole and in the long run, as the one object to be desired, and its pain on the whole and in the long run, as the one object to be shunned, altogether put aside. True love as the spring or motive to action does not set the different parts of man's moral nature in battle-array among themselves. Neither does it lead us to prefer pain to pleasure, on the whole and in the long run. Right principles must lead to happiness in a world that is governed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and therefore rectitude and utility have points of contact in actual practice. If we take the four cardinal virtues, alluded to in the apocryphal book of Wisdom (viii. 7), and taught as main principles by ancient heathen philosophers, we shall find much of practical agreement between the New Testament, Plato, and Epicurus.

*Prudence*, said Plato, consists in a clear discernment of right ends to be attained, and the selection of right means leading to right ends—Epicurus, that it consists in seeking the greatest good and avoiding the greatest evil—the New Testament, that it consists in a man's "losing his life" for the truth, in "forsaking all" to further the Gospel. Plato was guided by wisdom—Epicurus by desire for happiness—Christ by goodness. And what have we here but three sides of an

ethical triangle, the only question being to find its true area and relations? There is no distinct opposition.

*Fortitude*, said Plato, consists in maintaining a spirit of honour and magnanimity—Epicurus, that it consists in braving smaller dangers with a view of escaping greater—Christ, that it consists in going into Judæa again, to the post of duty, whither the Jews lately sought to stone Him—and St. Paul, that it consists in that “ecstasy of charity,” which led him to say, “I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Here, notwithstanding the difference which that “life and immortality” which the Gospel brought to light, must have made, we find that Plato assimilates very closely to Christ and His Apostles.

*Temperance*, said Plato, consists in the proper subordination of the lower parts of human nature to the higher—Epicurus, that it consists in curbing the appetites with a view of attaining higher and more lasting gratification—the New Testament, that it consists in extending to the very *thoughts* and intents of the heart, the prohibitions of the ancient moral code, in “bridling the tongue,” in “keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection.” The Platonic and the inspired teaching here very closely agree.

*Justice*, said Plato, consists in the three subjective parts of the soul or nature of man (like the different parts of a state), so working together in their several offices as not to infringe upon that of each other—Epicurus, that it consists in uprightness and honesty towards others, because the reverse would bring shame and disgrace—the New Testament, that it consists in “doing unto others as we would they should do unto us,” in “rendering unto all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.” Aristotle brought the teaching of Plato into still closer conformity with the New Testament by making virtue consist in a practical *habit*. Love, however, as the mainspring, to be seen in these New Testament details, is not so clearly to be gathered from Plato and Epicurus. It is in fact *not there*. The agreement is one of a practical rather than a theoretical kind, in details rather than in first or foundation principles. But this shows the superiority of New Testament ethics over other systems, and it brings me to Mr. Mill’s views. He says:—

“I wonder that any one who derives his knowledge of morality from the New Testament can suppose that it was announced or intended as a complete doctrine of morals.”\*

---

\* *On Liberty*, p. 28.

It was certainly never "announced" as a treatise on Ethical Philosophy, nor was it "intended" to embody a complete system of rules. But it most certainly embodies the true *principles* of morality; indeed, religion, pure and undefiled, could be taught upon no other basis. But Mr. Mill advances to a more direct charge:—

"I do not scruple to say (he adds) that the New Testament morality is in many important points incomplete and one-sided, and that unless ideas and feelings not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse state than now they are." \*

It is difficult to meet this charge, because it does not say in what sense New Testament morality is "one-sided;" but if it is *fundamentally* right, while Plato and Epicurus are not, which I have maintained, then from a good foundation there cannot arise unsoundness. But Mr. Mill's meaning comes out perhaps in the following sentences:—

"Christian morality, so called, has all the character of a reaction; it is, in great part, a protest against Paganism. Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than active; innocence rather than nobleness; abstinence from evil, rather than energetic pursuit of good; in its precepts (as has been well said) 'thou shalt not' predominates over 'thou shalt.'"

It is curious that another recent writer of sceptical views should have drawn a picture the very opposite of this from the pen of Mr. J. S. Mill. *Ecce Homo*, therefore, shall defend the New Testament here in my stead. Its author says:—

"Christ raised the feeling of humanity from being a feeble *restraining* power, to be an *inspiring passion*. The Christian moral reformation may be summed up in this—humanity changed from a restraint to a  *motive*. We shall be prepared, therefore, to find that while earlier moralities had dealt chiefly in *prohibitions*, Christianity deals in *positive commands*. And precisely this is the case, precisely this difference made the Old Testament seem antiquated to the first Christians. They had passed from a region of *passive* into a region of *active* morality. The old legal formula began 'thou shalt not,' the new begins 'thou shalt.'"

And then he gives proofs in detail. (See pages 175, 176 of his book.)

It is impossible for two authors to contradict each other in more express terms, and the only way I can account for Mr. Mill's statements, which every one acquainted with the New Testament must know to be untrue, is this, that he had not

\* *On Liberty*, p. 29.

seen such a book for a long time when he wrote his *Essay on Liberty*.

The "greatest happiness" principle of Mr. Mill is certainly not to be found in the New Testament; and it may have been this which led him to speak of its ethics as "incomplete and one-sided." But then the Utilitarian theory, ancient or modern in form, has never made out its claim as yet to be sound. We look at actions, not at their consequences, when we speak of them as virtuous. It is the intention of the agent, rather than the benefit conferred, which leads us to admire what he does. The tree which supplies us with fruit, or the animal which renders us good service, does not awaken our sense of gratitude, like the kind and benevolent actions of a fellow-creature. Why not? because it is not the benefit conferred, but the motive or sense of duty implied, which constitutes the action virtuous, and awakens its corresponding feeling of gratitude and approbation. The facts of human consciousness give the lie to utility—right is not the same as benefit.

But I should gather from Mr. Mill's essay that truth on all points must continue to be an open question. His great principle appears to be a mere beating out of human brains in a sort of intellectual prize fight. The truth, of course, might, some day, come off victorious, but a lie is just as likely to triumph. Nay, as fools always outnumber philosophers, the stern logic of "liberty," of "individuality" as elements of "well-being" in the realm of thought, would seem to give an easy triumph to the omnipotence of numbers. But this could hardly matter, for we are told that—

"We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavouring to stifle is a false opinion, and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still."

I am no advocate for "stifling," but I do think that we can never be sure when we hold what is true, if this last quotation contains what is sound. Still, Mr. Mill talks of things "no longer doubtful," and of the "fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking," as being the cause of half their "errors." But how he reconciles these statements with what goes before, namely, that "we can never be sure that an opinion is false," is not shown. I must, however, say that this uncertainty of opinion is not a goal worthy of man's unceasing mental exertions, nor an end such as we may reasonably conclude the Divine Wisdom has planned for His creatures to strive after. I think we can be sure that some opinions are false, and that the truth was never intended to remain an

insoluble enigma. In a moral point of view, I could not conceive of a more unphilosophical system of ethical dry-bones than that which Mr. Mill offers with such a sublime indifference to revelation and its teaching.

Of course he has a fling at the bitter sectarian feeling among professedly Christian people; there is no danger, we are told, of any man being seduced in these days into making that old statement, "See how these Christians love one another." And if the spirit of persecution and want of charity did not seem to be laid to the charge of Christianity or the New Testament itself, I should have been very willing here to pass it over. But Mr. Mill says:—

"Orthodox Christians, who are tempted to think that those who stoned to death the first martyrs must have been worse men than they themselves are, ought to remember that one of those persecutors was *St. Paul*."

We say it was *Saul*, not *St. Paul*; an unconverted Jew, not a Christian. But if Mr. Mill would scorn to own any difference which conversion made in the character of Saul, common honesty, one would think, ought to put into the account the fact that *St. Paul* never ceased all his life long to bewail the sinfulness of the act which is here so disingenuously set down to his account.

The very *basis* itself, as well as the objects of Christianity, is sublimely ethical. "*Herein is love! not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" *St. Paul*, therefore, was ethically correct when he concluded "*love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*"

And if it be said that virtue should have its reward, but hereby gets it not, it may be replied that the Gospel places that reward where alone it can be expected,—in the world to come. In this world, the Christian does not receive less than other men; but virtue here has never been crowned with complete success. Christ's kingdom is a brotherhood of the purest ethical character, founded in the most disinterested virtue, and holding out to its members a full reward in the world to come. It therefore demands of necessity *faith* in its members. And it is worthy of remark, that when *faith* has, upon earth, done its work, and when the future arrives, the decision as to character on the part of the Judge, is described in the New Testament as proceeding upon strictly *ethical principles*. He takes the type of perfect humanity, the "*Son of man*," and tests the actions of each according as they have acted up to that type, and towards others as if towards

it. It is "*I that was an hungered,*" "*I that was thirsty,*" "*Me that ye visited.*"

From what has now been said, I trust I may take leave of my subject. The foundation of virtue is placed by Christ where the best ethical philosophers have placed it, and I do not think that any species of virtue can be said to be wanting in the New Testament. Not that it was ever intended to give us a complete system of ethics. But ethical principles are there, held as it were in solution, to be precipitated and gathered up. They are there because sound doctrine can only be taught through the moral nature, and exhibited in the moral life of man. There are to be found in the Christian's standard of doctrine abundant instances of humility, self-denial, gratitude, liberality, justice, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and *love*, as the foundation, the mainspring of them all. Gratitude used to be said to be wanting; but the truth is, it shines out from every page which teaches man his duty to God, for love to God is the sublimest gratitude.

In conclusion, then, I seem to feel this thought to be uppermost, namely, that truth, under different forms, points to one author, and wears, in different dress, the same eternal character. But we live, some think, in an age of great research and vast trifling, of profound reverence for the truth and a shallow indifference to it—an age when a few are anxiously working for whatever the truth itself may reveal; but when many, as ever was the case, thoughtfully study nothing, and yet, in a sense peculiar to the times, catch up the ephemeral schemes of the hour, laugh at eternal verities, and treat religion and all that is real and spiritual as an effete thing. Against positivism, materialism, and infidelity, ethical science raises its voice. And in its interactions and relations, it points to an universal philosophy, where the spiritual and the material, the moral and the intellectual, without prejudice to each other, shall find a common resting-place.

As to each man thinking out every moral, social, and religious problem for himself, to say nothing of the presumptuous rejection of revelation which it implies, it could only end in a world of sweat and labour for daily bread, by nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of a thousand, thinking out nothing at all, believing nothing at all, and living, to all practical purposes, the veriest heathens, amid the full light of Truth itself streaming around them.

