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ARTICLE I.

The Principles of Moral and Political Economy.—By WILLIAM PALEY, D. D.

Dr. Paley's system of Moral Philosophy, like most other modern treatises upon the subject, is divided into two general parts. The first discusses the *theory* of morals, the other comprises the *rules* of life; the first is *speculative*, and the other *practical*. His design, in the theoretical or speculative part, is to determine the nature and criterion of right, to trace moral distinctions to their source, and evolve a principle which shall enable us to settle our duty in all the circumstances in which we may be placed. With him, accordingly, the theory of morals bears very much the same relation to practice as subsists between theory and practice in other sciences. His rules are all applications of his speculative principles, and his speculative principles have evidently been adjusted with a view to their practical results.

There are obviously three questions which every complete system of moral philosophy must undertake to answer. 1. How we come to be possessed of the notions of right and wrong?—whether by that faculty which perceives the distinction betwixt truth and falsehood, or by a peculiar power of perception, which is incapable of any further analysis? 2. In what the distinctions betwixt right and wrong essentially consist?—or what is the quality, or qualities, in consequence of which we pronounce some things to be right and others wrong?

3. What are the actions that are right,—the things that must be done or avoided?

The two first questions exhaust the subject of theoretical morals; the last comprises the whole province of practical duty. The first two questions Dr. Paley answers in the first two books of his treatise. The remaining three are devoted to the third. In the first two he unfolds the science, in the other three the *art*, of a virtuous life.

The method pursued in the speculative part is, after a definition of Moral Philosophy, first, to show the *necessity* of some scientific system, in order to ascertain an adequate and perfect rule of life, and then, from the phenomena of our moral nature, to *deduce* and *construct* such a system. The end which Dr. Paley has steadily in view is the *discovery of a perfect rule of life*; and the only claim which, in his judgment, can commend moral philosophy to our attention, is the claim to teach us our duty, our whole duty, and the reasons of it. If it cannot discharge this office, it is, in his eyes, nothing worth. Philosophy; as a reflective exercise of reason upon the phenomena of consciousness,—an effort to reduce our knowledge to unity by seizing upon the principles and evolving the laws which regulate it,—seems to be entirely ignored by him. Philosophy with him aspires to no more exalted function than to explain the theory upon which practical rules depend. It is simply the antithesis of art. Hence his definition—"Moral Philosophy is that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it."* It is related to life, as the science of agriculture to the business of the farmer, or the science of navigation to the business of a sailor. It prescribes rules, and tells us why they should be observed.

Its end or office being thus exclusively practical, he proceeds to show the importance of such a science, by exposing the inadequacy of the rules that men are likely to adopt for the regulation of their conduct, if not instructed by philosophy. This is done in the first five chapters of the first book. These rules he makes to be

*Book I, chap. i.

the law of honour, the law of the land, and the Scriptures. To these may be added conscience; for, although Dr. Paley does not formally mention it as a rule, in connection with the others, it is clear, from his chapter upon it, that he contemplated it in that light, and regarded it as no less defective than the laws of honour, of the land, and of the Scriptures. There are certainly men who profess to be governed by the dictates of conscience; and if these dictates are in adequate and perfect rule of life, there is no use, according to Dr. Paley's conception of its office, of such a science as Moral Philosophy. His vindication, accordingly, of the science which he proposes to expound, implies that, *without it*, there are no means of arriving to a complete standard of duty. We shall be left to guides that are unsatisfactory and uncertain. The practical tendencies of his mind are here very conspicuously displayed. Instead of attempting to prove, from the nature of the case, that science *must* furnish the rules of art, and that no art can be considered as perfect until the theory of its operations is understood and developed, he takes a survey of human life, notes the laws which different classes profess to obey, and exposes their incompetency to answer the ends of human existence. His argument is briefly this: We need and must have a science of morals; because experience shows that, independently of it, men are liable to serious mistakes in regard to their duty. No rule, not derived from it, has ever yet been perfect. He then assumes that the rules already mentioned exhaust the expedients of man in settling the way of life.

The vindication of moral philosophy, upon the ground that all other means of compassing a perfect rule of life are defective, most evidently takes for granted, that it can supply the defect,—that it can teach us, and teach us with at least comparative completeness, the whole duty of man. In the second book, accordingly, Dr. Paley undertakes to evince its competency to this end, by evolving a principle from which an adequate and satisfactory solution of all moral questions may be extracted. It is here that he determines the great problems of speculative morals, concerning the nature and origin of our

moral cognitions. Here, then, we must look for his system of moral philosophy.

From this general view it will be seen that the first book is an answer to the question, do we need a science of morals? The second book an answer to the question, is the need which is felt supplied by such a science? If this be, however, the order of thought, the discussions of the first book should have closed with the fifth chapter. The sixth and seventh chapters of that book are out of their logical order. The seventh chapter should have concluded the discussions of the second book, and the sixth chapter, in its present form, should have been omitted altogether, as having no conceivable connection with aught that precedes or follows. That a man should make the tendency to promote happiness the very essence of virtue, and a corresponding tendency to promote misery the very essence of vice, and then gravely conclude, after an enumeration of the various elements that constitute happiness, "that vice has no advantage over virtue,"* even on the score of expediency, is a real curiosity in the history of literature. Dr. Paley's whole system proceeds on the assumption that happiness is the chief good of man. Virtue and vice are respectively determined to be such by their relations to this as an end. A discussion, then, of happiness, which should have been in harmony with the rest of his system, ought to have included such an enumeration of its elements as would show, at a glance, that it was the privilege of the virtuous only. As being the end of virtue, its tendencies to that end should have been made conspicuous and manifest. But nothing of this sort has been attempted. The chapter contains little more than judicious and wholesome reflections, preceded by low and degrading views of the comparative worth and dignity of pleasures, upon the best methods of getting through life with tolerable comfort. It adds nothing to the work, and might be subtracted from it without the slightest diminution of its integrity, as a scientific treatise. It is a mere interpolation.

Having settled, in the second book, his speculative

*Book I, chap. vi., sub. fin.

doctrines, Dr. Paley proceeds to a classification and detailed consideration of human duties, which occupies the remainder of his treatise. These he divides, in conformity with prevailing usage, into three general heads: 1. Duties to our neighbor, or relative duties. 2. Duties to ourselves; and, 3. Duties to God. Relative duties he again subdivides into three classes: 1. Those which are determinate, and are consequently embraced under the category of justice; 2. Those which are indeterminate, and are embraced under the category of benevolence; and, 3. Those which spring from the constitution of the sexes.

Having given this general outline of his treatise, what I now propose is to subject his theory of morals to a critical examination, and then make some remarks upon what seems to be objectionable in some of the details of the work.

The fundamental principle of his system is contained in the answer to the question, what is that *quality* in consequence of which we pronounce an action to be right? This he makes to be *utility*, or its tendency to promote happiness. "Whatever is expedient is right." The process by which he is conducted to this conclusion is brief and simple. He begins with an analysis of moral obligation, and in order that his account of it may be exact and discriminating, he first inquires into the essence of obligation in general, and then proceeds to expound moral obligation in particular.

Obligation, in general, he resolves into a strong sense of interest, prompting obedience to the commands of a superior. "We can be obliged to nothing,"* he openly avows, "but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by for nothing else can be a violent motive to us. As we should not be obliged to obey the laws of the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended on our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practice virtue, or to obey the commands of God." A strong sense of interest, then, which Dr. Paley denominates "a violent motive," is

Book II., chap. ii.

essential to obligation. But is every appeal to our hopes and fears, every prospect of advantage, or every apprehension of calamity, to be considered as creating an obligation? Are obligation and inducement, in other words, synonymous terms? Dr. Paley answers that they are generically the same, but specifically different. Obligation is a particular species of inducement—that species which results from the command of a superior, or of one who is able to curse or to bless. This circumstance, that it results from command, or is the expression of authority, is what differences duty from every other form of interest. Hence his articulate definition of obligation in general postulates inducement as the genus, and the command of a superior as the specific difference. "A man is said to be obliged, when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another."*

The peculiarity of *moral* obligation, as contradistinguished from obligation in general, consists in the person who prescribes the command, and the nature of the motive to obey. In this case, He who commands is God, and the motive to obedience is drawn from the future world,—the hope of everlasting happiness, or the dread of everlasting misery. Moral obligation may, accordingly, be defined as that strong sense of interest, or "violent motive," prompting us to obey the commands of God, and arising from a conviction of endless retributions beyond the grave.

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is consequently fundamental in Dr. Paley's system. There can be prudence, but no virtue, without it. An action becomes right only by its relation to our future interests. What *binds*, what presses as a violent motive, what creates the sense of duty, is the hope of heaven or the fear of hell. "They who would establish," says our author† "a system of morality, independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation, unless they can show that virtue conducts the possessor to certain happiness in this life, or to a much greater share of it than he could attain by a different behaviour."

* Book II., chap. ii. † Book II., chap. iii.

From this analysis of moral obligation, it appears that the will of God is the matter, and the retributions of a future state the form of it; that is, the will of God determines *what* we are bound to do, and our everlasting interests *why* we are bound; or, as Dr. Paley expresses it, "private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule."

The will of God being the standard or measure of right, the question naturally arises, how is the will of God to be ascertained? The answer is, by inquiring into the tendency of an action to promote or diminish the general happiness. Utility is the exponent of the Divine will, as the Divine will is the exponent of right. Whatever is expedient God commands, and whatever God commands is morally obligatory. Dr. Paley regards his doctrine of expediency as only the statement, in another form, of the Divine benevolence. To say that God wills the happiness of his creatures, is, with him, equivalent to saying that whatever is expedient is right; and, accordingly, the only proof which he alleges of this fundamental doctrine of his theory, is his proof of the benevolence of. God. "The method," says he,* "of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of the action to promote or diminish the general happiness. This rule proceeds upon the presumption that God Almighty wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures, and consequently that those actions which promote that will and wish must be agreeable to him,—and the contrary."—Too much praise can hardly be awarded to his vindication of the benevolence of God; it is neat, clear, conclusive, presented in two different forms, in neither of which can it fail to produce conviction.†

"From this brief analysis, Dr. Paley's whole theory of morals may be compendiously compressed in a single syllogism. Whatever God commands is right or obligatory. Whatever is expedient God commands. Therefore, whatever is expedient is right. The major proposition rests upon his analysis of moral obligation—the minor upon the proof of the Divine benevolence, and

* Book II., chap iv. † Book II., chap. v.

the substance of all is given in his remarkable definition of virtue, which, logically, should have followed the exposition of expediency. "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."* The matter of virtue is expediency, which becomes bight or obligatory, because it is commanded by God, and supported by the awful sanctions of the future world.

In estimating the merits of Dr. Paley's theory, two points must be particularly attended to, as these are the cardinal points of his argument,—his analysis of moral obligation, as yielding the result that the will or command of God is the sole measure of rectitude,—and his vindication of expediency, as an universal measure of the Divine will from the Divine benevolence. Upon his success or failure here depends the success or failure of his treatise.