I am no enemy to freedom of thought and discussion, but I cannot close this paper without observing that while the abstract speculations of men who affect to think out all things

for themselves—who spurn the very idea of “authority,” and who ridicule the word “obedience,” have left the world one after another, unbenefitted and unblest by any appreciable moral good, He who did claim to speak with “authority,” who did enforce the duty of “obedience,” in all things lawful and honest, went straight home to the hearts of men with His teaching, touched there a responsive chord, and left His mark so deeply impressed upon the race, that after eighteen centuries have passed away, there are still found to be something like 350 millions of living disciples ready to add their testimony to that of old, that “never man spake like that man.”

**The CHAIRMAN.**—It is now our duty to return thanks to the author of this paper. Our thanks are especially due to him for introducing us to another field on which to meet our enemies. I am sure we are all very much indebted to him for bringing forward this subject.

**Rev. C. A. Row.**—The subject which has been introduced to us to-night by Mr. English is one in which I feel a particular interest, and to which I have given as much thought as to any subject whatever. There are many points in Mr. English's paper which are worthy of our deepest attention, although I do not think the paper, as a whole, has taken quite so wide a view of the subject as it might have done. But I will confine what observations I have to offer to that portion of it which deals with moral philosophy, and in such criticism as I shall be able to enter upon I hope the author will feel that I am only actuated by a desire to lead to an enlarged view of the subject. The author says:—“In that great principle of action, faith, we see an extension to what is spiritual of that confidence which, by nature, man was formed to repose in his fellow-man.” Now I do not think that this is a sufficiently comprehensive view of the nature of faith, but as that question will form a portion of a paper which is now in the hands of the Council and which I shall read to the Institute shortly, I will not discuss it at present, although I should have liked to have offered a few observations upon it. Further on Mr. English says:—“Ethical or moral philosophy is the science of right and duty—the ‘habit of virtue’ according to Aristotle: ‘the art or science of living well’ according to Cicero.” But I doubt whether you can find in the ethics of the ancients the Christian idea of duty at all. In the Greek philosophy, all ethics were a portion of politics, and there is no idea of duty contained in the Greek writers further than that duty which binds men to political society. The highest moral motive of the Greek philosophy is τὸ καλόν, that is, the morally beautiful; but that must not mislead us into the idea that there is such a thing in the heathen philosophy as the Christian idea of duty. In “the science of the habit of virtue” the writer gives not a bad definition of what Aristotle meant by ethics. No doubt, from his point of view, it was the science of the habit

of virtue ; but it should be observed that Greek philosophy uses the term virtue in a more extended sense than we do. The Greeks, for instance, might have spoken of the virtue of that pen, or of the virtue of that table. In Greek that would be quite correct ; but it is not so with us. I think moral philosophy may be more naturally defined as being the philosophy of the activities of man, and I think the range of moral philosophy is exceedingly extensive. I quite agree with Mr. English in his remarks upon the slight extent to which the study of moral philosophy is pursued at our universities. I think it is a sad thing that it should be so little studied in this country, and I feel great wonder that at the only place where moral philosophy is practically studied—the University of Oxford—it has made so very little progress for many years. I speak of it, remember, in the sense of Christian moral philosophy, because I am afraid that all existing theories of moral philosophy are sadly deficient in embracing the great facts of revealed religion. Now, just let me notice two points of deficiency. The ancient moral philosophy is a portion of politics, and the ancient philosophers could not take any other view of it because they had no data for doing so. So far they were right, but in the Christian religion moral philosophy has attained a very much higher realization, and yet I do not find in any existing treatise any distinct recognition of the Church of Christ as a great phenomenon in moral philosophy. Since the days of Butler, Christian moral philosophy has made no progress whatever. Another point in which Christian moral philosophy is lamentably defective is found in this, that it has taken, and does take, no account of the most powerful of all moral influences, the great Christian principle of faith ; and I use the word faith in a wider and more extended sense than that in which the author of this paper has used it. There is one strong point in every system of moral philosophy, and that is the immense power of habit upon human nature. But to effect changes through the principle of habit is a very slow process ; and if our only hope of making the world better depends on acting on the state of moral corruption by habit, we shall find ourselves in a very bad state. In his 10th book Aristotle tells us, with a certain degree of pathos, what he thought would be the result of his treatise, and his only hope was to act upon a few select spirits :—the human race, the great mass of mankind, he felt himself utterly powerless to deal with. That is the simple result of the mere principle of habit, as Aristotle contemplated it. Now, our Lord, in building up His Church, certainly did intend to act on human nature by the principle of faith. I apprehend that He looked upon the great principle of faith as being that by means of which man can be made better ; and He proceeded in His work, beginning with the intellect, through the principles of faith, and getting down into the heart. But that principle is altogether ignored by every system of moral philosophy with which I am acquainted. Nothing would be more valuable, and nothing would more effectually dissipate scepticism than honestly investigating many subjects where Christianity has stirred the profound depths of humanity, and seeing how far it is adapted to the moral nature of man. A few months

ago, while in the British Museum, I looked over all the recent editions of Aristotle, to see whether anything had been added in recent years. I examined them with considerable attention, but I failed to find in any of the commentators of the last twenty years any ideas drawn from Christianity. I looked at Grant, but I did not find any enlarged views connecting religion with moral philosophy; and I found that, practically, since the days of Butler, we had made no progress in harmonizing the revelation of God with the moral nature of man. I feel that the whole Christian Church suffers an enormous loss from this, and Mr. Mill would not have said such foolish things as he has done if it had been otherwise. I very cordially agree, therefore, with that paragraph of Mr. English's paper, which deals with the slight extent which moral philosophy is taught in this country. In another passage Mr. English speaks of Aristotle's division of the mind of man, and here I think is the weakest point of Aristotle's mode of procedure in founding any portion of his moral philosophy on arbitrary divisions of that description. Moral philosophy, if good for anything, must be founded on the facts of human nature, including those acted upon by revelation. As far as human nature is acted upon by revelation, the investigation of it comes under the principles of moral philosophy. But I very much doubt whether that portion of Aristotle is not the weakest of his whole system. Mr. English, in another passage, says:—"The springs of action excited, it is the office of the higher powers to regulate human conduct, reason giving to man a sense of prudence, enabling him, that is, to select right means, and conscience giving to him a sense of duty, or aiding him in the selection of right ends." I presume that in that passage the author means by "prudence," the *φρόνησις* of Aristotle. Now I have given long and deep attention to this subject, and I believe that the 6th book of Aristotle's Ethics is exceedingly defective in its analysis of the intellect of man, in relation to his moral character. I believe that Mr. English has adopted throughout the views of "the Ethics" upon this point, which very much narrows the action of man's reason upon his moral nature. In one word, the author in his subsequent pages implies that the intellect always follows, and does not precede moral action. Now I entirely dispute the truth of that. I mean to say that in every act of faith the intellect goes first. I use the word in a wide sense, and include the whole of our rational powers. It is difficult to speak accurately when using the terms "intellect" and "reason"; but I hold that the author has taken much too narrow a view of the action of the intellect upon the moral nature of man. Mr. English goes on to say:—"Ideas of right and wrong are simple and intuitive. They provide materials for the exercise of reason; but it seems to me that without an intuitive moral faculty we could never have such ideas at all." But I apprehend that reason is directly and closely connected with almost every one of our moral actions in a much wider sense than is admitted here. With very much of what the author says under the head of "the efficient cause of human action" I cordially agree, for it virtually embodies

some of the principles which I had the honour to lay before the Institute in a paper earlier in the year; and as it states my own view, I will not take up your time at any length upon the question as to whether man does actually possess a free will. In my own paper I used the term "rational will," and I was not wholly understood; but when I unfold my theory of the moral nature of man it will be seen what I did mean. There are those who deny the freedom of the will, and among them are the Positivist philosophers; but it does appear to me most wonderful that they should hold to that view in the face of the examples that can be brought against them, and especially in the face of one or two examples from ancient history. What could be more grand and more noble than the sacrifice of the four hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ: the inscription "Go, stranger, and tell the Lacedæmonians that we lie here obeying their laws," records the pure idea of voluntary self-sacrifice. So, again, take the Christian martyr. I want to know whether his sacrifice—that rational sacrifice in which all his rational powers concurred—was not the exercise of free-will. It is by means of the concurrence of our rational powers in the act that self-sacrifice takes place. The Duke of Argyll has fallen into the same error. Although I have the greatest respect for his Grace, still, when he takes up the subject of freedom, he takes the lowest forms of human or even of animal action to reason from, and that is out of place. Why should they not take the higher acts of the human understanding or intellect to illustrate their theory? To sink down to some poor miserable wretched cat, (though I do not mean to deny that a cat has freedom of will to a certain extent,) appears to me to be going uncommonly wide of the mark. Mr. English states:—"Mr. John Stuart Mill has said it has never been possible to extract a body of ethical doctrine from the New Testament." I agree with the author in joining issue upon that assertion. It is utterly absurd, and it is plain that Mr. Mill can have given no sustained thought to it. I admit that the four Gospels contain no perfect rules of ethics, and blessed be Heaven that they do not; but I hold that they contain all the great principles which are the foundation of ethics—that they do bear out the principles of moral philosophy, and that the principles of moral philosophy do bear out the Gospels. Mr. English says further on:—"The Founder of Christianity sought to stir up morality by an appeal to the springs of moral action, love for mankind (*ἀγάπη* = *φιλανθρωπία* = *humanitas*) being the foundation of virtue which He laid down." But I go further and say that the basis of moral action is faith. In the character of God, and in the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is laid the basis of moral action. What in fact produces the feeling of benevolence in my mind? Some thought suitable to awaken that feeling. Mr. English further says:—"The powers of reason are treated by the Founder of Christianity as regulative merely, and the mere intellectualist, such as Mr. Mill, misses the root of the matter when he seeks to build up an ethical system upon merely rationalistic grounds." But I do not think that the Founder of Christianity has treated the principles of the intellect as merely regulative. I am satisfied that our