Is an action, then, right, simply because God commands it, and that upon pain of eternal death? Is it the *command* which makes it to be right, or is its being right the cause of the command? According to Dr. Paley, it is right, *because* commanded. According to the common sense of mankind, it is commanded because it is right. If it is the will of God which creates the distinction between right and wrong, the difficulty which Dr. Paley felt, and which he has endeavored to obviate,† would manifestly embarrass all our judgments in regard to the moral character of the Divine administrations. "It would be an identical proposition to say of God that He acts right;"—a contradiction in terms to say that He could, by any possibility, act wrong. We cannot escape the conviction—it is forced upon us by the constitution of our nature—that there is a rectitude in actions, antecedently to any determinations of will, and that this rectitude is the formal cause of their authoritative injunction upon the part of God. To this eternal standard we appeal when we vindicate the ways of God to man. We do not mean, as Dr. Paley suggests, when we pronounce the dispensations of Providence to be right, that they are merely consistent with themselves,—for that is

*Book I., chap. vii. † Book II., chap. ix.

the substance of his explanation,—but that they are consistent with a law which we feel to be co-extensive with intelligent existence. Right and wrong are not the creatures of arbitrary choice. They are not made by the *will*, but spring essentially from the *nature* of God. He *is* holy, and therefore his volitions are just and good.

According to Dr. Paley, a different arrangement of the adaptations of the universe would have changed the applications of all moral phraseology, and made that to be right which is now wrong, and that to be wrong which is now right. There is no other difference in the properties expressed by these words than the relation in which they stand to our own happiness. For aught that appears, God might command falsehood, perjury, murder and impiety,—and then they would be entitled to all the commendations of the opposite virtues. Actions and dispositions are nothing in themselves; they are absolutely without any moral character,—without any moral difference, until some expression of the Divine will is interposed. It is not till God enjoins it, and it becomes connected with everlasting happiness or misery, that an action or disposition acquires moral significancy. Such sentiments contradict the intuitive convictions of the race; and he grievously errs who imagines that he is exalting the will of the Supreme Being, or reflecting a higher glory upon the character of God, by representing all moral distinctions as the accidental creatures of arbitrary choice. If no other account can be given of the excellence and dignity of virtue, than that God happened to choose it, and to take it under His patronage and favour, we may call vice unfortunate, but we can never condemn it as base.

We must, consequently, go beyond the Divine command for the true foundation of the moral differences of things,—but, as we cannot ascend beyond the Deity himself, we must stop at the perfections of the Divine character. It is because God is what he is, that he chooses virtue and condemns vice; and it is because he is what he is necessarily, that the distinctions betwixt right and wrong are eternal and immutable. His will is determined by his nature, and his nature is as necessary as his being. His will, consequently, has a law in

the essential holiness of his character; and that essential holiness is the ultimate ground, the *fons et origo* of all moral distinctions.

But while it is denied that the will of God *creates* the differences betwixt right and wrong, it is not maintained that his will does not adequately express the rule of duty. If Dr. Paley had asserted nothing more than that the Divine command was a perfect *measure* of human obligation, no exception could have been taken to his statement. But he obviously meant much more than this; he meant to affirm, in the most unequivocal manner, that the sole distinction betwixt virtue and vice was the arbitrary product of will. It is true that he subsequently insists upon their respective tendencies, but these cannot be regarded as the ultimate reasons of the Divine volitions. All beings are from God, and all the adaptations and adjustments which obtain among them, by virtue of which some are useful and others hurtful, are as much the offspring of His will, as their individual existence. Utility finds its standard in His determinations. It is because He has chosen to invest things with such and such properties, and to fix them in such and such relations to each other, that any place is found for a difference of tendencies. A different order and a different constitution would have completely reversed the present economy. Will, therefore, as mere arbitrary, absolute choice, is the sole cause why things are as they are,—why some things are useful and others hurtful,—some right and others wrong.

Still this error in the analysis of moral obligation does not materially affect the argument. Dr. Paley could have been conducted to his favourite dogma of expediency as well by maintaining that the will of God is the *measure* of duty, as by maintaining that it is the source or ultimate principle of all moral distinctions. What his case needed was simply the proposition that we are bound to do all that God requires, and that nothing but what he requires can be imperative upon us. His will—no matter what determines it, or whether it is determined by anything out of itself,—His will is our law. To this preposition no reasonable exception can be taken—and hence it may be cheerfully admitted, "that to inquire

what is our duty, or what we are obliged to do in any instance, is, in effect, to inquire, what is the will of God in that instance?"

It is in the solution of this inquiry that we encounter the central principle of Dr. Paley's theory. If his reasoning here be conclusive, however we may object to his analysis of obligation, we are shut up to the adoption of his favourite maxim—that whatever is expedient is right. The only argument which he pretends to allege in vindication of this sweeping dogma, is drawn from the benevolence of God; and yet that argument—though I do not know that the blunder has ever been articulately exposed—is a logical fallacy, an illicit process of the minor term. What he had proved in his chapter on Divine benevolence is, that God wills the happiness of his creatures. What he has collected from his analysis of obligation is, that whatever God wills is right. Put these premises together, and they yield a syllogism in the third figure, from which Dr. Paley's conclusion can by no means be drawn.

Whatever God wills is expedient.

Whatever God wills is right.

Therefore, says Dr. Paley, whatever is expedient is right,—an illicit process of the minor term. Therefore, is the true conclusion, *some* things that are expedient are right,—the third figure always concluding particularly.

The, secret of Dr. Paley's blunder is easily detected. He confounded the original proposition, which his proof of the Divine benevolence had yielded, with its simple converse, and was consequently led to treat the latter as exactly equipollent to the former. What he had proved was, that God wills the happiness of his creatures. This is all that can be collected from benevolence. It simply settles the question, that whatever may be the number and variety of the things that constitute the objects of the Divine volition, they are all, characterized by the quality—that they contribute, in some way, to the public good. They are all conceived in kindness and executed in love. God in other words, never wills anything that is essentially hurtful or prejudicial to the highest interests of his creatures. Whatever He commands is conducive to their welfare. But to say that *whatever He wills*

is conducive to the general happiness, is a very different thing from saying that *whatever conduces* to the general happiness He wills. It may be true that He wills no-*thing* which is *not* expedient, and yet false that He wills *everything* which *is* expedient. The truth of the converse, in universal affirmative propositions, is seldom implied in the original dictum without limitation. Here was Dr. Paley's slip. Because God wills nothing that is not for our good, he took it for granted that He *must* will everything which is for our good. The *proper* converse of the proposition, that whatever God wills conduces to the general happiness, is the barren statement that *some* things which are expedient are willed by Him; or, in other words, that *some* things that are expedient are *right*. It is very remarkable that a portentous system of philosophy, which is distinguished by nothing more prominently than its open and flagrant contradictions to the common sense of the race, and its glaring falsifications of the characteristic phenomena of our moral nature, should lay its foundations in a palpable violation of the laws of thought. It begins in a blunder and ends in a lie. The benevolence of God is only a guarantee as to the nature and tendencies of whatever He may choose to effect or to enjoin upon us, but it is not a standard by which to determine beforehand upon what *particular* things His will shall pitch. In the boundless range of conceivable and possible good, there may be things characterized by the quality of expediency, which yet, on other accounts, are excluded from the Divine scheme. To be the benevolent ruler of the world implies no more than that the economy of Providence, which has been actually instituted, and is daily carried on, *excludes* all laws which are inconsistent with the highest interests of the subject, and *includes* a system of fixed and definite means, adapted to promote them. If God has a plan, the very conception of it involves the notion of rejection and choice. All the reasons, in one case or the other, can never be known to us. Some of the things rejected might have been turned to a good account. But how many soever of this class have been rejected, as not falling within the plan, the Divine benevolence renders it certain that the plan itself is good, and that all its ar-

rangements, if properly observed and heeded, tend to promote our happiness. Given a Divine volition, the argument of benevolence vindicates its usefulness; given expediency, the argument does not show that it is willed. Hence it is much safer to try expediency by the Divine will than to try the Divine will by expediency. God commands it—therefore it is good, is, materially considered, a sounder syllogism than It is good—therefore God commands it.

The argument from benevolence, however, is the only one which any advocate of expediency has ever been able to adduce. The fallacy in question is not a solitary blunder of the Arch-deacon of Carlisle. Among those who assume it as a fundamental principle that the happiness of the universe is the final cause of its existence—a principle, however, which never has been, and never can be established,—it has been uniformly taken for granted, that whatever is conducive to that happiness, must be an object of Divine volition. With them, to will its happiness is not simply to reject and prohibit what is inconsistent with it, and to institute a series of laws and means suited to promote it, but absolutely to aim at the production of everything that bears the impress of public good. How, upon this doctrine, the universe *can* be a whole, it is impossible to comprehend. If benevolence is obliged to achieve *every* thing by which the happiness of *any* creature can be promoted, it would lose itself in the infinite region of possible good. If it is to have no discretion, no right to discriminate, to choose or reject,—if *every* candidate who can bring credentials of utility and convenience *must* be received into favour, the notion of a plan—a scheme—a government—must at once be abandoned. Upon what an ocean would this doctrine set us afloat? If benevolence is the *sole* measure and standard of the Divine will—the greatest happiness of the greatest number the only end of universal being—why have not more creatures been made? Why have not other orders been introduced? These additions to the stock of being would certainly enlarge the domain of happiness. Reflections of this sort should convince us, that whenever we undertake to speculate upon the constitution of nature, independently of the guidance of

experience,—when we undertake to pronounce dogmatically upon the whole end and aim of the Divine dispensation,—we get beyond our depth. We may confound a crotchet with a principle—mistake a cloud for a Divinity. It is palpable to common sense that all which we can legitimately make from the benevolence of God is a security against mischief and malice in his government. He will choose only the expedient; but *what* expedient things, must be left to His own wisdom. He comprehends His own plan; and only those things, however useful, which fall in with the harmony of the *whole*, will be selected and adopted. When, therefore, the question is asked, What does God will? we cannot answer it, from considerations of expediency. We cannot say, He wills this or that, because this or that is fitted to promote the happiness of His creatures. There may be reasons why the things in question should be rejected or prohibited, *notwithstanding* their utility. Benevolence does not supersede the other perfections of the Divine nature, and if it is limited and conditioned by wisdom, Justice, truth, or other attributes of God, then it is clear that it never can be taken as a complete and adequate exponent of the Divine will. To *condition* its manifestations, in any manner or degree, is to limit the proposition, that *whatever* is expedient is willed.

If the distinction had been observed—a distinction obvious in itself, and resulting from the very laws of thought,—betwixt what the benevolence of God really implies, and what the advocates of expediency have assumed it to imply, betwixt the original proposition and its simple converse,—this ill-omened theory never could have been ventilated. It *assumes* that the benevolence of God is a bare, single, exclusive disposition to produce happiness,—it *proves* that this is *one* of the dispositions which enter into and characterize the Divine Administration; it assumes that benevolence is simple and absolute, the only principle which reigns in the universe,—it *proves* that God is good, and never can inflict gratuitous mischief upon his creatures; it assumes that God wills nothing but the happiness of his creatures—it proves that *whatever* God wills shall contribute to their good; it assumes, in short, that whatever is

expedient is right,—it proves that whatever is right is expedient.

That benevolence is the *absolute* principle of the Divine nature—as it cannot be proved inductively from the manifestations of goodness in the universe, so it cannot be demonstrated from any necessary laws of belief. Induction gives us the result, that God is good; but limits, modifies, and conditions the exercise of his goodness, by laws and arrangements that clearly indicate the existence of other attributes, and other attributes by no means subordinate to goodness. We see that happiness is not dispensed without regard to character and conduct. Nature speaks as loudly of justice as of love. Neither, again, is there any process by which we can reduce the manifestations of other attributes to the simple principle of love. We cannot see how *this*, as absolute, implies them,—we cannot comprehend how they are developed from it. There is no law of thought which can reduce to the unity of a single appearance these various phenomena. Accordingly, we are not warranted in asserting that simple, absolute benevolence is the only character of the Author of Nature. To our observation, it is neither simple nor absolute, since it is limited and conditioned. The assumption, consequently, upon which the entire fabric of expediency depends, not only has not been proved, but from the nature of the case, *never can* be proved. If it were even true in itself, it belongs to a sphere of knowledge lying beyond the reach of our faculties; and to us, therefore, it must always be as if it were false.

But more than this—the scheme of expediency, in any and every aspect of it, involves a complete falsification of the moral phenomena of human nature. It does not explain, but contradicts them; it is not the philosophy of what actually passes, but of what might be conceived to pass within us,—not the philosophy of man as he is, but of man as its advocates would have him to be. The point at issue, in this aspect of the case, is whether that which constitutes the rightness of an action,—which makes us feel it to be obligatory and approve it as praiseworthy,—be its tendency to promote public happiness so that, independently of the perception of this

tendency, we should experience none of those emotions with which we contemplate virtue and duty.

1. This, as a question of fact, mush be settled by an appeal to consciousness; and we confidently aver that the true state of the case is precisely the reverse of that which is here assumed. It is not utility which suggests the sense of duty; it is the sense of duty which creates the conviction of utility. The connection betwixt virtue and happiness is only the statement, in another form, of that profound impression of moral government, which is stamped upon all men by the operations of conscience. It is the articulate enunciation of the sense of responsibility. The dictates of conscience are always felt to be commands of God. They address us in the language of authority and law. But a law without sanctions is a contradiction in terms. Conscience, consequently, must have its sanctions, and these sanctions, accordingly, are both implicitly suggested and explicitly revealed; implicitly suggested, in that sense of security which results from the consciousness of having pleased the lawgiver, or that uneasiness and restless anxiety which result from the consciousness of contradicting his will; explicitly revealed, in the sense of good or ill desert, which is an inseparable element of every moral judgment. This sense of good and ill desert is a declaration of God that he will reward the righteous and punish the wicked—it is an immediate manifestation to consciousness of the fact of moral government. Antecedently to any calculations of utility, to any enlarged views of the good of the race, or to any inductions from the consequences of actions, without being able to comprehend why or how, we all feel an irresistible conviction that it shall, upon the whole, be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, because we carry in our bosoms a revelation to this effect from the Author of our being. Virtue is pronounced to be expedient, because we are the subjects of a government of which virtue is the law. Our nature is a cheat—the conviction of merit and demerit a gross delusion, unless the consequences of obedience and disobedience are answerable to the expectations we are led to frame. Hence we associate, from the very dawn of reason, virtue and happiness, vice and misery. As soon

as the feeling is developed that we are under law, that we are responsible creatures, the conviction is awakened that we shall be rewarded or punished according to our behaviour,—that the consequences, in other words, of virtue *must* be good, and the consequences of vice disastrous. Our nature leads us, nay, compels us, to predict favourably of an upright course, and to augur evil of a life of transgression. Our appeal is to human experience. To perceive that an action is right, what is it but to feel that it is our duty to do it? To be conscious that we have done what is right, what is it but to feel that we have pleased the law-giver, and are entitled to his favour? What means the sense of merit, if it is not the promise of God that the obedient shall be rewarded? and a promise of this sort, what is it but a declaration from our Maker that virtue is the highest expediency? We do not object, therefore, to the close and intimate connection which the utilitarian makes to subsist betwixt virtue and happiness. We could not, without ignoring or absolutely denying all moral government, be blind to the fact that God has so constituted man and the universe, that he alone shall be finally and permanently happy, who makes righteousness his law, and faithfully discharges his duties. Conscience explicitly declares that the path of rectitude is the path of life. But what we object to is the order in which the utilitarian arranges these convictions. He makes the perception, or rather the feeling of duty, consequent upon the perception of expediency; whereas the belief of expediency is the natural offspring of the operations of conscience. It is a revelation of God through the structure of the soul.

From this account of the matter, it will be easy to obviate an argument upon which utilitarian are accustomed to rely, drawn from the circumstance, that, when pressed as to the reasons of a moral judgment in any given case, we are prone to enlarge upon the benefits of the action, or its tendencies to promote the public good. When we have exhibited its advantages, we feel that we have satisfied doubt, and confirmed our conclusion. Now, in all this there is nothing but the natural propensity to seek, in experience, for what a law of belief

indicates beforehand that we must find. Is a given action right? Then it is entitled to reward. We consequently expect that the consequences of it will be good: and what more naturul than the effort to verify this expectation by an appeal to events? But that our conviction is not dependent upon experience appears from this: that when experience returns an unfavourable answer, as it often does in this life, we do not doubt the veracity of our conscience. We still feel that virtue *must* and *will* be rewarded, though we may not be able to tell how or where.

2. Another consideration which confirms the foregoing view, is the early age at which moral distinctions are recognised, and praise or blame awarded to human actions. Upon the hypothesis of the utilitarian, the conception of general happiness must precede, in the order of nature, the conviction of right; and as this conception can only be collected from a large survey of human life, as it requires no little experience and sagacity to perfect it, moral discriminations could not be made until the reason had been expanded and matured. Yet we know that children, long before they are capable of comprehending what is meant by the good of the universe, pronounce confidently upon the excellence or meanness of actions, and the merit or demerit of the agents. They manifest the same symptoms of indignation or approval, and utter the same language of praise or censure, which obtain among their superiors in years. They manifest the same sense of obligation, exult in the same consciousness of right, and are tortured with the same agony of remorse. It is clear that they apprehend the right, long before they can appreciate the expedient.

3. If the perception of utility, or beneficial tendency, is that which, in every instance, produces moral approbation, no reason can be given why this species of emotion is restricted exclusively to the principles and acts of voluntary agents. These, surely, are not the only things which are suited to produce benefit or harm. Many animals are possessed of instincts and capabilities which render them eminently subservient to the interests of man: The dog guards his dwelling—the labour of the ox unfolds the fertility of his fields—the ass bears his bur-

dens—and the horse aids him in his journeys. Inanimate objects, too,—especially the contrivances of mechanical skill and ingenuity,—may be of the highest importance to the progress and well-being of society. The printing press, the mariner's compass, the steam engine, the cotton gin, it is enough to mention these to show that utility is not restricted to the voluntary acts of rational beings. Now, if moral approbation is nothing but the pleasure with which we contemplate the *useful*,—if what we mean by merit and demerit is simply the conviction of convenience or inconvenience,—it follows that we attribute to a horse or mule, a steamboat or a railway, the same praise which we attribute to the benevolent deeds of a *man*. They are as truly *virtuous*—they as really promote the general good of mankind. The printing press, on this hypothesis, is entitled to as much praise as Pericles or Washington—an earthquake or tornado should be held as equally guilty with a Borgia or a Catiline.

The absurdity of the conclusion is a sufficient proof of the falsehood of the premises. Virtue and vice are terms exclusively restricted to the actions or active principles of intelligent and voluntary agents; and the emotions with which we contemplate virtuous or vicious conduct, are essentially different from those which are excited by an unintelligent instrument of good or mischief. Hume saw and felt the force of this objection, but his attempt to rebut it is only an additional proof of its strength. He does not deny that inanimate objects may be useful, nor that their utility is a legitimate ground of approbation. What he affirms is, that the approbation attendant upon utility in the one case is accompanied or mixed with other affections, terminating exclusively on persons, while in the other case it is not. But the question is whether utility, as utility, is in each case the parent of a similar emotion. That being admitted, the emotions or affections excited by accidental adjuncts are wholly irrelevant. His illustration from colour and proportions is extremely unfortunate for his purpose. It is evident that colour and proportions are instruments of pleasure, whether, found in a statue or a man. But in the latter case, beside the pleasure which they themselves give, they awaken other feelings of which they are not the proper objects. But still we call colour

and proportion by the *same name*, wherever they are found. Hume has confounded *concomitant* feelings with the emotions proper to utility as such. But that is to evade the point at issue. If utility, in itself considered, is the essence of virtue, we approve it, whether in man, beast or machine,—though the sentiment of approbation proper to the utility may be largely modified by other properties of the objects in which it is perceived to exist.

The foregoing considerations are fatal to the theory of expediency in every form. There are others which apply more particularly to that form of it which Dr. Paley has taken into favour. That his own principles may be clearly understood, it is necessary to premise that the patrons of the general doctrine of expediency may be divided into two great classes, according as they make the public good to be an ultimate end, or only a means of promoting individual and private interest. These classes are distinguished from each other by essential and radical differences. The first, which may be called the school of disinterested benevolence, admits the existence of a moral sense, and ascribes to it our perceptions of the beauty and excellence of benevolence, and our conviction of the obligation of it, as the all-pervading rule of life. Man, ac- according to this scheme, is so constituted as to rejoice in the happiness of all sentient beings, *on its own account*, independently of any considerations of personal advantage or reward. He has a moral nature which teaches him that to do good is the end of his being, and under the guidance and direction of this nature he condemns or approves actions, dispositions and habits, according to the degree in which they hinder or promote the happiness of all. Virtue is, accordingly, restricted to a disinterested regard for the welfare of the universe.

The other, which may be called the selfish school, while it maintains that beneficial tendency is the criterion of the rectitude of actions, maintains as strenuously that the ground of the obligation to promote the public good is a regard to individual interest and advantage. A man is to seek the happiness of all, because, in seeking that, he secures his own.