Lord did contemplate that the action of man's reason should be brought to bear upon his moral nature, and by introducing something good and holy and pure into that reason by means of faith, He revolutionized that moral nature. But here is a passage in the paper which I wish to have explained :—"Now of all the systems of virtue, the theories propounded respecting it, there is not one that can be said to rival the teaching of Christ. But there is one which comes very near to it,—I mean the eclectic system of Platonists, which, after the age of Augustus, made virtue consist in benevolence." He then goes on to quote from Adam Smith, who in turn quotes from some disciple of Plato, but without naming him. I meant to have looked this up in the British Museum, but I have not been able to do so, and I want to ask Mr. English whether he has ascertained that the passage referred to is actually to be found in a Platonic writer. For my own part I do not believe it is to be so found, and if it is found, I wish to know what is the date of the writer in whose works it appears. It makes a considerable difference if it is found in a Platonist of the reign of Augustus, or after the time of Christ. You often find in Seneca and in Marcus Antoninus, and other writers of the Stoic school, the very highest principles ; and though I do not believe the story that Seneca had communication with St. Paul—still there is no doubt that within thirty years of the crucifixion there was a very considerable infusion of Christianity in the heathen world. It becomes, then, a matter of importance to ascertain the precise date of any particular writer, and I should like to know if Mr. English has endeavoured to verify the statement made by Adam Smith, and if so, whether the writer he refers to flourished before or after the birth of our Lord. I feel uncommonly sceptical as to whether Adam Smith had found the words he quotes in any Platonist ; but if they are found anywhere, it will be, I fancy, in some of the schools which existed in Alexandria. It is all nonsense to tell us that if any late school has elaborated some high form of thought, it therefore existed independent of Christianity. Further on Mr. English says :—"I will not refer to the main principles or theories of virtue held by Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus. I choose rather to take up details, and show that what was good in the systems of Plato and Epicurus, the most opposed of the ancients, is to be found in the New Testament." The author then goes on to discuss that point ; but I think he has hardly been sufficiently cautious in dealing with it. I quite agree with him that whatever is good in the heathen morality you may find in the New Testament ; but I maintain that it does not exist in the New Testament in the form in which it exists in heathen morality, but is based on essentially different principles. I am prepared to admit that the New Testament does appeal to several of what we call the lower principles of human nature—self-love, for instance ; but while I admit that, I wish to draw attention to this fact, that Christianity, as a system, does not rest on those lower principles, but on very much higher ones, and though self-love is a principle appealed to in the New Testament by our Lord himself, yet there is one thing which has struck me, on a careful study of the subject, and that is, that while the Evangelists

do exhibit in our Lord's teaching an appeal to self-love, yet they have never once depicted Him as animated by that principle. Now that is a remarkable fact, and I think Mr. English has not been sufficiently cautious in regard to it. Unless one was careful, this assertion might lead to some misapprehension, and to the thought that the morality of the Gospel rests on the lower principles which Mr. English has enumerated. And I think he is not quite happy always in his application; for instance, where he speaks of prudence and temperance. I do not think that he has exactly put the matter there as it should be put. But I will not take up any more of your time by any further criticism.

Mr. POYER.—My first word must be a word of protest against an opinion enunciated by Mr. Row, that Christianity is to be taken as recognizing the principle of self-love. I have always apprehended Christianity to be destructive of self-love. The principle that involves universal love, the principle that involves self-sacrifice, is antagonistic to self-love.

[Mr. Poyer then asked permission to read some written observations; to which exception was taken; and, as they related chiefly to Positivism, it was suggested that they might perhaps be fitly incorporated in a paper on that subject, which he proposed to read before the Institute. The discussion afterwards proceeded as follows] :—

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—The absence of Mr. English makes it extremely painful to discuss what he has said. It is not right that we should always, and as a matter of course, pay compliments to our essayists; but, though I shall speak plainly, I am sure Mr. English will be able to bear it, and to treat what is said with philosophical equanimity. The whole subject dealt with by Mr. English is, I fully grant, of so much importance that we are obliged to him for having brought it forward, but for the method in which he has brought it forward I am not quite so grateful, as there is a great want of method and arrangement in the whole paper. I agree, however, with Mr. Row, that as to the main points put forward all sound-thinking Christians will agree with Mr. English; and the criticism made by Mr. Row upon the paper I think, will prove one of the most important that has yet proceeded from this Society, and I say that without at all undervaluing some very valuable discussions which are recorded in our Journal. I fully agree with what Mr. Row said concerning the ethics of Aristotle. No doubt Aristotle was unable to grasp the Christian idea of duty—of ultimate moral responsibility. It had never been suggested to him practically. He analyzed human action in a scientific way, and he really may be said to have had rather a science of ethics than a philosophy of ethics; for philosophy and science are not the same thing. You will, I trust, perceive what I mean by this. If I were to say, "There is a science of anatomy," it would not be the same thing as if I were to say, "There is a philosophy of anatomy." A philosophy of anatomy would at once lead your thoughts to a comparative estimate of various anatomical systems, but a science of anatomy would be quite another thing. Philosophy deals with the mutual relation of one subject to another, but science deals with the exact knowledge of one particular subject; and I am sorry to say

that ethical philosophy and ethical science seem generally to be supposed to be the same thing. The words are used clumsily. Now I suspect that Aristotle had no moral philosophy at all—he said merely, “I will write of the ethics of that state of things in which we exist”—and he had a very accurate ethical science. That will explain the difficulty which lies in the sixth book of Ethics. The intellectual virtues there are misplaced; their relation to pure ethics seems to have been misapprehended by Aristotle, as Mr. Row has pointed out. Virtue, according to Aristotle, is a mean between two extremes. He defines Happiness in connection with it,—*ψυχῆς ἐνέργειά τις κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἀρίστην ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ*—that is to say, an energy of the soul according to perfect virtue in a perfect life. That leads him necessarily to a discussion of what perfect virtue is, and that could not be carried out without an analysis of the intellectual as well as of the moral virtues. Thus the whole is made to lead up to that perfect life we believe to be developed in Christianity. Christianity adopts the same definition of happiness; but we must bear in mind that we have a perfect life set before us, and a polity of an exact kind in our Revelation, of which Aristotle was wholly ignorant. And I agree with Mr. Row in his view that nothing will impress our religion properly upon the conscience of the world but pointing out in this nineteenth century that ethics and Christianity are really inseparable, and are both parts of the same system of our Christian polity. Another defect which I have to point out in the paper of Mr. English is that he has fallen into the usual error of almost all moral and metaphysical writers, in making minute subdivisions and classifications of human faculties and powers, using words in peculiar senses of his own, and endeavouring to impose those senses upon other people. When men will begin moral and metaphysical science with arbitrary definitions, they will never convince the world of their conclusions. They must really use language in its ordinary common-sense meaning, and endeavour to show people the truth without teaching them a nomenclature to begin with. But there is one point on which I must express a very different opinion from the author, and that is concerning the freedom of the will. I am quite sure that this is the one point on which Christianity will, in our day, have to fight its battle. The whole tendency of the day is to turn men’s minds from the will to a kind of inert action, which they call force. I say “inert action,” for I really think that nothing short of that contradictory term will express my meaning. They deny that which is the real cause of all action, and yet seeing constant motion and action in the universe, they attribute it to an abstract idea. We shall have to fight the battle of Christianity on that question of the will of man. But though I must not be understood as even here acquiescing in the *obiter dicta* of Mr. English, yet I must thank him very heartily for the fearless way in which he has combated the infidelity of Mr. Mill and others. I think too he is quite right in confronting the *dicta* of Mr. Mill with those of the author of *Ecce Homo* in one point. It required no little assurance on the part of a public man in England in this nineteenth century to speak of Christianity as Mr. Mill has spoken of it; and I am not myself surprised

that, after having so expressed himself in his *Essay on Liberty*, he has gone further, and, according to the newspapers, has refused to say he acknowledges the being of a God. The two things go together; the latter explains the former. Previously, when we found fault with the sneers at our religion contained in Mr. Mill's books, we were told, in a triumphant way, that we could not lay our finger upon any passage of direct denial of fundamental truth; and there was a sort of popular truth in that, because he had veiled his intentions, and average readers would very frequently fail to perceive his drift. But Mr. English has, in this paper, brought out into strong relief some of his most mischievous sentiments, and now it is for Mr. Mill and his friends, when they see the prominence here given to these things, to make the best of them, and to meet us if they will in this place. There will be many opportunities in addition to this of discussing the ethics of Positivism. But before I sit down let me allude to a point raised by Mr. Row as to the passage from Adam Smith; and observe that not until the time of Porphyry and Iamblichus, both Neo-Platonists and born in the third century of the Christian era, have we anything in the heathen writers of Alexandria that corresponds to that passage.

MR. REDDIE.—Allow me to observe on that point that Cudworth and Hutcheson are also referred to in the paper quoted from Adam Smith as belonging to that school of Neo-Platonists; but no one would dispute that Cudworth's writings are especially imbued with Christianity; and Hutcheson, in the introduction to his *Moral Philosophy*, addressed to the students of the universities, while he recommends them to go to elementary books, in order to obtain all the instruction they can from the Greek and Roman writers, goes on further to say:—"Have recourse also to the yet purer fountain of the Holy Scripture, which alone gives sinful mortals hopes of a happy immortality"; and throughout his lectures he always leaves the question of human virtue open to supernatural influences on man by the Spirit of God. And so I believe that all those writers to whom Adam Smith has referred were essentially Christian, and unquestionably those named were not *pre-Christian* writers. I make these remarks now, but as the subject is a very large one, and as so many points in Mr. English's suggestive essay are yet entirely unnoticed, I beg leave to move the adjournment of the discussion to our next meeting.

The Rev. W. Mitchell seconded this proposal, which was agreed to; and the Meeting then adjourned.

## ORDINARY MEETING, DECEMBER 21, 1868.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G., PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

THE minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The discussion on the Rev. W. W. English's paper on "Ethical Philosophy," &c., was resumed as follows :—

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I am not aware whether Mr. English is present to-night ?—

Mr. REDDIE.—No, he is not.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I am sorry for that, because that made me abstain to some extent at our last meeting from expressing the severe disappointment which I felt on reading Mr. English's paper. I thought that when we are occupying, and hoping to occupy permanently, a position before the world which should be defensive, a position that should be a credit to our Christianity, it was a pity that we should put forward anything on an ethical subject that would not bear scientific and careful examination. I do not think the paper before us, regarded as a whole, is exactly that which this Institute ought to throw down as a challenge to the scientific world—