This school has no occasion for a moral sense. All that it postulates in order to account for the peculiar

phenomena of our moral nature is a susceptibility of pleasure and pain, and those faculties by which we are rendered capable of experience. That is good which pleases—that is evil which offends—and he who can foresee what, upon the whole, shall give satisfaction, and what pain and misery, is furnished with all that is necessary for the discovery of moral rules. Moral reasoning is nothing but a calculation of personal consequences; the data of the calculation are the facts of experience. Given a being, therefore, who is capable of pleasure and pain, who desires the one and revolts from the other, who is able to compute the consequences of actions from the phenomena of experience,—a being, in other words, who can feel and calculate, and you have all that is requisite to a moral agent. Virtue, in this school, is simply that which shall secure the greatest amount of satisfaction to the possessor,—vice that which shall be attended with more inconvenience than pleasure; and as it so happens that doing good to mankind is found to be the most effectual method of doing good to ourselves, virtue, materially considered, consists in promoting the happiness of the race. It is benevolence sanctified by selfishness. Obligation, accordingly, is only a strong conviction of interest, arising from the fear of superior power. A right to command is nothing but ability to curse or bless. Hence right is the necessary companion of might, and duty and interest are one and the same. Self is the supreme end of existence to every sentient being.

That this school falsifies the phenomena of our moral nature, in every essential point, the slightest examination will abundantly show.

1. If the principles which it postulates are all that are necessary to a moral agent, brutes would be as truly moral agents as men. They are susceptible of pleasure and pain, of hope and fear. They can foresee, to some extent, the consequences of their actions. They can be trained and disciplined to particular qualities and habits. The government which man exercises over them is conducted upon the same principles with which, according to the selfish philosophers, the government of God is administered over man. It exactly answers to Dr. Paley's definition of a *moral* government,—except that he restricts it to *rea-*

sonable creatures, without any necessity from the nature of the case,—"any dispensation whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures." A system of intimidation, coaxing and persuasion,—a discipline exclusively relying upon hope and fear,—this the horse can be subject to that fears the spur—the dog that cringes from a kick—any beast that can be trained by the whip. These animals obey their master from the same motive from which Dr. Paley would have a good man obey his God. Now, is there no peculiarity in our moral emotions but that which arises from hope and fear? Is there nothing that man feels, when he acknowledges the authority of law, which the brute does not also feel when he shrinks from the lash, or is allured by caresses? Is there not something which the desire of pleasure and the reluctation against pain, as mere physical conditions, are utterly inadequate to explain? We all feel that the brute differs from the man, and differs pre-eminently in this very circumstance, that though capable of being influenced by motives addressed to his hopes and fears, he is incapable of the notion of duty, of crime, or of moral obligation. He is a physical, but not a *moral* agent.

2. This theory, in the next place, contradicts the moral convictions of mankind, in making no distinction betwixt interest and duty, betwixt authority and might. Nothing *can* be obligatory, according to the articulate confession of Dr. Paley, but what we are to gain or lose by; and the only question I am to ask, in order to determine whether I am bound by the command of another, is whether he can hurt or bless me. His right depends upon his power, and my duty turns upon my weakness and dependence. If the devil, according to the case supposed in the Recognitions of Saint Clement, transformed into an angel of light, should promise to men more pleasing rewards than those propined to them by God, and should convince them of his power and willingness to bestow them, they would, upon Paley's principles, be under a moral obligation to serve the devil. If any being but their Creator could impart to them more desirable rewards than Himself, they would be bound to transfer their affections and allegiance from Him to the new god. The child whose parents are unable to distinguish him with wealth, and

prosperity, and honours, is under a moral obligation to forsake the father that begat him, and the mother that bore him, and to transfer his filial duties to any rich fool that might be willing to adopt him. If interest is duty, and power is right, natural ties, whether of blood or affection, considerations of justice and humanity, relations, original or adventitious, are all to be discarded, and every moral problem becomes only a frigid calculation of loss and gain. No elements are to be permitted to enter into its solution, which shall disturb the coolness of the mathematical computation. All moral reasoning is reduced to arithmetic, and a man's duty is determined by the sum at the foot of the account.

Now, if there be any two things about which the consciousness of mankind is clear and distinct, it is that there is a marked and radical difference betwixt interest and duty, right and might. The distinction obtains in all languages, and pervades every species of epithets, by which praise or blame is awarded to human actions.—The man who cannot distinguish in his own breast betwixt a sense of duty and a sense of interest, who regards all arguments addressed to the one as equally addressed to the other, who treats them as only different expressions of one and the same feeling, has either so enlarged his views that self-love operates in him in exact accordance with the laws of moral government,—that is, his conviction of the ultimate success and triumph of virtue is so firmly rooted and established, that the temporary successes of vice produce no effect upon his mind, in which state it might be difficult to discern between the influence of interest and conscience, exactly coinciding as they do in their results,—or he has corrupted and perverted sentiments which exist in every other, heart, and without which the short-sighted views of interest that men are accustomed to take in this sublunary world would often eventuate in the most disastrous results. The common experience certainly is, that in appealing to interest and duty, I am appealing to *different* principles of action, of which one is superior in dignity, though it may be inferior in strength.

The distinction betwixt right and might, betwixt unjust usurpation and lawful authority, is manifestly something far deeper than the distinction betwixt a lower and high-

er interest. It is not the sword which justifies the magistrate—it is the magistrate which justifies the sword. The successful usurper, upon the principles of Dr. Paley, who is able to maintain his position, is to be obeyed as a just and lawful ruler. His power to injure or to bless brings the subjects under a moral obligation to submit to him—and as right and obligation are reciprocal, he must have a corresponding right to exact obedience. Unsuccessful resistance becomes, consequently, always treason or rebellion. The mere statement of these propositions is a sufficient eviction of their absurdity. All men feel that the *right* to *command* is one thing, the *power* to *hurt* another,—that there can be no *obligation* to obey, although it may be the dictate of policy, where *force* is the only basis of authority. The language of all men marks the difference betwixt the usurper and the lawful ruler, the tyrant and the just magistrate; and any system which ignores or explains away this natural and necessary distinction, contradicts the moral phenomena of our nature.

3. The theory of Paley is liable to still further exception, as taking no account of the conviction of good and ill desert, and the peculiar emotions which constitute and spring from the consciousness of guilt, or accompany the consciousness of right. The slightest attention to the operations of his own mind must satisfy every one that the approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice include much more than a simple sensation of pleasure, analogous to that which arises from the congruity of an object to an appetite, affection or desire. It is more than the pleasure which springs from the perception of utility, or of the fitness of means to accomplish an end. It is a *peculiar* emotion—an emotion which we are not likely to confound with any other phenomenon of our nature. It is a feeling that the agent, in a virtuous action, *deserves* to be rewarded, accompanied with the desire to see him rewarded, and the expectation that he will be rewarded. The agent in a vicious action, on the contrary, we feel is deserving of punishment, and we confidently expect that, sooner or later, he will receive his due. When we are conscious of well-doing in ourselves, we have a sense of security and peace, arising from the conviction that we are entitled to favor; and when conscious of wrong, we

condemn ourselves as worthy of punishment, and tremble at the apprehension that it will and must be inflicted. The agony of remorse consists in the consciousness that we have done wrong—that therefore we ought to be punished, and that therefore we shall be punished.—The sense of demerit, which involves the sense of the righteousness of punishment, is the pregnant source of of all its horrors. It is this which distinguishes it from simple regret. Take away the conviction of merit and demerit, and there can be no such thing as rewards in contradistinction from good fortune,—no such thing as punishment in contradistinction to adversity. The foundation of justice is demolished. The penal code is an arbitrary dictate of policy,—crimes are converted into follies, and virtue into sagacity and cunning. A theory which annihilates the distinction between rewards and favours, between punishment and misfortune, is at war with the fundamental dictates of our nature. It sweeps away that very characteristic by which we are rendered capable of *government*, as distinct from *discipline*. It confounds remorse with simple regret, and the approbation of conscious rectitude with the pleasure which springs from the gratification of any other feeling or desire. It denies, in other words, that in any just and proper sense of the terms we can be denominated moral agents. The very element in the phenomenon which makes a judgment to be moral is left out or overlooked.

These objections are fatal to the system. That can neither, be an adequate nor a true philosophy which omits sonic, and distorts others, of the phenomena which it proposes to explain. He that stumbles in his account of obligation—the great central fact of our moral nature—divests his speculations of all pretensions to the dignity of science.

4. But it deserves further to be remarked, that the theory in question, especially as expounded by Dr. Paley, makes no manner of difference, as to their general nature, betwixt the obligation to virtue and a temptation to vice. There is nothing in either case but a strong inducement, derived from appearances of good. A violent motive, we are told, is the genus and the command of a superior, the specific difference of obligation. The violent motive, the genus, is found in temptation; the specific difference is

wanting. Hence, temptation is clearly a species co-ordinate with duty. The bad man is enticed by his lusts, and yields to those passions which promise him enjoyment,—his end is pleasure. The good man is allured by computations which put this same pleasure at the foot of the account. They are consequently governed by the same general motive, and the only difference betwixt them is that the one has a sounder judgment than the other.—They have equally obeyed the same law of pleasure, but have formed a different estimate of the pursuits and objects that shall yield the largest amount of gratification. Temptation, accordingly, may be called an obligation to vice, and duty a temptation to virtue.* Who does not feel that the difference is more than accidental betwixt these states of the mind; that the motives to virtue and the seductions of sin operate upon principles entirely distinct, and have nothing in common but the circumstance of their appeal to our active nature. They are essentially different states of mind, and the theory which co-ordinates them under the same genus prevaricates with consciousness in its clearest manifestations.

5. The last general objection which I shall notice to Dr. Paley's system, is its impracticability. His fundamental principle cannot be employed as the criterion of duty, from the obvious impossibility of estimating the collected consequences of any given action. The theory is, that morality depends upon results; the circumstance which determines an action to be right is its being upon the whole productive of more happiness than misery. It must, consequently, be traced in its entire history, through time and eternity, before any moral judgment can be confidently affirmed in regard to it. What human faculties are competent for such calculations? What mind but that of God can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done? The government of God, both natural and moral, is one vast complicated system; the relations of its parts are so multifarious and minute—the connections of events so numerous and hidden—that only the mind which planned the scheme can adequately compass it. He knows nothing

* See Brown's Lectures, Lecture 79.

of it, as Bishop Butler has remarked, "who is not sensible of his ignorance in it." To be able to estimate all the consequences of any given action, is to be master of the entire system of the universe, not merely in the general principles which govern it, but in all the details of every single event. It is to have the knowledge of the Almighty. It is manifestly impossible, therefore, to apply the principle in practice. He that should wait, until his judgment could be assured in the method contemplated by the rule, would be like the rustic upon the banks of the river, expecting the stream to run dry, that he might pass over dry-shod.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

But as the exigencies of human life require action, and not unfrequently prompt and decisive action, the calculations of consequences would behove to be made from limited and partial views. The effects of this procedure would be obviously to destroy any steady standard of virtue and vice. "For since," as Bishop Berkeley has remarked, "the measure and rule of every good man's actions is supposed to be nothing else but his own private, disinterested opinion of what makes most for the public good at that juncture; and since this opinion must unavoidably, in different men, from their particular views and circumstances, be very different, it is impossible to know whether any one instance of parricide or perjury, for example, be criminal. The man may have had his reasons for it; and that which, in me, would have been a heinous sin, may be in him a duty. Every man's particular rule is buried in his own breast, invisible to all but himself; who, therefore, can only tell whether he observes it or no. And since that rule is fitted to particular occasions, it must ever change as they do; and hence it is not only various in different men, but in one and the same man at different times. From all which it follows, there can be no harmony or agreement between the actions of good men, no apparent steadiness or consistency of one man with himself, no adhering to principles; the best actions may be condemned, and the most villainous meet with applause. In a word, there ensues the most horrible con-

* Serm. on Pass. Obed.

fusion of vise and virtue, sin and duty, that can possibly be imagined." The conclusion is inevitable, that this cannot be the principle upon which the moral government of the world is carried on.

Its impracticability is, indeed, so obvious, that the attempt has never been made, in any moral system, to use it as an actual test of the righteousness or wickedness of actions. Dr. Paley no sooner announces, and, as he supposed, demonstrates it, than he abandons it, and, imperceptibly to himself, introduces a standard of morality of a very different nature. His distinction between general and particular consequences, and his inculcation of the necessity of general rules, are a virtual surrender of the principle, that the morality of an action depends exclusively upon the sum total of its consequences. What he calls general consequences, are not the consequences of any given act, but the consequences of a multitude of acts, agreeing in some prominent circumstances. A single action can have nothing but particular consequences; these are the only ones which flow from it,—the only ones with which it is strictly and properly chargeable. If, for example, I wish to determine whether, in a particular case, I may lawfully lie; if the morality of the act is to depend upon the predominant character of the results, I must trace that *particular lie* through all the stages of its history, and admit nothing into the computation, that does not legitimately spring from it. I cannot take into the account the consequences of *other* lies; these consequences belong to *them*, and determine their character. Hence, the rigid application of the test precludes the possibility of general rules. Each case must stand or fall upon its own merits. To introduce general rules, is to shift the ground of the morality of actions, and to make it depend, not upon their consequences, but upon their conformity or non-conformity with the rule. It is singular that Paley did not notice the distinction, as Berkeley had so clearly pointed it out in the discourse from which I have already extracted.* "The well-being of mankind must necessarily be carried on one of these two ways: either, first, without the in-

* See also Whewell, Lect. Hist. Mor. Phil., Lect. x.

junction of any certain universal rules of morality, only by obliging every one, upon each particular occasion, to consult the public good, and always to do that which to him shall seem, in the present time and circumstances, most to conduce to it. Or, secondly, by enjoining the observation of some determinate, established laws, which, if universally practised, have, from the nature of things, an essential fitness to procure the well-being of mankind, though in their particular application they are sometimes, through untoward accidents and the perverse irregularity of human wills, the occasions of great sufferings and misfortunes, it may be, to very good men."—Dr. Paley himself, admits that there are instances in which the only mischief resulting from an action is the violation of a general rule, which is equivalent to saying, that if the action were measured by its own proper consequences it would be lawful,—which, again, is equivalent to saying, that actions must be judged by some other standard than their own individual expediency.

Neither are these general rules inductions from particular consequences, though Dr. Paley has, strangely enough, represented them in that light. They are not classifications of actions grouped according to the results which have been perceived to flow from them, which is the only way of generalizing from consequences, but grouped according to some circumstance which characterizes the action as a phenomenon of will. The ground of comparison, in other words, is not in the effects, but in the cause. Take the case which Dr. Paley has supposed: "The present possessor of some great estate employs his influence and fortune to annoy, corrupt, or oppress all about him. His estate would devolve by his death to a successor of an opposite character. It is useful, therefore, to despatch such an one as soon as possible out of the way, as the neighborhood will exchange thereby a pernicious tyrant for a wise and generous benefactor." But, says Dr. Paley, though the immediate consequences in this case may be good, the general consequences would be disastrous,—that is, the consequences ensuing from the violation of a *general rule*. But what general rule? The rule, he answers, which prohibits the destruction of human life at private discretion. Now, it

is manifest that such a rule could never be collected from any number of cases like the one supposed. The true induction from them would be, that whenever the like circumstances concurred, the action would always be lawful. In the same circumstances, the same antecedents will always be followed by the same consequents. The question is not, whether it is lawful to kill a man upon imaginary pretexts, but whether, when his death will be obviously a public benefit, it is right to destroy him; and the general rule, as determined by consequences, must be in the affirmative. But when you lay down the law that human life shall not be sacrificed to private discretion, you are prohibiting actions, not according to their *consequences*, but according to another circumstance, the source or authority whence they proceed. No induction of the consequences of particular actions could ever yield this rule with anything like the universality which attaches to it.

But is not the general rule itself recommended by its utility? There can be no doubt of the importance of general rules, and of the comparative facility of estimating the consequences connected with their violation or observance. Their evident fitness to promote the interests of society suggests itself spontaneously to the mind, as soon as the nature of social relations is competently understood. But that it was not their utility which first led to the recognition of their authority, is manifest from what has been already said. If a man were introduced into the world with no other means of determining the moral character of actions but from the nature of their consequences, he would proceed to arrange under one class those whose consequences were obviously good, and under another those whose consequences were opposite. He might go on to discriminate among them, making subordinate classes of each kind; but no circumstance in which any actions of both kinds were found to agree could ever be made the principle of classification. As in the case supposed, if it should be found that *some* instances, in which human life was taken without the sanction of public authority, were productive of good, this principle could never be made the distinctive feature of a class. No such rule could ever emerge, as that life

must never be taken by private individuals. The same process of reasoning might be carried out in reference to all general rules. They cannot, therefore, be the offspring of experience, as an inductive comparison of consequences. Paley's theory of the morality of actions could yield no other general rules but such as are denominated general facts. It could do nothing but group, and arrange under different heads, the various actions which were found productive of the same effects. It could create genera and species, but it could not originate laws, by which the character of the action was determined. An action must belong to the class, because it *has* such a character. Hence, to say that its own consequences were good, but that it does not belong to the class of good actions, would be a contradiction in terms, equivalent to saying that the individual has not the properties of the species.

Berkeley saw the impossibility of reaching general rules in this way, and hence discarded the whole system, which measures morality by the individual consequences of actions. His rules are inferences of reason from the very structure and constitution of society. It is their fitness to promote its ends, their evident congruity with the relations it implies, that recommends them to our minds. Society being given and its elements understood, these rules follow, as necessary means of preserving and perfecting it. They are not the educts of experience, but necessary truths; not the results of observation, but the dictates of reason. They *must* be, if society is to be maintained. They belong to the nature of demonstrative and *a priori* truths, rather than of empirical deductions.

Ingenious and plausible as this hypothesis appears to be, it may well be questioned whether any man ever arrived at the laws of morality from the previous consideration of the structure of society. It is one thing to perceive the fitness of means, when they have once been clearly pointed out; it is quite another thing to discover it in the first instance. Any man may understand the mechanism of a watch; few could have invented it. Society is a complicated thing, and if men were to have no moral rules until they were able to understand its structure, and to comprehend its manifold relations,—if they

were to wait until their knowledge was sufficiently enlarged and their reasoning powers sufficiently developed to enable them to draw just conclusions upon so nice and delicate a subject,—many would die without having reached the period of moral agency. The early age at which moral judgments are pronounced by children, when they could not have reflected upon the fitness of means to an end, is conclusive proof that moral rules do not come to us, in the first instance, as the results of reasoning. They are comprehended long before society is analysed. It is probable, too, that if they had to be reasoned out, there would be far greater diversity of opinion in regard to them than actually obtains. We should have as many theories of morals as of politics.

But still, after they have been announced, it is not difficult to trace their beneficial effects, and no doubt this obviousness after discovery has been confounded with obviousness before discovery, and led to the mistake in question. What is so plain when suggested, we think, could not miss of occurring of itself to our own thoughts. We forget how long it was before the law of gravity was settled, or the circulation of the blood was discovered.

In Dr. Paley's admission of general consequences, and the importance of general rules, we see a departure from the scientific rigour of his fundamental principle, which we cannot but construe into the tacit acknowledgment, that man's moral cognitions have another source than experience. It is an unwilling homage to the scheme which he professedly repudiates. His heart was better than his head. He gives us laws which he could never deduce from his principles, and imagines that he has deduced them only because he felt them to be true.

The incompatibility betwixt a system of general rules and one founded upon individual consequences, is sometimes painfully manifested by Dr. Paley, in his vacillations between the two standards. At one time he makes the rule supreme, as in the case of the assassin; at another, the consequences, as in the exceptions to the general law of veracity. Now, one or the other must be absolutely supreme, or if they reign by turns, we should

have some means of determining which, at any time, is sovereign.

Upon the whole, how much soever we respect the memory of Dr. Paley, as a man, we are constrained to say that his book has no just pretensions to the title of Moral Philosophy, except in the sense that the science of contraries is one. There is no cautious elimination of first principles, no accurate analysis of the data of consciousness, and no rigorous deductions from primary truths. His fundamental doctrine is a sophism, and the superstructure is wood, hay and stubble. Indeed, the building rests on a double foundation, and is, therefore, a house divided against itself, which, according to the highest authority, cannot stand. One of the most amazing phenomena in the history of literature is the eminence which has been given to this treatise.—That it has held its ground so steadily and long, is a humiliating proof of the low ebb to which moral speculations have sunk. It has neither sentiment nor logic, poetry nor science; it has nothing on earth to recommend it, but the vigour and transparent clearness of the style; occasionally coarse and vulgar in its judgments—as where all pleasures are put upon a footing as to dignity and worth—generally degrading in its tendencies—always distorting the moral phenomena of our nature—dogmatic and confident, and yet at the same time superficial and shallow in the extreme,—it is hard to understand how it could ever have gained, and having gained, how it could continue to maintain its ascendancy in the public mind. It is a problem, hardly less curious, how so good a man as Dr. Paley, and so vigorous a thinker, could have written so bad a book.

We come, in the next place, to consider the details of the work, and in noticing them, we shall restrict ourselves to those which are liable to exceptions upon other grounds beside an unfortunate consistency with the fundamental principle of the system. This principle, of course, vitiates his speculations in all his attempts to explain the ground of the obligation in particular duties. A radical and pervading vice, it is unnecessary to call attention to it, in the special instances of its occurrence,

after what has already been said of the general doctrine of expediency.