Mr. REDDIE.—I really must beg here to observe that authors are alone responsible for their papers. If we were only to bring forward those papers which the Institute could adopt, it would close discussion altogether. I think those observations which have just been made by Dr. Irons have more the nature of reflections on the Council, for passing the paper of Mr. English, than on the author. You cannot make a man think in your own way. We have had a former and very valuable paper from Mr. English on another subject ; and though I admit that the paper now before us is discursive, still it is the first paper we have had upon ethics, and the author could only be expected to deal with it in his own way.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I am only saying why I think the paper is defective. Its discursive character is such, that we could not put it before the world with much credit to ourselves. I do not say this as blaming the Institute, but because we are bound to remember the very great sacredness of our cause and to put before this gainsaying and truth-denying generation nothing that will not bear very close examination. I am only to discuss the paper before us, and not by any means the acts of the Council, who have no doubt done their best. On this occasion we have to deal with ethical

science in its relation to other sciences and to Christianity ; and I would say that ethical science ought, in an association like ours, to be regarded *per se* and previous altogether to the conception of revelation. If man is a responsible being at all, he is so before revelation comes to him. Man as man, is accountable for his actions everywhere, and if he were not accountable beforehand, revelation by coming to him could not make him an accountable being. But the two things are mixed up together in a strange way in this paper. Ideas which are purely Christian ideas, are mixed with those which are purely philosophical and ethical, so that you cannot tell where the ethics end and where the revealed system really begins. Now man, if we are to regard him as a being, responsible to God and to his fellow-creatures, must be first of all contemplated as responsible to his fellow-men. In the first instance he finds himself in society held accountable undoubtedly by his fellow-men for what he does, and the idea of God, though implanted in him, is elicited from his nature subsequently. That prior notion of accountability belongs to him as a conscious being from the very moment he begins to act among his fellows. The religious idea of accountability is a subsequent idea. Various additional helps are given ; many new truths are implanted by revelation ; but those helps and those truths are wholly subsequent, *in modo concipiendi* as well as in fact, to those prior notions of accountability. There should then have been a careful line drawn between ethics and revealed religion. The notion of grace, for example—and I only give it as an example—the notion of grace is assumed in one part of the paper. We as Christians thank our God that He does impart His grace to strengthen our defective moral agency, but we have no business as philosophers to assume the idea of grace until we have cleared the ground beforehand and shown the nature of the previous accountability—the nature of the defect—the need of the supply. Then I find the same unhappy deficiency in the paper in treating the question of free will—the mingling, that is, of the two sets of ideas, the ethical and the revealed ; the ethical and the purely Christian or religious. If you will turn to the chapter on “the efficient cause of human action” you will find it quite impossible to ascertain what the philosophy of the writer is. He assumes in every point. He says :—“The appetites, desires, affections, &c., forming that part of human nature called the sensitivity, were designed to be under the direction and control of reason and conscience.” I suppose there are at least half a dozen enormous assumptions in that sentence—assumptions which imply both religion and moral philosophy, but in the most indistinct way. The sentence puzzles me. Then he goes on :—“Yet these springs and guides are also dependent upon the *will*, as the last link in the chain of intention and the first of action. But what is volition ? how comes it to pass ? Do the sensitivity and intellect invariably guide and *necessitate* the will ?” I seem to be reading words without any clear and logical meaning at all. I am not at all aware that there is a part of human nature called the sensitivity ; it is a term that I am not familiar with—it requires explanation. Nor am I at all aware that the sensitivity and intellect invariably guide and necessitate

the will. They are words with so very little meaning to me that I acknowledge I am obliged to translate them in order to get at any sense. I do not acknowledge these separate faculties or constituents of human nature, and how the one can be said to necessitate and invariably guide the other is to me very amazing. I only quote this one passage to explain to you my whole and entire recoil from the style of treatment adopted in this paper. But the Council I think has done very wisely in putting the paper before us, because it exhibits to us the condition of some men's minds—how they assume to proceed from what they imagine to be premisses, and so amuse themselves and convince nobody. I regret to speak so strongly in Mr. English's absence, but if I have to speak at all, your lordship will understand I have nothing to say but what I think. Here, as lovers of free thought, in this great city of London, in this hard-thinking age, we are bound to be quite candid and outspoken with one another, and I give Mr. English my full permission (so far as he needs it, though of course it is not necessary) to pull my paper to pieces when it comes before you, and to speak of it as plainly and clearly as I have spoken of his. I do not know Mr. English personally, and therefore I have been actuated in what I have said by no other feeling whatever than that of the love of truth, and a desire to deal honestly with the paper before us. I am the more earnest on this subject because I do believe in the high destiny which is before us if we are faithful to our trust. Christianity and moral truth are being attacked with an earnestness and with a reality in our day which have never been known before. No one can have read the startling pamphlets of the Bishop of Orleans without being aware that there is now throughout Europe, and in our own favoured land as well as others, an organization of atheism and of extreme infidelity, which can only be met on our part by deep earnest faith in Our Blessed Lord, and that solid reasoning which He has given us to use in His service. They must never be separated. We find that there are now 127 associations of workmen in different parts of Europe, from Berlin to Rome, which are meeting at this very moment at Nuremburg by deputation, and the men forming these associations have laid it down in their programme, that there is no God; that the idea of God is hostile to human progress; that there should be no such thing as inequality of rank; that all that is to be entirely obliterated; and that the idea of a workman being a workman is itself unlawful. These 127 associations throughout Europe, which are to be affiliated with our own trades' unions, are disseminating principles throughout the whole of Christendom which must be subversive of everything like civilization, and must reduce mankind to a savage state if carried out. Now, my Lord, if these words appear exaggerated in the slightest degree to any one present, I would simply ask him to look at the statistics and the proved facts as set forth by Mgr. Dupanloup, the Bishop of Orleans. He leaves you in no doubt of this real atheism of the working classes, who immensely outnumber all other classes in Europe. That we are in a great crisis no thoughtful man can doubt. But I say this without the least panic. We know who has placed His church upon a rock, that Rock Himself. I have

no doubt or hesitation whatever when I contemplate the future ; but every one needs to become very earnest in the face of these facts. It is because I feel that this Institute has a mighty work to do in standing forward in God's name to meet the infidelity of the age at every point that I deprecate anything like a weak treatment of a moral subject. Now one word as to my own paper. It will be very painful of course after this to say even one word——

Mr. REDDIE.—But are you not travelling into a foreign subject, Dr. Irons? We are rather discursive as it is, and it would be as well, I think, not to speak upon a new subject.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—You seem to suppose that in what I said earlier I was impugning the character of our Institute by objecting to the feebleness of some portions of Mr. English's paper. But I said what I have said simply because I value our Institute. I do not wish it to be supposed that I am in the slightest degree disparaging it, but the reverse. I was about to say that with respect to the paper which the Council have been good enough to ask me to read, I shall be quite unable to deal with it in one single evening. I should take up so much time with the paper itself, that it would be impossible to have any discussion upon it ; therefore, with the permission of the chairman, I will read only a portion on the first occasion, and that will be purely ethical, and will have nothing whatever to do with the revealed part of ethics.

Mr. REDDIE.—I am sorry I have been somewhat misunderstood in the remarks which I felt it my duty to make officially, as the Hon. Secretary of the Institute. I think it is undesirable that any one should go into any general discussion as to the importance of this Institute, or into its general principles or objects, because all our members know that this Society was formed for the purpose of meeting the Atheism to which Dr. Irons has referred. I also think it would be very unwise if our Council were to take an extremely—shall I say harsh?—view of the papers submitted to them by our fellow-workers in the Institute. Such a course would necessitate our rejection of many more papers submitted to us than we already refuse. I am sorry, in some respects, that Dr. Irons has spoken again so very strongly to-night—for he did so at our last meeting—upon the general character of Mr. English's paper, though I am extremely anxious to have as much as possible of criticism on the arguments which Mr. English has advanced. No doubt there is no apology necessary for the most free discussion of any paper. Mr. English, of all writers, comes before us as a free lance : he speaks plainly himself ; he is a critic, and criticises many writers ; and every one is entitled to speak quite freely upon his paper. But in doing this we must not lose sight of the merits of the paper ; and one of these is, that it opens up, for almost the first time in the proceedings of our Institute, the subject of ethics. It is not absolutely the first time the subject has been brought before us, for Mr. Row read a very valuable paper on Buckle's *History of Civilization*, last year, in which ethics were largely dealt with. Mr. English had not the advantage of seeing that paper, or doubtless he would in some respects have modified

his present one. One feature in Mr. English's paper is that it contains so much controvertible matter ; and I hope Dr. Irons and others will take up various of its points in subsequent essays. In a general paper of this kind, where the author is acting on the defensive against the attacks of others—and this Institute, as Dr. Irons has pointed out, is really a defensive Society,—the writer is not exactly able to take his own line always. It is not like writing an abstract paper on moral responsibility, such as we shall have from Dr. Irons shortly, and in which the subject is treated *per se*, partaking more of the nature of a formal abstract treatise. On the contrary, this paper is written, one may almost say, in reply to various public writers who have treated of the subjects quite as discursively as Mr. English has done. I must say so much in defence of the paper, which I think it would not have been at all right in us to have rejected ; indeed, for my own part, I should have been content to have taken the essay blindfold from Mr. English, because of the great value of his former paper on miracles, although I was his principal critic and opponent upon that occasion.—Now I come to the paper itself ; and here I am going to speak quite freely, as I am sure Mr. English will expect. He will have the right of sending us a written reply, as he is non-resident. He would have been present to-night if he could have come, but he was unable, from other engagements, to be with us. However, he sent us a very valuable written reply on a former occasion, and I have no doubt he will do so now. In dealing with the paper, I am led first to the remarks which are made on Professor Tyndall ; and here I think Mr. English, in his zeal for the very cause which Dr. Irons has advocated, has somewhat misapprehended Professor Tyndall's meaning. He seems to consider that Professor Tyndall has said, that the connection between soul and body is not necessary. Now, I am quite sure Professor Tyndall does not think that, and, indeed, that is not what he has said. What Professor Tyndall says is :—“ Associated with this wonderful mechanism of the animal body, we have phenomena no less certain than those of physics ; between which and this mechanism we discover no necessary connection. A man, for example, can say, *I feel, I think, I love.*” Professor Tyndall is not, then, speaking of the connection between soul and body, but of the connection between certain *actions of the mind* or soul and the body, such as are expressed by the words, “ I feel,” “ I think.” Then Professor Tyndall goes on to ask, “ But how does consciousness infuse itself into the problem ? ” and Mr. English admits, in the words of the Professor, “ that the ‘ problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern phase as it was in the pre-historic ages.’ ” By “ insoluble,” I suppose, is meant “ insolvable,”—as a problem is not like sugar or salt—it cannot be melted, it must be solved. Professor Tyndall may know a great deal about the opinions which were entertained in the pre-historic ages, though I am not aware that there is any record of them (laughter) ; but, at all events, Mr. English does not make that a point of dispute. But Mr. English asks, “ Why is the connection between body and soul severed by pain in so short a time, if that connection is not necessary in the eyes of science ? ” and I only refer to this to show