1. On opening the book, one is astounded with the want of discrimination which makes "Moral Philosophy, Morality, Ethics, Casuistry, and Natural Law, mean all the same thing." These terms, though each of them may be occasionally employed to designate the science, are by no means synonymous. They have distinctive meanings of their own. Morality is applied to actions, and expresses their conformity with the standard of right. Ethicks generally denote a collection of moral precepts, digested into order, without the processes by which they have been evolved. It is the practical, in contradistinction from the speculative part of moral philosophy. It answers the question, *what* is to be done, but not *why*. Cogan, however, in his treatise of the Passions, uses ethicks as the distinctive appellation of the science, and morality in the sense which has just been attributed to ethicks. It must also be confessed that it is becoming quite common to employ ethicks in the sense of Cogan, from the prominence, perhaps, which, in most moral treatises, is given to the elimination of rules. As moral speculations terminate in practice, it is not strange that they should be distinguished by a title which indicates the fact. The design of casuistry is evidently to determine duty in cases of apparently conflicting obligations. It discusses and resolves what are called cases of conscience. In the Romish Church, it constitutes, in consequence of the practice of auricular confession, and the power and influence awarded to spiritual guides, a most important branch of sacerdotal, learning; and perhaps nothing has contributed so much to foster corruption and to sanctify evil, as the countless distinctions which have been invented to reconcile sin to the conscience. There are, no doubt, cases of real perplexity, but it will generally be found that an honest heart and a simple understanding are the best casuists. "But this I shall advertise," says Taylor,* "that the preachers may retrench an infinite number of cases of conscience, if they will more earnestly preach and exhort

* Ductor. Dub. Introd.

to simplicity and love; for the want of these is the great multiplier of cases." "I have myself had," says Bishop Heber,* "sufficient experience of what are generally called scruples, to be convinced that the greater proportion of those which are submitted to a spiritual guide are nothing, more than artifices, by which men seek to justify themselves in what they know to be wrong; and I am convinced that the most efficacious manner of easing a doubtful conscience is, for the most part, to recall the professed penitent from distinctions to generals,—from the peculiarities of his private concerns, to the simple words of the commandment. If we are too curious, we only muddy the stream; but the clearest truth is, in morals, always on the surface." As the duties of the confessional imposed upon the priest the regulation of the conscience in all doubtful cases, and its instruction in cases of ignorance, the business of casuistry took a wide scope, and embraced the whole domain of practical morality. It was cultivated co-ordinately with natural jurisprudence. The distinction between them is thus happily stated by Smith:† "Those who write upon the principles of jurisprudence, consider only what the person to whom the obligation is due ought to think himself entitled to exact by force,—what every impartial spectator would approve of him for exacting,—or what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had submitted his case, and who had undertaken to do him justice, ought to oblige the other person to suffer or perform.—The casuists, on the other hand, do not so much examine what it is that might be properly exacted by force, as what it is that the person who owes the obligation ought to think himself bound to perform from the most sacred and scrupulous regard to the general rules of justice, and from the most conscientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour, or of violating the integrity of his own character. It is the end of jurisprudence to prescribe rules for the decisions of judges and arbiters. It is the end of casuistry to prescribe rules for the conduct of a good man. By observing all the rules of jurisprudence, supposing them ever so perfect, we should

*Life of Taylor. †Moral Sent., part 7 §4.

deserve nothing but to be free from external punishment. By observing those of casuistry, supposing them such as they ought to be, we should be entitled to considerable praise by the exact and scrupulous delicacy of our behaviour."

Natural law, in its widest sense, (*lex natura*,) is applied to those rules of duty which spring from the nature and constitution of man. There are those who maintain that the distinctions of night and wrong are the arbitrary creatures of positive institutions—"that things honourable, and things just, admit of such vast difference and uncertainty, that they seem to exist by statute only, and not in than nature of things." In opposition to this theory, it is maintained that the moral differences of things are eternal and indestructible, and that the knowledge of them, in their great primordial principles, is an essential part of than original furniture of the mind. Man is a law to himself; from his very make and structure, he is a moral and responsible being, and those rules, which, in the progress and developement of his moral faculties, he is led to apprehend as data of conscience, together with the conclusions which legitimately flow from them, are denominated laws of nature. They belong to inherent, essential morality, in contradistinction to what is positive and instituted. The complement of these rules is called right reason, practical reason, and by Jeremy Taylor, legislative reason. Hence that of Cicero: "*Est quidem vera lex recta ratio, natura congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat, quæ tamen ueque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquod licet, neque tota abrogari potest; nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus; neque est quærendus explanator aut interpres alius ejus; nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit, unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium deus; ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator, cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet ac naturam hominis aspernatus hoc ipso luet maximas poenas, etiam si caetera supplicia, quæ putantur, effu-*

gerit." Noble as this passage is, a much greater than *Cicero* has declared that man is a law unto himself, and that those who are destitute of an external communication from heaven, have yet an internal teacher to instruct them in the will of God. The dictates of conscience are denominated *laws*, from the authority with which they are felt to speak; they are manifested in consciousness as commands,_ and not as speculative perceptions; they are laws of *nature*, because they are founded in the nature of things, and are enounced through the *nature* of the mind.

In a narrower sense, natural law (*jus naturæ*) denotes the body of rights which belong to man as man, which spring from his constitution as a social and responsible being, and which consequently attach to all men in the same relations and circumstances. In this sense it coincides with natural jurisprudence, as distinguished from the municipal regulations of States and nations.

In a still narrower sense, natural law is restricted to those principles or rules which should determine the duties of men in times of revolution, on under oppressive and tyrannical governments, or regulate the intercourse of independent States and nations. In none of these senses does natural law coincide precisely with moral philosophy. In the first sense, it may be said that the *conclusions* of moral philosophy are natural laws; they are the results of its investigations, the end of its inquiries. In the second sense, the view of human nature is too limited for a complete philosophy of than moral constitution.— "Right and duty," as Dr. Reid has remarked,* "are things different, and have even a kind of opposition; yet they are so related that one cannot even be conceived without the other; and he that understands the one must understand the other." Hence it happens, that although the inquiries of natural jurisprudence begin at a different point from those of the moral philosopher, they eventually traverse the same ground, and meet in the same practical conclusions. Still, natural jurisprudence is only one branch of moral investigations; and it has only

*Act Powers, chap. iii.

been by an unwarrantable extension of its terms, that it has been made to cover almost the entire domain of duties to our fellow men.

Dr. Paley's blunder in the nomenclature of his science would hardly be deserving of attention, if it did not indicate an entire misconception of the nature and scope of philosophy. This misconception is rendered still more glaring by his articulate statement, that the use of such a department of knowledge as moral philosophy depends upon its competency to furnish a perfect rule of life.—This, indeed, is not the least of its advantages, that it authenticates the laws which, in the progress of intelligence, we have been led to adopt, and enables us to discriminate betwixt legitimate maxims and the offspring of prejudice. It supplies a valuable touch-stone in cases of difficulty and perplexity. But, though moral philosophy reacts upon our rules, and authenticates or annuls them, moral rules must evidently precede philosophy. It is their existence and authority which give rise to it. Its office is to show whence they come, how they are formed, upon what grounds of certainty they rest. It is, in short, the science of our *knowledge* of moral distinctions. It is the creature of reflection upon all those spontaneous processes of the soul which are occupied with good and evil, with right and wrong. Man finds himself with certain moral convictions, with rules which he feels to be authoritative; and when he begins to *reflect* upon these phenomena, and to seek for their laws, he begins the work of the moral philosopher. There may be ethicks without philosophy,—a classification of all the duties of human life; there may be natural jurisprudence, or a systematic exhibition of the essential rights of humanity; there may be religion, or a profound knowledge and reverence of the will and perfections of God. It is not until the question is asked, *how* we know these things, and thought returns upon itself to investigate the laws and conditions of consciousness, that philosophy takes its rise. The mere classification of objective phenomena is not philosophy, though an important organ of philosophy. The aim of philosophy is to verify human knowledge, or to show how it comes to be knowledge.—In this, the true view of it, Dr. Paley, it needs not to be

said, not only makes no pretensions to it, but had no conception of it. Human consciousness is a territory which he never enters; the moral faculties he has absolutely ignored; and what he has given us is rather a special application of arithmetic, from data suggested by experience, than the evolution and analysis of indestructible elements of the human soul. There is not a single problem of the science which lie has grappled with in a philosophic spirit; and there cannot be a more egregious misnomer than to apply the title Philosophy to a scheme which aims no higher than to show how, with no other faculties but those of apprehension, and the susceptibility to pleasure and pain, an animal might be drilled into a particular line of conduct. Dr. Paley set out with a determination to seek for *rules*, and his treatise is only a special plea, upon what seemed to him a plausible ground, for those which he saw to be necessary. Many of his rules are right enough, and no one would have thought of questioning them, if the defence of them had not been so weak.

2. The chapter on the Law of Honour, is calculated to mislead, not because it contains anything positively false,—(it is, on the contrary, a faithful account of a factitious rule of life, introduced by free-thinking into the higher circles of English society,)—but because it may convey the implication, that honour itself, is a factitious principle of action. It notices an abuse, without vindicating the just claims of what had been perverted and misapplied. That Dr. Paley has not exaggerated the abuse, requires no proof to those who are conversant with the history of the times. The licentious speculations of the Infidel philosophers of the eighteenth century,—which were greedily embraced by the frivolous, profligate and vain, and passed into a sort of badge of distinction, as if the admirers of them were the only men of intelligence and spirit,—undertook to compensate morality and religion for the loss of God, conscience and moral government, by introducing a sentiment of *honour*, which, apart from any interested motives,—the fear of punishment, the hope of reward, the approbation of the wise and good, or the sense of duty,—could maintain the-cause of virtue in the world. This honour appears

to have been an exclusive admiration of the beauty. of virtue. But it is easy to see that when this *sense* of beauty became the only criterion of right and wrong, all would soon come to be felt as beautiful which was felt to be desirable. Virtue would be reduced to the narrow proportions to which Dr. Paley's Law of Honour assigned it. Substantially the same account is given by Bishop Berkeley in the Minute Philosopher.

The very abuse, however, shows that there was something real,—the counterfeit proves the genuine. There must have been a foundation of stone, or the superstructure of wood, hay and stubble could not have stood for a moment. Hutcheson and Dr. Reid made *honour* synonymous with conscience, and a sense of honour with a sense of duty. They were misled by the Latin term *honestum*, to which they supposed that our honour exactly corresponds.