how loose the argument is. Either Professor Tyndall does not maintain what Mr. English says he does, or Mr. English himself believes what he seems to argue against. My own opinion is, that Mr. English does believe that the body and soul may be separated without the destruction of the soul, and I am not sure that Professor Tyndall does hold that view!—Then Mr. English says:—“What is ethical cannot be separated from what is physical and theological, very frequently.” Well, “*very frequently*” we do know that that may be so, but until you come to those words, he seems to be putting an invariable and absolute proposition before us. Then he says:—“Mind is connected with matter, and both have to do with morals.” But mind is not connected with matter abstractedly, and there is no necessary connection between them always. And “both have to do with morals.” Now that I deny. I deny that matter has to do with morals, and such an assertion seems to me almost as if we were drifting into Manichæism. All that is moral or immoral is connected with mind alone and not with the mere animal body. It is not that which goeth into a man that defileth him, but that which cometh out of him. We have high authority for that. It is the defilement in the mind that constitutes immorality. Then there is another point in the paper which I must notice, because we must bear in mind that this paper is thrown out as a challenge to the men of science. I heard Professor Tyndall make use of similar language to that now animadverted upon, greatly to my delight, in Sion College, on the occasion of Professor Huxley reading his paper there; and I considered it an acknowledgment that “there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of” in natural-science-philosophy. But what will Professor Tyndall and his friends think when they come to read this? Mr. English refers to the Positivist notion “that every branch of knowledge leads the inquirer through three stages; that the mind, on seeing phenomena, first desires to know the causes at work producing such phenomena; then, leaving causes, it seeks after abstract forces; and lastly, confines itself to laws,—‘the God of this world, which blinds the minds of them that believe not.’” Now I protest against that. I am sorry to have texts introduced at all into our papers; but how the natural laws, the laws of God’s nature, should be connected with “the God of this world which blinds the minds of them that believe not” I cannot understand. “The God of this world” alluded to by the Apostle is the spirit of evil; and the spirit of evil has nothing to do with those natural laws of God’s ordaining. I am surprised that that passage should have escaped Mr. English’s pen. And now let me pass on to another part of the paper, where there is a still more extraordinary error, in allusion to St. Paul’s admonition to the Philippians:—“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Mr. English, after quoting that text, goes on to say:—“Which St. Paul bade the Philippians ‘think on,’ if there be any such thing as virtue.” But the text means nothing of the kind. St. Paul, after enumerating a great many things, simply

goes on to suggest, "if there be any other virtue or aught else praiseworthy, to think of these things." But in the paper before us, it seems as if there were some question raised as to whether there be any such thing as virtue at all! I certainly think that we should have Scriptural texts more carefully used, if used at all. Then there are some phrases used by Mr. English which have puzzled me not a little. I was not so much puzzled about "sensitivity" as Dr. Irons seemed to have been, because I think I know what is meant by the term, but the phrase "presentative faculties" puzzled me considerably. I am not sure what faculties are to be called presentative, because whenever I think, I have something before my mind, and I apprehend all our faculties come into that category. But no doubt Mr. English will be able to throw some light upon the point in his reply. But I will not proceed any further with this minute criticism. I will only take now one or two of the more important points. And I come first to that passage where Mr. English seems to me to press Professor Tyndall—I have no doubt, without any intention of unfairly pressing him,—and he seems to consider him as saying something bad when he is really saying something good. He quotes this passage from Professor Tyndall:—"The scientific mind can find no repose in the mere registration of sequences in nature. The further question intrudes itself with resistless might—whence comes this sequence? What is it that binds the consequent with its antecedent in nature? The truly scientific intellect never can attain rest until it reaches the forces by which the observed succession was produced." Now, I consider that is a positive acknowledgment on the part of a distinguished scientific philosopher that the sceptical theory of Hume, that all things in nature were merely a series of sequences, is not true. I was glad to welcome that acknowledgment, and I do not know why Mr. English is not satisfied with it. He says:—"I have a fair-haired boy of five whom I feel in danger of regarding as 'truly scientific,' for he bothers my very life out to know the cause of everything." Well, my answer to that is, that the man is the same as the child, only with a larger experience. It is an astonishing thing how early children begin to reason; and I should be sorry to think there is a line drawn between the philosophical mind and the child's mind—in fact, I am inclined to believe that the more philosophical the more childlike. I repeat that I do not understand why Mr. English is not satisfied with this admission of Professor Tyndall's. I was glad to see it, for I thought it was anti-Positivist, and not atheistic at all. Then Mr. English goes on to the question "what is force?" and on the next page, with a mark of admiration, he says:—"Force! why who has ever tried to conceive what this word can mean, further than his own conscious efforts of volition, as by a sort of figure, enable him?" But any one who feels a stone fall upon him has a strong impression of force without any conscious effort of volition. The reflex action is a different and subsequent operation of the mind. Any one who feels the weight of a stone which falls upon him must be impressed with the notion of being weighed down, and although I have no doubt he will believe that the blow must be due to some preceding force that caused it, still that is not the first thing in his mind. I wish Mr.

English had been more careful in the use of these expressions. Then he pulls up Professor Tyndall for substituting the word "doubtful" for "invisible" in some argument which he does not tell us anything more about than that the Professor proceeded "to argue upon the change of terms, as if it were warrantable." Everybody knows that this is unwarrantable in logic; but Mr. English himself is guilty of the very same fault on the next page, in a very important matter, namely, as to whether miracles are to be considered as coming under laws or not. He says:—"Law, in the sense of order, may be said to be common to all branches of philosophy. There is an order of thought as well as an order of material sequence." But there is no connection between the material sequence by which a heavy body falls to the ground and the order of human thought. I only wish we were all as steady in our thinking as a stone is in falling! But Mr. English, by looking at all sorts of things in nature, and seeing that there is an "order" which belongs to them, tries to bring them all into the category of the same order. Then he says:—"Law denotes order, not force, and it is common to all branches of philosophy, metaphysical, moral, and material." But before that, he says he has been asked—(and I remember it was I who asked him the question in my Annual Address two years ago)—"Do you, in fact, use the term law in the same sense as when you speak of physical law?" He says he was asked that question when speaking of miracles, "as coming under a system of moral law." Now I never made any allusion to moral law at all: I was speaking of regular laws, invariable in their action. He says:—"Law denotes order, and not force." But nobody ever said it did mean force. It was, in fact, I who argued that it meant order; and I quoted Bishop Butler in defence of that, to show that the laws of nature had only a meaning by being understood to mean something settled and fixed; that is, "orderly." If any one applied the sense of force to them, it was Mr. English himself, when he spoke of the force of nature intercepting the fall of a stone. He rings the changes upon these words, and in point of fact does just that which he says is wholly unwarrantable in Professor Tyndall! Again he tells us:—"Every one truth is connected with some other truth." Now I am not quite sure of that; I should like to see it proved as well as stated, though no doubt there are many truths that are thus correlated. Further on Mr. English speaks of the atonement as "the highest form of that friendly help and mediation which by nature God has taught us to render to each other." But of course he does not suppose that that is all that is meant by the atonement,—and as that is perhaps the least thing it implies, I think it is rather a pity that he has introduced that sentence. In the same page Mr. English tells us:—"There is a Christian as well as a natural philosophy." We know the *Saturday Review* has recently had an article on Christian Science, sneering at the very notion; and I am glad Mr. English makes a stand for it, and am quite prepared to make allowance for his mode of advocating the thing, so that we get the thing done. He alludes to the main object of this Society as being "the consideration of the mutual bearings of the different branches of science and

philosophy," referring them "as branches to some more comprehensive and fundamental principles based upon faith in one Eternal God;"—and upon that subject we want a whole series of papers. There was a great deal said at our last meeting as to "the habit of virtue," quoted by Mr. English as from Aristotle's *Ethics*. Mr. English says:—"Ethical or moral philosophy is the science of right and duty—the 'habit of virtue,' according to Aristotle." But Aristotle never called it the "habit of virtue," and though Mr. English uses inverted commas, that phrase, I imagine, is not a quotation. He then proceeds to discuss the nature of virtue; but "the regulative principles of moral action" treated of here are dealt with in a way which I agree with Dr. Irons leads to nothing as regards the subject before us. No doubt there is much of that part of the paper which is incontrovertible, and with which we should agree; but his is a critical paper, and Mr. English is laying himself and us open to a great deal of counter-criticism, and I think that should be avoided as far as possible. At our last meeting I referred to Dr. Hutcheson's *Moral Philosophy*. In that valuable epitome of lectures there is a definition of the cardinal virtues. Mr. English defines them also, but only one of them accurately, I think, and that is temperance. In prudence he rather describes wisdom. We know there is a connection between wisdom and prudence, but they are not the same thing. Nor do I think he quite gives the New Testament idea of prudence. The New Testament doctrine of prudence is rather found where Christ taught His disciples to be "wise as serpents." So with fortitude. Surely fortitude does not consist alone in "maintaining a spirit of honour and magnanimity;" or, in the act of Christ, in "going into Judæa again to the post of duty." No doubt, in a certain sense, that must be admitted to be fortitude, but we have surely many other better illustrations; for instance, St. Paul tells Timothy to "endure hardness," and that is fortitude. Then there is a certain looseness about Mr. English's way of treating the subject of ethics, which is to be regretted. Professor Hutcheson, although he treats the subject very much in the way in which Dr. Irons says it should be treated, by taking ethics apart from revelation, always leads you up on questions of virtue to revelation, and in the preface to his lectures he directs attention to the Holy Scriptures as completing the ethical studies of his students. A very important statement was made by Mr. Row at our last meeting, and confirmed by Dr. Irons, and the subject is also glanced at in the paper before us,—namely, with reference to the utter want of attention given to Christian morals in our universities. Now that should be taken to some extent as an excuse for Mr. John Stuart Mill in coming to the conclusion that no one has been able to deduce a system of morals from the New Testament. Our Christian universities are certainly open to the charge that they have done very little in this direction. I recollect some years ago reading a then recent book—I will not name its author—with the title of *Christian Morals*, and I found it a very weak production indeed; and, unquestionably, I don't understand why Christian men in our universities, when they have treated of ethics, have not risen beyond the traditions of Plato and Aristotle, and deduced a system of morals from the New Testa-

ment, and raised the whole tone of ethical philosophy by introducing that important doctrine of faith which Mr. Row on more than one occasion has spoken of. It is in this that I think Mr. English's paper is weak, for he seems not to think that the heathen morals and Christian morals must to a great extent necessarily agree. There may be some excuse for Mr. John Stuart Mill holding the opinions he does, owing to the utter neglect on the part of Christian teachers to do justice to the most noble subject that could engage them. But even taking Mr. Mill's language as quoted by Mr. English, I think Mr. English has rather strained the meaning. Mr. Mill says :— "Orthodox Christians who are tempted to think that those who stoned to death the first martyrs must have been worse men than they themselves are, ought to remember that one of those persecutors was St. Paul." "No," says Mr. English, "it was not St. Paul the Christian, it was Saul, an unconverted Jew." But it should be remembered that Mr. Mill is speaking merely of the identity of the man, and not of the name he went by ; and no doubt he was a good Pharisee before his conversion, and that is all Mr. Mill asserts. The censure which Mr. English here throws upon Mr. Mill is in my opinion quite undeserved. There is a great deal of truth in what Mr. Mill says, and we need not be offended with him for saying it. I do not agree with him in many of his principles at all ; but I do not see the use of forcing a man's words rather against what he appears to argue. There is only one other point which I wish to refer to. At our last meeting Mr. Row made some remarks about self-love as a Christian principle ; but I do not think he made them strong enough, though one gentleman made a strong protestation against his views. Now we should be very cautious in dealing with this point ; self-love is one thing, but selfishness is quite another. Self-love is really a foundation principle of Christianity. The very message of the Gospel is, "Save yourselves,"—admitting that that principle is of the first importance. Then we are told, "Love your neighbour *as yourself*,"—showing that you are expected to love yourself first ; and I am very sure of this, that if we only love our neighbours *as ourselves*, we may then properly love ourselves as much as ever we please. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. C. A. Row.—I should not have risen again this evening if it had not been that I wish to correct an inaccuracy into which Mr. English has fallen. He has inaccurately quoted Mr. John Stuart Mill, and it is a thoroughly inaccurate quotation. Mr. English says, "But Mr. Mill advances to a more direct charge :—'I do not scruple to say that the New Testament morality is in many important points incomplete and one-sided, and that unless ideas and feelings not sanctioned by it had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse state now than they are.'" But Mr. Mill does not say that. What he says is :—"What is called Christian, but should rather be termed theological morality, was not the work of Christ or of the apostles, but is of much later origin, having been gradually built up by the Catholic Church of the first five centuries ; and though not implicitly adopted by moderns and Protestants, has been much less modified by them than might have been expected. For the most part,

indeed, they have contented themselves with cutting off the additions which had been made to it in the Middle Ages, each sect supplying the place by fresh additions adapted to its own character and tendencies. That mankind owe a great debt to that morality and to its early teachers I should be the last person to deny ; but" (and here comes in the passage quoted by Mr. English) "I do not scruple to say of it that it is in many important points incomplete and one-sided, and that unless ideas and feelings not sanctioned by it had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are." What Mr. Mill says, therefore, is that the moral teaching of the first five centuries of the Christian era was of that character ; but he expressly excludes the moral teaching of our Lord, whereas Mr. English makes him call it the New Testament morality. No doubt if Mr. English had gone a little further into Mr. Mill's book he would have found matter which we should all take serious exception to, as in this passage :—"It can do truth no service to blink a fact known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected the Christian faith." That is certainly very strong, but it is of no use to misrepresent or misquote Mr. Mill on other points. And now with regard to that quotation from Adam Smith. I have been looking into Adam Smith, and I found, as I expected, that he gives no citation to enable me to refer the passage which Mr. English has taken from him to any author of the Augustan age, or thereabouts. But the preceding paragraph is so exceedingly loose, that much of the language may have been written any time within the first two centuries. It is absurd to suppose that it was written in the Augustan age ; and, as I have already pointed out, a few years with regard to morality sometimes involve the whole issue, whether it comes from a pagan or from a Christian source. We must know distinctly the date of any author before we can bring him into contact with the four gospels, and that is a point of which I am exceedingly jealous. As Mr. Reddie has pointed out, moral philosophy is in a most lamentable condition, and we cannot speak too strongly of this. If I were ten years younger, I would see if I could not do something to improve it. So far as Oxford is concerned, moral philosophy is in my opinion in a declining state, I am sorry to say. In my day much weight was attached to Bishop Butler. I am not prepared to say that he really gives us a full exemplification of Christian philosophy ; but now he is very little studied at Oxford, and in his place Mill and others are brought in to be studied. I am really afraid that moral philosophy at Oxford at this moment has much of the atheistical about it.

Rev. Dr. THORNTON.—All that I should have said on the paper before us has been very accurately and ably said already, and I should not have risen at all, had it not been that the ears of an Oxford man are very sensitive, when he hears his university mentioned ; and as I myself have been concerned there for some time with tuition, I must, after what has been said by Mr. Row, attempt to defend my university a little. The study of moral

philosophy has not been so much neglected there as the older Oxonians present might think. One great reason why a proper system has not been adopted in teaching it is that we have no logic. There is no such thing in existence now in England as a real logic. We have no real science of logic, and the systems of Sanderson and writers of that kind are looked at with contempt or serve as pegs to hang criticisms upon. I know I learnt logic by committing to memory a compendium, and I was told by my tutor that the book was wrong on every point, and we took it part by part. (Laughter.) Now I put it to any sensible gentleman or lady present, whether the proper way to learn a science is to give a man a compendium that is quite wrong, and then to teach him where it is bad. The main reason, therefore, why I think morality has not been accurately and properly studied is the want of a true logic—there is a certain haziness that must first be got rid of. If Mr. Row would elaborate a system for us I have no doubt it would be followed. The reason why the coping-stone has not been placed on our system of ethical philosophy—that coping-stone which would be placed by introducing into morality and adding to it that which we learn from revelation—the reason why that has not been done is to be found in our unhappy theological disputes. There can be no doubt that when Plato was talking about the just man, and said “he will be even cut into splinters,” he was feeling about in the dark for some one about to come; and the same may be said of Aristotle’s *σπουδαῖος*, the good man, and *φρόνιμος*, the prudent man. It has been owing to our unhappy theological differences that we have been prevented from finishing ethics by a proper system of Christian morality, based on the teaching of the One truly Just and Good Man. I do not think Mr. English in this paper has clearly pointed out the relations of ethical philosophy to science and revelation. He has not shown how ethical philosophy is connected with revelation: he merely says there ought to be such a connection; and he has not shown its relation to science, because he has not gone on the principle of that saying of Leibnitz, who, to the sentence “*nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*,” added the remark “*nisi ipse intellectus*” (laughter), thus destroying all the point that appeared to be in the dictum. Now Mr. English should have done something of the same kind in regard to the relation between ethical philosophy and science. He should have pointed out how ethical philosophy is a contradiction to positivism, because it shows that there must be a philosophy which of itself cannot be positive, but always touches on higher truths, which positivism does not approach.

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—I feel that this is a subject which is very much beyond me, but I must say a word as an excuse for my own university. Ethics at one time were very widely studied in the University of Cambridge. I remember after taking my Bachelor’s degree, I had the good fortune to attend Professor Whewell’s lectures on Casuistry, which were nothing more than giving the students a *résumé* of the history of ethical philosophy, commencing with the ancients and coming down to the moderns. But when he came down to modern times, so great was the number of books and so great the

richness of English literature on the subject, that he felt himself bound to confine his criticisms and remarks to the writers of his own university, and I think most Cambridge men were astounded with the number of authors on ethical philosophy, and cases of conscience from the university library and other sources. He came into the room, lecture after lecture, with piles of books, and he gave us an admirable and valuable *résumé* of the opinions of the authors of these books, so that I do not think the study of ethics was altogether neglected—

MR. REDDIE.—He did not tell you that all the books were wrong, did he? (Laughter.)

REV. W. MITCHELL.—No, not all. (Laughter.) I remember the sermons which he preached on the subject when it came to his turn as university preacher, when he expressed a wish, which I have heard echoed here, that, considering the extreme value of the fragment we have of Bishop Butler, some one should add to it that which would complete Bishop Butler's labours as a system of Christian ethics. But looking at this matter from the light of common-sense men, I have to consider what would be the value of an ethical philosophy, supposing we were to have the *desideratum* of a complete course of Christian ethical philosophy. I presume the value sought for in such a complete course would be that it would make men moral. Now I may perhaps express extreme doubts, from what I know of moral philosophy, whether any such philosophical system would have the slightest effect on the masses at large. The ancients discovered that truths set forth under the form of strict logical sequence were too hard and difficult to be digested by the general mass. We had it stated by Mr. Row, at our last meeting, that Aristotle never sought to influence the popular mind, and that he therefore sought only to influence the philosophers—the few thinking minds. And that was not only the case with Aristotle, but with all the older ethical philosophers; and it was eminently the case with such men as Cicero and the Latin philosophers who wrote on the subject. Now what do you find is the great want of the present period when you strive to bring the principles of natural philosophy down to the masses? It is said we require a new system of works to be written entirely on what is now called technical education—that the logic of Euclid, for instance, where we have so good an exposition of the logical method as applied to strict inductive reasoning on the subject of geometry, is found so difficult that it cannot influence the mass of men, who require to be made acquainted with and to use geometrical principles. I believe it would be the same with moral philosophy if we had a complete system, and were to attempt to influence the masses by means of it. But, on the other hand, I maintain that the Bible, as a whole—both the Old and the New Testament—does teach ethics, and I maintain that it has taught ethics, and that it is the only book which has ever influenced the masses and made men moral. I maintain that the Bible does influence mankind, and that it is the only system of ethics which has ever transmuted men from mere savages into Christian men. You can find hundreds of such men who could give you a far more exalted system of ethics, and who have far

juster notions of virtue than ever Plato or Socrates professed. In thinking of a philosophical system of ethics, when we remember that our philosophical systems of teaching are so powerless with regard to the masses, it would be well if we were to confine our attention somewhat to the true philosophical method of teaching ethics which we discover in the Bible itself. If any one doubts whether there is such a thing as a pure system of ethics in the Bible, and the feasibility of teaching it to the masses, we have only to go back for eighteen hundred years and see whether the Christians as a body during that period had not been producing a continual series of men and women who in their lives have set forth the purest examples of morality that the world ever saw. On the other hand, if we consider the men in this country who have striven to make ethical systems which should be independent of New Testament revelation, do we not see that all those men have been signal failures in themselves, and have manifested in themselves the utter powerlessness of any ethical philosophy whatever to make men good and moral? And why is this? Because if we reject revelation we are obliged to reject the great truth which we learn from revelation, and which is confirmed by human nature. When we study ethics as manifested in man's moral nature, we are led to the astounding fact that we have to consider, as it were, a morbid anatomy of ethics. Scripture reveals to us that man has fallen from a higher state—that his moral nature is diseased, and that sin is that disease. It tells us what sin is against God, and what sin is against man; and it unfolds to us, as it were, the whole morbid anatomy of man's moral being. It is in the Bible alone, I contend, that we are taught moral philosophy in the manner best adapted to the hearts and consciences of mankind. Go back to the Old Testament. Did any ancient philosopher or writer on ethics ever bring before men more practically the duty of virtue and chastity than we have it in the history of Joseph? And what moral philosopher ever enunciated the principle that the Bible enunciates there—that grand principle to keep a man from erring, the fact of God's presence? Could Joseph do that sin against his God? Dare he do it? I may here—and that is the reason why I have taken the Old Testament for an illustration—refer incidentally to a work upon a cognate subject, though one would not think so from its title. I have derived considerable benefit from it myself, and so have others to whom I have introduced it. It is a work of extreme value. The book I refer to is Isaac Taylor's essay on Hebrew poetry. The author traces there the effect of the teaching of the Old Testament upon the Christian world who have listened to it for the last eighteen hundred years, and he shows how the reading of the Old Testament has, as it were, saturated men continually hearing it from their very infancy with some of the profoundest and most valuable truths, and has thus done much in making them moral and good. He says we are greatly indebted to that Old Testament reading, and to the psalms which we constantly hear in our churches, until the words become insensibly incorporated with our nature, as it were. We are indebted to that old Hebrew literature for the habitual feeling that we have of the presence of God about us—of God's omniscience and God's omnipotence. I

think that in constructing any ethical system we should have to make that feeling our foundation, and become indebted to the Old Testament for laying down the principles on which alone ethical philosophy can be raised.