General usage, however, restricts the term to two significations, one of which may be called its objective, the other its subjective sense. In the first sense, it is the esteem or praise which is awarded to a man by others, on account of his actions, considered as praiseworthy.—Any external expressions of this inward feeling are called honours. In the other sense, it is that principle of our nature which leads us to act in such a way as to *deserve* the commendation of our fellow men. It prompts us to perform virtuous actions, not only because they are right and pronounced to be obligatory by the conscience, but because they contribute to our dignity, and are felt to be intrinsically laudable. They are seen to become us—that condecency in virtue with the excellence of human nature is what is meant by its beauty. It is lovely in itself, and adorns all its possessors. This beauty elicits admiration, and secures, among the wise and good, esteem and commendation to all who are graced with it. Honour, then, as a principle of action, is only another name for self-respect, or for that pride of character which preserves from what is base, or mean, or shameful in conduct. It is subsidiary to conscience. That must prescribe the standard of virtue, and this comes in as an additional sanction, to secure conformity with it. Honour is distinguished from vanity in this, that honour aims

at being *praiseworthy*, and vanity simply at *being praised*. The one is consequently an inseparable ally of conscience, the other the shadow of public opinion.

Opposed to honour, in both its objective and subjective senses, is shame, which is either the contempt of others manifested in some external expressions, or the fear, on our part, of doing that which shall justly expose us to disgrace. It proceeds from the feeling, that there is in vice, a deformity or filthiness corresponding to the beauty of virtue. Apart from the horrours of conscience or the naked workings of remorse, there is in every guilty breast a profound conviction of meanness and degradation. The transgressor loses his sense of self-respect. He is like a man who, unconsciously having come naked or with filthy apparel into polite and refined society, awakes suddenly to a just sense of his condition.

3. Dr. Paley's representation of the inadequacy of the Scriptures as a rule of practice, should not be allowed to pass without notice. It is true, they pre-suppose a moral nature in us, but they are not wanting in the facilities which they furnish for guiding that nature into all duty. It is not necessary to the perfection of a rule that all the instances and occasions of its application should be minutely described. If none could be perfect that failed in this condition, moral philosophy itself would be as incompetent as the Scriptures. That cannot specify all the cases in which men may be called to act; and if the Scriptures are to be condemned for not doing this, why should it receive a milder treatment. All that we want, practically, is sound general rules; prudence and common sense must apply them. The Scriptures give us such rules, and he who faithfully obeys their teachings will find himself perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. But the Scriptures are not a philosophy. They do not show how the commands of God are deeply founded in the principles of consciousness and reason. The reflective process they have left to human speculation, and here philosophy comes in.

4. The most exceptionable part of Dr. Paley's book is that in which he treats of conscience. If he had been successful in his attempt to construct a moral system, independently of the aid of a moral faculty in man, his

success would have rendered unphilosophical the assumption of any such faculty. The law of parsimony forbids the unnecessary multiplication of causes, and where phenomena can be explained without postulating a new original principle, such a principle is not to be granted. But the failure of Dr. Paley's effort is anything but encouraging to those who would dispense with conscience. And as his general system fails to obviate the necessity of such a principle, so his special and articulate arguments fail to invalidate the proof of its existence.

In order to apprehend fully the weakness and inconsistency of Dr. Paley's discussion of this subject, it is necessary to bear in mind the real condition of the controversy. There are obviously two general questions in relation to conscience—one having reference to its existence, or the reality of moral phenomena, and the other to its origin. The first question is, whether or not there is a class of judgments and emotions, specifically different from all others which we denominate moral? Is there a distinction made by the human mind betwixt right and wrong, a duty and a crime? Is there such a thing as a sense of duty and a conviction of guilt? That such moral phenomena exist cannot be doubted. It is a matter of universal experience—and hence no philosopher has ever thought of calling them into question. Now, to the cause or causes of these phenomena we may give the name of conscience, without presuming to determine the nature of the cause, or the mode of its operation. In this sense, the question whether or not conscience exists, must be answered by all philosophers in the affirmative. Then the question arises, what is its nature and origin? Whence are our moral cognitions and sentiments derived? It is in the answer to this question that philosophers split into sects. All the possible answers may be reduced to three. 1. The opinion of those who maintain that our moral judgments are purely adventitious—that conscience is the creature of prejudice, authority, custom and education, that there is no uniform law by which it is acquired, and that it will consequently be one thing at Rome, another thing at Athens. These men admit that conscience is natural,

in the sense that all men will form a conscience,—but they deny that there will be uniformity in the conscience thus formed. The character of its judgments and sentiments is altogether contingent, and it, itself, is a factitious principle, or complement of principles. 2. The opinion of those who maintain that it is natural, but not original. These men represent it as a necessary product of nature, but not as a primary gift of nature. It is an acquired faculty, or combination of faculties, but it is acquired in obedience to laws of the human constitution, which not only necessitate its acquisition, but determine the elements of which it shall be composed. It is consequently the same in all men. Their nature being what it is, and operating as it does, conscience must be generated, and generated alike, in all who have this nature. It is therefore natural, in the same sense that the acquired judgments of sight and hearing are natural. It springs from nature, though it is not given as a part of nature. 3. The opinion of those who maintain that conscience is not only natural, but original,—that it is a simple element of our being,—that no analysis can resolve it into constituent principles,—that its cognitions are primitive and necessary, and its sentiments peculiar and marked.

1. This being the state of the question, the first thing that strikes us in Dr. Paley's articulate discussion of it is, that the conclusion which he seeks to establish is inconsistent with the scope and tenor of his general system. The very conception of a philosophy of morals implies that there is a foundation laid in nature for the distinctions betwixt right and wrong. If these distinctions were determined by no law,—if they were absolutely arbitrary and capricious, the inquest of a principle which should furnish a perfect and adequate rule of life, would be as idle and chimerical as the dreams of the alchemists. But if morals can be reduced to a system, then our moral judgments must depend upon steady and uniform principles. They must spring from our nature; and though they may not be original, they are not wholly adventitious. But in the chapter before us, Dr. Paley not only denies that our moral judgments are original; he denies that they are natural; he denies that they are

acquired by any constant or uniform law. He makes them as variable and fluctuating as the circumstances, education and caprices of men. This is equivalent to saying that there can be no such science as Moral Philosophy. The general conclusion of his book is, that conscience is the necessary result, in beings constituted as we are, of the perception of what is useful in character and conduct, conjoined with a sensibility to pleasure and pain. It is an acquired faculty, or combination of faculties, but the process by which it is acquired is natural and inevitable in the progress and education of the mind. The conclusion of the present chapter is, that it depends altogether upon accident what actions a man shall approve or condemn, and what rule he adopts for the regulation of his conduct. Dr. Paley has been betrayed into this inconsistency, by inattention to the distinction betwixt what is natural and original. The point which he aimed to combat was the originality of conscience—that it is a principle which we bring with us into the world—like the capacity of perceiving truth, or the sensibility to pleasure and pain. He need not have gone any farther. To have been consistent with himself, he ought to have adopted the opinion which Sir Jas. McIntosh subsequently elaborated, concerning the method by which conscience, as a derivative and secondary faculty, or rather habit, is acquired. But, in his zeal to refute the originality, he aims a blow at the naturalness of conscience.—What is natural, under the circumstances favourable to its developement, must be as universal and uniform as what is original; and hence, in maintaining the capriciousness of moral distinctions, Dr. Paley demolishes his own book, as triumphantly as he refutes the hypothesis of an innate power. To say that conscience is a complement of prejudices and arbitrary judgments, is to say that moral philosophy is impossible. To say that it is natural, whether original or acquired, is to say that there may be such a science.

2. In the next place, Dr. Paley is mistaken in *the criterion* by which he distinguishes the original from the adventitious. That criterion, according to him, is not simply *universality*, but *maturity*. It is not enough that the thing in question be found in all men who have had

the opportunity of developing it, but that it should be actually developed in every man, without respect to his circumstances, the general expansion of his powers, or the degree of his experience and education. Now, our original faculties are not all unfolded at once, and none arrive at maturity without time and experience. There is an order in their developement; some precede others, as the condition of their operations. When, therefore, we inquire whether the manifestations of a power are universal, we restrict our researches to those who are in the condition in which they ought to be found, if they exist at all. The child cannot comprehend a complicated argument; but does it follow that the faculty of reasoning is not original and universal? And so the savage supposed by Dr. Paley, or the wild boy caught in the woods of Hanover, having had no opportunities of exercising his moral faculties, might be incapable, at first, of manifesting their existence. They are in him in the same state in which they would be in an infant. If we wish to know whether moral judgments are universal, we must look among those from whom Dr. Paley precludes us; we must look among those who have had the opportunity, by social intercourse, of unfolding their moral nature; and if we find, among such men, that moral distinctions universally obtain, we are sure, at least, that they are natural. We should no more look for a maturity of moral knowledge among infants, and those who, in regard to education, are no better than infants, than we should look among them for the maturity of the speculative understanding.

Dr. Paley seems to think that education is something contradictory to nature, and that whatever has been effected, by education is, on that account, factitious and unnatural. On the contrary, a, sound education is but the *improvement* of nature; it is nature in its progress to perfection. It is among the educated, in the proper sense of the term, that we must look for the justest exhibitions of what is original and natural. It is in man's nature as *matured*, that we may best study the faculties and capacities of man. A perverse education may do violence to nature; but these distortions will be local and accidental, and should not authorize the summary

conclusion that education is the re-constitution of the man.

The test, therefore, by which Dr. Paley would determine the question of the originality of conscience, is simply absurd. He might just as reasonably propose his case to at infant hanging upon its mother's breast, as to one whose moral faculties, from the very nature of the case, never could have been exercised. "Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist," says Dugall Stewart, "to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man, brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colours? But would it not be equally rash to conclude, from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not at original part of the human frame?" The true test of the question is, whether the manifestations of conscience are universal among all who have had the opportunity of exercising it, and whether these manifestations can be resolved into any other principles of our nature. The universality of manifestation is a proof of naturalness, the simplicity of originality. To these two questions Dr. Paley should have confined himself. Do all men who have a sufficient degree of intelligence make a distinction betwixt right and wrong? Can you explain these judgments without at ultimate principle?

3. Having made the *maturity* of a power the criterion of its originality, Dr. Paley's next blunder is not to be wondered at. He has not favoured us with a distinct statement of what he understood to be the doctrine of an original conscience, but it may be collected from the general tenor of his argument, that he apprehended it to include two things: 1. A habit of rules, applicable to every possible variety of cases, lying unconsciously concealed in the recesses of the soul, ready to be manifested in consciousness whenever an occasion should demand; and 2, an instinct by which the rule to be applied to any given case was instantaneously and infallibly suggested. An original conscience, with him, could mean nothing less than a perfect knowledge of ethic's in its laws, and their applications. It was equivalent to an infallible directory of duty. With this notion in his mind, we are able to explain why he has grouped together, as different

statements of the same thing, systems of philosophy which have nothing it common but their advocacy of the primitive character of our moral cognitions. It was to him an unimportant question whether the faculty to which these cognitions pertained were held to be reason with Clarke and Cudworth, or a distinct and separate principle with Hutcheson,—whether its rules existed in the mind in the form of knowledges, developed (innate maxims,) or undeveloped, or whether they were determined by sentiment or feeling, operating either as a blind instinct, or a refined sensibility to the presence of its appropriate qualities (moral taste); all these were unimportant points, compared with the general doctrine of an original ability of some sort, to distinguish betwixt right and wrong. This ability, if mature and adequate, as it must be, according to him, if original, must be tantamount to a perfect knowledge of duty on all the occasions of life. Hence, all these theories, in his judgment, coincided in this result. They amounted to the same thing.