Rev. Dr. Rigg.—I am very glad to have found myself able at last to be present at one of these meetings. I have long been a member of this association, but the pressure of business has made it impossible for me to be here before. Perhaps I may be permitted to express some of the feelings which have risen in my mind as I have sat, almost as a stranger, listening here. I confess it was with some feeling of disappointment that I heard the minute criticisms given at an earlier period of the meeting. I was longing that we might get to some principles and points bearing on the great questions before us, to which we might attach importance, and which might be discussed as principles. Still, the nature of the paper before the meeting was, no doubt, in itself the reason and, to a large extent, the justification for that minute criticism; and probably the want in the paper of any clear principles which should suggest the course of argument or discussion was another reason why in the earlier part of the meeting we were not led to look at these great principles and points to which I have referred. I confess I almost felt tempted, as I listened to Mr. Reddie's criticism, to a reaction in favour of Mr. English on one or two points. I confess it does seem to me that Mr. Reddie need not in his criticism have gone so far as to intimate a doubt as to whether each one truth does or does not involve another truth. I apprehend that we cannot even conceive a truth of any sort whatever without reference to other truths upon which it more or less depends, and which must be more or less inseparable from it. And I hope also that I may use the word "insoluble" in reference to a problem, and not be compelled to say "insolvable." With regard to "force" and "will" I think Mr. English is metaphysically right; and when we come to the metaphysical conception of which I apprehend he was speaking, force does inevitably and inseparably connect itself in our own mind or consciousness with something like our own consciousness of power or will. At the same time it is clear from what has been said by Dr. Irons, Mr. Reddie, and Mr. Row, that the paper to which our attention has been directed is characterized by at least the average preponderance of statements not very carefully sifted by the writer before he felt it his duty to give them to the society. As regards the principles which have been brought before us, there are two or three things which I should like to say. Mr. Mitchell has told us that only the Bible could have given us that grand principle of morality which in fact was the light of conscience in Joseph, but I could not help thinking myself—where did Joseph get that light from? At the time when Joseph was put under his temptation, he had no Bible to illuminate him. The very man who himself uttered that beautiful, and touching, and sublime principle, which Joseph enunciated, and which is recorded in the Bible, and which there occurs in its original character as the record of a previous fact—that very man must have derived the principle, not from any Bible, for there was none, but he must have been a moral being, a conscientiously moral being, a

person endowed with high ethical instincts, and intelligence, and conscience, prior to the fact of that revelation which we rejoice in. Now here is a truth perpetually coming out when we study the Scriptures closely, and that is, that we must remember that before the first book of Scripture there was a prior, anterior, primitive revelation without which we should have had no revelation at all. All these things combined have produced a large amount and degree of morality or of moral consciousness, and when we come to the New Testament and to Christian ethics, we come to a sort of concrete body of conceptions and of moral intuitions, which consist in part of that which was common to all the best and most thoughtful of all the moralists, and those most amenable to moral influences in the world, and in part of that which belongs to Christianity, and which being added to and connected with the other, makes the total amount of illumination with which we, as Christians, have to deal. We have been told that one reason why there is no moral philosophy in Oxford is because Oxford has no logic. But that only gives a reason for the fact that is previously stated—it does not at all diminish or mitigate the force of the fact itself, that we are without any complete system of ethics at our universities. But what does this statement concerning the want of a logic imply? It implies that we cannot get ethics in their completeness; that we cannot have them fully articulated, and developed, and made applicable to every case of life and conscience, unless the whole matter be thoroughly worked out by means of an applied logic. That is really the implication which underlies the statement, and it leads us to a conclusion of some importance. I believe it is of the utmost importance, even to the mass of the people, that we should have a complete and perfectly developed system of Christian ethics. We have been told often, and told here again to-night, that the morality of the New Testament is higher, and better, and more perfect than that of the ancient Greek philosophers. Undoubtedly that is true; but yet no one can have seen much of the effects of religion upon untutored minds, without admitting another truth, that where the mind is so untutored, morality itself suffers in the hands of those who are unquestionably true and fervent Christians, for want of a complete intellectual character and development. On the other hand, the effect of Christian morality upon the tutored mind, even when the Christian faith is to a large extent abandoned, is most marked. I have learnt something of this from some families who, for several generations, have not been orthodox. I refer to that body who have chosen to call themselves Unitarian. In the moralities and amenities of social life they are often pre-eminent; in matters of honour and fair dealing between man and man they often put to shame those who have more fervent religion, and, as I think, truer and more orthodox Christian views than themselves. What is the meaning of this? Why, from generation to generation they have represented a highly cultivated strain of Christian ethics. They are derived from good Presbyterian families of the time of the Commonwealth, and from that origin they have derived a good basis and substratum of Christian truth and morals. That has never been

lost; and there has been, in addition to that, all that could be gained in intellectual character and social refinement, and that has produced, from generation to generation, a higher development of the nicer and more exquisite proprieties of Christian morality and intercourse than is often found in those who have, if I may so say, the truth and the root of the matter. If we had more of that completeness of development of all that is included in Christian ethics, and if that were brought out fully in sermons, made clear and level with the understanding of the people, who wish to know what is right, and to do it; if we were to explain where and why a thing is wrong, and then were to preach the golden rule, we should have in future a much higher system of morality—of commercial, social, civic, and popular morality, than we have at present. Our children often desire to do what is right, but they do not know what is wrong until we tell them how one thing bears upon another, and their conscience then gets enlightened, and they act properly. On the same principle we should deal with persons who have fewer advantages than many of us in regard to culture; and I am certain that from a complete system of Christian ethics there would arise an increase of Christian propriety, refinement, and sensibility, such as we have never found hitherto. These are the remarks which I wished chiefly to make, and I hope that when Dr. Irons brings forward the paper of which he has given notice, we may see our way to throwing out some principles on which we may work at the subject, both *en masse* and in detail, and have as the result a really practical contribution to the science of Christian ethics.

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—I so thoroughly agree with Dr. Rigg that I am sure he misunderstood my application of the history of Joseph. When I spoke of the temptation of Joseph I was referring to what I considered a great historical phenomenon, and that is, the power of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures in making men moral men. Of course I agree with Dr. Rigg that it was not from the Scriptures that Joseph had his knowledge; he had it from association with his forefathers, who were men who knew God in a way that very few of us do. Remember he was only great-grandson of the man who had walked with God as a friend, and therefore I presume to say that Joseph had a knowledge of God's nature and holiness that few of us possess, even with the blessed influences that we have of the Holy Spirit of God. I merely say this in explanation, for I should be sorry to have it supposed that I do not agree with what Dr. Rigg has said. And now let me say one word more. If we had a complete system of ethical philosophy philosophically drawn out, I am extremely doubtful whether people would be more moral than they are now. I believe the most unwholesome reading which any one may have is a guide book on cases of conscience, and I do not think such a book would improve my morality. I cannot help thinking that the great majority of casuists, writing on cases of conscience, only teach men, not the purest morals, but the lowest degree of morality, by showing them how near they may go to sin without actually touching it.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—As to the want of a logic at Oxford, I must leave Dr. Thornton's statement untouched. But the statement made by Mr. Mitchell is of much more importance, that there really has been no effort made by Christian writers to inform the world as to what is Christian morality. I say that the very careful treatise of Thomas Aquinas ought to save us from the imputation that the world has been careless on this subject. Every one of the Christian virtues has been analyzed with the most minute care by that profound scholar, and although his method is not the modern method, still I say his conclusions are very careful and exact. Another remark has been made by Mr. Mitchell, which almost discourages me in the work I have undertaken. He almost goes the length of saying that anything like a careful and logical consideration of ethics is entirely a mistake, and that instead of making men good and moral, it will make them worse than they were before—

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—I was referring to the casuists.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—In the paper I am going to read before the Institute I shall try to be careful and practical. I understood Mr. Mitchell to say that careful study in morals is to be deprecated. May I ask him to explain to us what he means by that statement?

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—Dr. Irons has entirely misapprehended the drift of my remarks, which were as to the value of teaching the people in general, reaching the large masses of uninformed people, and influencing vast bodies of men. What I say is, that no system of ethical philosophy, independent of revelation, has produced such marvellous results in the world. I believe it could be done now if it has not been done already, and I believe a great deal has been done in this country by the clergy since the Reformation as well as by the clergy before the Reformation—by such men as Thomas Aquinas—to work out a pure system of ethical philosophy. I believe that if we were to hunt among the books in our libraries we might derive a very good system out of what we already possess. I do not think there is such a dearth of ethical philosophy as seems to be believed, but I believe if all this were done to-morrow it would not influence the masses. It might be of importance to meet the infidel with a system of well-reasoned ethics, and to show that we have in that only evolved the ethical principles of the Bible. I think that might be of importance, but I believe that such a system would not influence the masses—

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—Did any one say that we were to use ethical philosophy as a means of evangelizing the people? All we wish is that the metaphysics of to-day may become the common sense of a century hence.

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—With regard to cases of conscience I was only referring to those writers on ethics who took up that particular branch of casuistry called cases of conscience, and I still hold to my opinion that that is a very painful study indeed for those whose duty requires them to enter upon it, and unwholesome food for the mind. One has to approach it as one would go into a dissecting-room to learn morbid anatomy and the

nature of the diseases which the physician has to cure. The clergyman who is called on to deal with such cases of conscience feels, when he goes to the books, that they are not wholesome for his own soul, and he goes as a surgeon or physician would go into a dissecting-room.

Rev. Dr. RIGG.—If Mr. Mitchell's remarks did not apply to what fell from Dr. Irons, they must apply to what I said, or they are altogether irrelevant. Now I had no idea of sending people to books of casuistry to learn the treatment of extraordinary cases of conscience. The thought never entered my mind. All I intended was this,—let people who preach expound moral philosophy, and those who preach Christian duties expound Christian ethics, so that the clear and true comprehension of all that is included in ethics may eventually come within the scope of the common apprehension.