But no such doctrine of conscience ever has been seriously maintained by any man deserving the name of a philosopher. The primitive cognitions of morality are like all other primitive cognitions. They exist, it the first instance, as necessities or laws of conscience, and are evolved into distinct propositions by a process of reflection. Experience furnishes the occasions on which they are developed, and when developed they become the standard by which we judge of all moral truth.—They stand in the same relation to the moral faculty in which the laws of thought stand to the faculty of speculative truth. Hence, they do not supersede, but suppose reflection. The germs and elements of morality, they require culture as much as any other principles of our nature. What are called the laws of thought are all given in consciousness, and constitute the ultimate standard of truth; but they require reflection to elicit them into distinct and formal propositions, and to guide their application to the complicated problems suggested by experience. So there is a two-fold office of the understanding in the case of our primitive moral cognitions—one to eliminate them in consciousness, to reduce to explicit enunciations what is implicitly given in a spon-

taneous operation,—the other to apply the rules thus eliminated to the various exigencies of real life. Much error arises from the misapplication of laws which are just and proper in themselves. It is the function of the understanding to analyze the cases which are brought before it, and to determine which of the primary principles should be applied to them. Conscience gives us the elements—thought and reflection, the combination and uses of these elements. Conscience gives us *implicitly*—the understanding *explicitly*—the fundamental laws of morality.

This view of conscience, as containing, implicitly and undeveloped, the primary rules of right,—as furnishing the criterion, but not the knowledge of what things are right, completely obviates the objections of Dr. Paley to the existence of such a faculty, founded on the supposition that it must act instinctively, instantaneously and infallibly. On the contrary, it begins, like all our other powers, as a feeble germ; it is strengthened by repeated and proper exercise, and brought to maturity by judicious culture and education,—this education imperatively demanding the aid of reason and reflection.

4. The only argument which Dr. Paley alleges against the originality of conscience, is founded on the diversity which is said to obtain in the moral judgments of mankind. This argument is, of course, a complete disproof of any *such* conscience as he supposed to be asserted. If the moral faculty implies an instantaneous, unreflecting, instinctive discrimination of the right and just, in every possible case, any instances of the absence or want of such a power in man, would be conclusive against it.—But the argument has no force against the true doctrine of conscience, unless it can be shown that there is a difference among men as to the primary principles of right. Those laws which are implicitly given, in every spontaneous operation of conscience, if they are contradictory among men, there is an end of the dispute. But nothing can be concluded against them from any amount of discrepancy in their actual application. Men may reason badly upon them, and yet admit them with an absolute faith,—just as all men necessarily acknowledge the laws of thought,—and yet, in a multitude of cases, misapply

them, and fall into error. Speculative error is as much an argument against the primitive cognitions of the understanding as moral error against the primitive judgments of conscience, to be accounted for in the same way; and in both it will be found that there is at bottom a tacit recognition of first principles. The very mistakes of men are confessions of the truth. We have no hesitation in asserting that the primary laws of morality are essentially the same in every human mind, and that, except in cases of grievous, manifest and monstrous perversion, no instance can be found, among those whose minds are sufficiently matured, of a direct contradiction to them. They answer the condition, *quod semper*, *quod ubique*, *quod ab omnibus*.

The discrepancies upon which so much stress has been laid are all to be ascribed, not to the denial, but to an ill-judged application of these laws. The conscience was right, but the understanding was wrong. The heathen who murders his aged parents, professes to be acting on the same law of filial reverence and piety, which prompts the Christian to nurse their declining days.—The heathen father who exposed his tender babe, was taking it away, in a spirit of mistaken tenderness and kindness, from the evils to come. The Spartan condemned theft, but encouraged dexterity and skill. There are some instances in which atrocious vices were practised, whose history and origin we are not able to explain. But it does not follow that they who practised them denied the fundamental rules of right. It may be that they did not really approve them—that they condemned in their consciences what they practised in their lives—or that they had some ingenious sophism, by which they extricated these vices from the jurisdiction of the rule. The Jesuits have not called directly into question any primary truth,—but they have contrived a system of casuistry, which, upon given occasions, eviscerates them of all authority and power.

The truth is, when we consider the wickedness of man, and the ingenuity of a corrupt heart in devising excuses, extenuations and shifts, the wonder is, not that there is so much, but so little diversity in the practical judg-

ments of men. It is an unanswerable proof that there are laws enthroned supremely in the conscience, which make themselves heard amid all the tumult, confusion and uproar of passion, interest, superstition and power. These laws are the anchors of the moral system of the world.

Whatever diversity obtains in the judgments of men, may, perhaps, be reduced to four causes: 1. Where the relations which are presupposed in a moral judgment are not developed among a people, they cannot be expected to exhibit, or even to understand that judgment. There are savage tribes which cannot enter into our condemnation of theft, because the notion of property is not definitely unfolded among them. Let this relation be as perfect with them as with us, and the moral judgment would undoubtedly be the same. 2. The weakness and debility of the intellectual faculties which are to eliminate and apply the general principles of conscience, are the most prolific source of moral confusion and error. There is an incompetency in some men to comprehend the cases which are submitted to them; they connot distinguish and discriminate, and hence they are exposed to perpetual blunders. 3. The influence of passion, interest, selfishness, to pervert the moral reasoning, covers a multitude of cases. Men contrive evasions to escape from the jurisdiction of principles whose general authority they acknowledge. They multiply exceptions to the rule.—The sophistry of a corrupt heart suborns the understanding to silence the conscience. 4. The difference in the moral import of the same action, as performed in different ages, or among different people, must also be taken into consideration. An action may be right to-day which is wrong to-morrow, because in the two cases its significancy is entirely different. It expresses a different principle, like a word that has changed its meaning; not that the rules of morality are mutable—but relations are mutable; and with these shifting relations, the same material action may change its moral import. What would be incest with us, was lawful and necessary in the family of the first man. Usury was once universally condemned by Jew and Gentile, because it was then synonymous with oppression of the poor; it is now as universally ap-

proved, because, in the changes of society, it is the life and soul of commerce.*

These four considerations seem to relieve the subject of all embarrassment, by accounting for whatever discrepancy prevails in the moral judgments of mankind, without prejudice to the universality of our primitive cognitions.

5. It remains only to consider the explanation which Dr. Paley has given of the genesis of our moral sentiments. He refers them to the law of association, making conscience a secondary principle or habit, like avarice or the love of money for itself. The sentiments of approbation or disapprobation, which are immediately excited by the contemplation of virtuous or of vicious actions, were, in the first instance, awakened by the utility or hurtfulness of the actions; and this pleasure and pain, arising primarily from its quality, becomes firmly associated with the action itself,—and hence the very mention of the action is sufficient to reproduce it. The approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice are, consequently, the pleasure and pain of utility or hurtfulness, transferred from the qualities to the action in which the qualities are found. But to this hypothesis there is one insuperable objection. Association can transfer sentiments, but cannot create them. Now, the approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice, are feelings different in kind,—not the same feelings directed to a different object, but feelings specifically distinct from the pleasure and pain of convenience or inconvenience. They are a class of feelings by themselves. The question is, how are they to be accounted for? Association may transfer them to associated objects, supposing them to be in existence, but association cannot *originate* them.—If they were the *same*, with the approbation of what is useful, or the condemnation of what is hurtful, Dr. Paley's theory might be admitted; but being different, it is altogether unsatisfactory. Sir Jas. McIntosh, who agrees with Paley in the general doctrine of utility, as the criterion of right, while he contends that our moral judgments are secondary and acquired, admits the originality of our moral emotions. He saw that they were peculiar

* Vide Stewart.—Phil. Act. & Mor. Pow., chap 3.

and unique, and could only be explained by an original susceptibility.

These are the special points, apart from the general proportions of the system, to which we have thought it necessary to call attention in Dr. Paley's book. These, however, are not the only things which are exceptionable. His notions of the origin of property are narrow and superficial, drawn from the objective rather than the subjective, from the crude appearance of things, rather than the analysis of human nature. His resolution of the obligation of veracity into the obligation of promises, is a singular instance of confusion of ideas,—as if the obligation of a promise did not pre-suppose that of veracity. But we have said enough to put the merits and defects of the system in a fair light. We have endeavoured to neutralize its power of doing harm,—and if we have been successful, it is all that we desired.

ARTICLE II.

ORTHODOXY IN NEW-ENGLAND.

A Remonstrance, addressed to the Trustees of Phillips Academy, Andover, on, the state of the Theological Seminary under their care. By DANIEL DANA, *D. D. Boston: Crocker & Brewster:* 1853.

The author of this earnest and dignified paper, is one of the oldest and most venerable of the clergy of New-England, whose long life of piety and labour in the cause of his Divine Master, is now drawing to a close. For nearly fifty years Dr. Dana has been a member of the Board to whom he addresses his Remonstrance, and he has always been one of the most faithful and devoted guardians and friends of the important institution under their care.

This "Remonstrance" was presented to the Board in 1849. After two years a Report was made upon it, and accepted, the nature of which was highly unsatisfactory

to the friends of truth and orthodoxy; and, inasmuch as the considerations and suggestions contained in the Remonstrance have been followed by no corresponding action on the part of the Trustees, Dr. Dana has felt called on to make this public appeal to the Christian public; and such is the history of the present publication.

It may be safely assumed, that when a man of Dr. Dana's age, and character for piety and wisdom, with the prospect of very soon meeting his Master, and rendering up an account of his stewardship, feels himself constrained, in this public and emphatic manner, to raise his voice in remonstrance against beloved and respected brethren, with whom he has been associated for nearly half a century, he is influenced by no slight considerations of duty, and that his words are worthy of serious and candid attention. For ourselves, we are entirely convinced, that the very grave and alarming nature of the matters against which the remonstrance is directed, do not only fully justify its author in the course which he has adopted, but that no other course was open to him, as an honest man, in defence of what he firmly believed to be the great principles of sound doctrine, which were dear to the Fathers of New England, and for the dissemination and defence of which this their Theological school was established and commended to the prayers, confidence, and support of the churches.

We have been aware, for some years past, of two things in relation to this subject. The first is, that the instruction now, and of late given in the Theological Seminary at Andover, was in direct opposition, on se-several fundamental points, to the received standards of sound doctrine, especially to the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, and that this teaching was calculated to produce an influence upon the cause of vital godliness in New England, which was of the most deplorable character.

The other fact is, that although many of the younger ministers, and multitudes of Christians, have been dazzled and impressed by the splendour of the rhetoric, and the brilliant drapery of learning and talent which has been thrown around this erroneous teaching, and have failed in some cases to detect it, and in others justly to