Mr. REDDIE.—It may be as well for us to remember that books of casuistry generally deal with immoralities, and not with the proper subjects of ethics. Aristotle calls ethics the science of virtue, and it is the virtues and not the vices of man that ethics teach. With regard to popularizing these things, I think Mr. Mitchell is unorthodox to this extent, that St. Paul decidedly speaks "of those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," showing that he considered that virtue was not only a habit, but that it required training, and that the mind ought to be trained to understand these things. We have therefore scriptural warrant for such work.

Rev. Mr. ROW.—This meeting seems likely to break up under some illusion. I do not think casuistry is a portion of ethical philosophy at all; if it is, it is an exceedingly subordinate one. Ethics deal with the whole system of motivity. Mr. Mitchell seems to think we cannot act upon the masses by ethical philosophy; but, surely, if our clergy get their minds enlarged to understand the Gospel better, they will be better fitted to teach the people.

Rev. W. MITCHELL.—I have only one more remark to make: the Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge is called the Professor of Casuistry.

Rev. Sir TILSON MARSH.—The principles of ethical philosophy are eternal, and therefore they are anterior to written revelation. They are inherent in the very nature of the Supreme Being. The distinctions between right and wrong are eternal principles; and when the nature of man was created, there was infused into the inferior nature by the Creative Power those inherent principles. That man has gone wrong has been due to the will. There is in the mind of man a sense of right and wrong; and the point where the machinery has got out of gear has been in the human will. Men know what is right, but they do not do it: they do not wish to do it, and that is why they do it not. With reference to Oxford, I will make only one remark, drawn from my own experience of many years, in close connection with many very superior Oxford men. The fault in our training there has been, not that we have led men to study closely the Aristotelian philosophy. By no means has that been the fault—it has been part of the

excellence of our training. Our fault has been that we have not superadded to it as we ought, the teaching of Christian morals. Christian morals in written revelation supply a motive power, which is not to be secured anywhere else, that motive power being, no doubt, the principle of faith. I think if we added this to our Aristotelian teaching at Oxford, then the teaching would afford a clear and satisfactory training in morals.

The meeting was then adjourned.

---

### REPLY BY THE REV. W. W. ENGLISH.

I AM favoured with a copy of the speeches delivered during the two nights' discussion on my paper, and requested to return it with a "brief reply as soon as possible." I will therefore take up the speeches in order, and if I omit anything of importance I must plead an imposed "brevity" as my excuse.

#### THE REV. C. A. ROW.

I must pass over all such unimportant remarks as those on "faith," because I have nowhere in a passing reference to it professed to define its full meaning. It appears to me absurd to criticise such passing observations as if they were intended to set forth a writer's full views. Mr. Row thinks my paper has not taken so "wide a view as it might have done," and says "moral philosophy is exceedingly extensive;" but I have taken a much "wider" view than even Mr. Row, for I have said that in its "relations and interactions" it is *universal*. Mr. Row says:—"The author in his subsequent pages implies that the intellect always follows, and does *not* precede moral action;" the author never wrote a sentence which implied anything so absurd. Is the arrangement of this essay not as follows—"springs"—"regulative principles"—"the efficient cause of action"? What authority can Mr. Row have for taking this moral machinery to pieces, and say that I have placed the action of "intellect" *after* "moral action"? Mr. Row actually confuses my analysis of *conscience* with *moral action*! Moral action comprises the sensitivity which *excites*—the intellect, or reason and conscience, which *guide*—and the will which *perfects* action. Mr. Row and another speaker refer to a quotation from Dr. Adam Smith, and invite me to justify it from history; but the following remarks will correct an apparent oversight and misconception. First, Dr. Adam Smith's words are "*after* the age of Augustus," and not, as Mr. Row says, "*in* the reign of Augustus." Secondly, the passage is not a quotation from any ancient author at all, but Dr. Adam Smith's own description of the views of Platonists in general. If

Mr. Row doubts its accuracy, it is for him to give his reasons. Thirdly, there appears to be some idea that in speaking of "philosophers" of the eclectic school, I must necessarily refer to men not Christians. I certainly protest against any divorce between faith and philosophy, and Dr. Adam Smith particularly refers to the "Fathers" as patrons of this philosophy, among whom was the illustrious Clement of Alexandria. I cannot answer Mr. Row's remark about "self love," because the word has been differently defined by philosophers, and I have not the slightest idea which view of it Mr. Row himself takes. I should have been exceedingly obliged to Mr. Row if he had detected any material misrepresentation of Mr. Mill's words, but with the exception of "Christian morality," which ought to be substituted for "New Testament morality," in one sentence, I fear there is no misrepresentation. Mr. Mill begins with defining "Christian morality," and says if it means "New Testament morality," then he wonders that any one could think of it as a "complete system of morals." Then after saying "to extract a body of ethical doctrine from the New Testament" we must "eke out of the old, &c.," he adds the passage given by Mr. Row, not as *distinguishing* "Christian" from "New Testament" morality, but as *that same* morality, with the individual glosses or additions of theologians. He does not exculpate the "New Testament," but charges it both before and after the passage referred to with defect. I fear, therefore, that my passage must remain as substantially just.

#### THE REV. DR. IRONS.

Dr. Irons complains of a "great want of method and arrangement" in my paper; but I think that my paper is strictly logical throughout as to "method and arrangement." Preliminary general considerations are taken first, then definitions of moral philosophy proper, then analysis of moral action comprising springs, guides, and efficient causation; and then I have added a section on virtue, the specific object to which moral action, as a subjective characteristic of man, is directed. I do not know what method Dr. Irons would have followed, but if he had departed from this arrangement, he would not have followed any logical order. He complains of my "arbitrary definitions." I reply that all the confusion in the world has arisen from neglect of this principle. Dr. Irons seems to fear my paper will not be "a credit to Christianity," and doubts whether this society should have read it. He says:—"The paper is not that which this Institute ought to throw down as a challenge to the scientific world;" I reply that it was written for a very different purpose, namely, to prove that the really scientific part of the world, and the New Testament, are agreed on the subject of ethics. He says a great deal about "accountability;" I have written on the philosophy of moral action, on virtue, and the relations of what is ethical to science and revelation. I have not discussed "accountability." Dr. Irons speaks of "where ethics end" and "where the revealed system ends," and charges me with "confusion;" but it was a main point

with me to prove that grace plants itself upon the ethical tree and ramifies through its every sprig and bough—see pages 395-7. The confusion I apprehend is in Dr. Irons's own mind—we have no *revelation* of ethics except in the *nature of man*—revelation proper has a very different object, to shew man a system of grace. To talk of a revelation of that which has existed from creation would be absurd—the New Testament is the *true interpreter* of previously existing ethical facts, it is not a *revealer* of ethical truth. Dr. Irons is “not aware that there is a part of human nature called the sensitivity; it is a term he is not familiar with—it requires explanation.” I hope the following explanation will make him familiar with its use and meaning—a late professor of moral philosophy has written :—“*Sensitivity* (τὸ αἰσθητικὸν) is now used as a general term to denote the capacity of feeling as distinguished from intellect and will. It includes sensations both external and internal, &c.” These are the words of a well known writer who was for about a quarter of a century professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow, and I had thought that most men who claimed to have any acquaintance with ethical subjects had been familiar with this term. Its Greek equivalent is not strange to either the New Testament or the works of Plato. I quite agree with Dr. Irons that essayists should not be “complimented as a matter of course;” indeed, I like the principle so well that I would even extend it to speakers. I never said will was “invariably guided and necessitated;” but I have tried on several pages to prove that it is *not*.

#### MR. REDDIE.

Dr. Rigg having answered several points I may pass over them, and correct Mr. Reddie in two places. He says :—“all that is moral or immoral is connected with mind alone, and not with the mere animal body.” What then of the “springs” of action? what of Butler's cases of “usurpation,” of “breaking in upon nature?” and what of St. Paul's “keeping under the body?” That the mind's office is to *regulate* action everybody admits, but the above sentence contradicts all mankind except that part of it which is Mr. Reddie's. Again my words “and lastly confines itself to laws, the God of this world, &c.,” surely ought never to have been misunderstood—they do not refer to any “connection” between “law” and the “evil spirit,” but to that atheistic phase of positivism, or that atheistic phase of thought in positive philosophers which refuses to see anything beyond mere “law.” If Mr. Reddie dislikes to have texts quoted he should set a better example, for of all speakers he is the most frequent offender. He says I am a “free lance;” he will not, therefore, object to hear from me in my own character. The passage in Philippians was not quoted as if there were “any question raised as to whether there be any such thing as virtue,” but as setting forth in Scripture language the objective part of virtue itself, as truth, honesty, purity, &c. The “presentative faculties” are such as bring before the mind

matter upon which to think. I referred to Dr. Tyndall's words, and my little boys' thirst for knowledge, simply to shew the absurdity of such bombastic phrases cropping up at every turn as "the truly scientific intellect." The falling of a stone upon a man's body imparts the feeling of pain rather than any philosophic idea of force—Mr. Reddie confuses here effect with cause. I never tried to bring "all things into the category of the same order." Each system of law has necessarily an order of its own. I have not attempted any strict logical definition of the cardinal virtues—I have simply tried to illustrate them. I am sure better Scripture illustrations might be found.

THE REV. DR. THORNTON.

Dr. Thornton will find that I have tried to show that moral philosophy is "universal" in its "interactions and relations," and that every separate doctrine of Christianity, as regeneration, atonement, conversion, faith, &c., is made to work upon ethical principles. How could I point out fully in a few pages the "relations" to science and revelation? I have simply suggested the train of thought that might be worked out.

THE REV. DR. RIGG.

Dr. Rigg's "longing for principles and points bearing upon the great questions before us" is exactly what I have longed for in vain. The speeches have all been confined to small chips from the block—not one speaker has taken the subject in his hand and criticised it. And I think Dr. Rigg himself will give me more credit for "careful sifting" after reading my reply than the speeches of "Mr. Row, Dr. Irons, Mr. Reddie, &c.," for the moment led him to do. There is nothing calling for any special remark in the remaining speeches, and as I am enjoined to be "brief," I will stop here by thanking the members of the Institute for the attention given to my paper, and hoping that the subject may receive further attention from other pens.

I may add that I am happy to know that a favourable opinion of my paper has been expressed by the Press. A very extensively read weekly organ recommended it as an *antidote* "against modern objections to Divine revelation," and says that the arguments used to "prove that the principles of the New Testament are in strict accordance with true philosophy" are "altogether unanswerable."