

## LECTURE IX.

### SOURCES OF OUR THINKING.—Continued.

#### SYLLABUS.

1. Is the Intuitional Reason a different faculty from, and of higher authority than, the Logical Understanding?  
Locke's Essay, bk. iv, ch. ii, § 7. Mosheim Eccles. Hist., Cent. 17th, Sec. i, ¶ 24. Morell, p. 125, pp. 161-168.
2. To ascertain the origin of moral distinctions in our minds, state and refute the Selfish System of Morals, as held by Hobbes, and others.  
Jouffroy's Introd. to Ethicks, Lect. ii. Dr. Thos. Brown, Lect. 78, 79. Cousin, *Le Vrai*, &c., Lecon 12th. Morell, p. 71-75.
3. State and refute the utilitarian theory, (as held by Hume and Bentham.)  
"Crimes of Philanthropy," in the *Land too Love*, Dec., 1866. Jouffroy, Lect. 13, 14. Brown, Lect. 77, 78. Cousin, *Le Vrai*, &c., Lecon 13th. Morell, p. 215, &c. Thornwell, Discourses on Truth, i, ii. Bishop Butler's Sermons, 11th to 14th. Jonathan Edward's Essay on the Nature of Virtue, ch. i, ii.
4. State and refute Paley's form of the Selfish System.  
Paley's Moral Phil., pp. 24-60. (8vo. Ed.) Jouffroy, ch. 15. Brown, Lect. 79, 80. Alex. Moral Science, ch. 1, 2, 3. Cousin, *Du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien*, as above.
5. State and discuss the Sentimental Theory of Dr. Adam Smith.  
Jouffroy, Lect. 16-18. Brown, Lect. 80-81. Turretin, Loc. xi, Qu. 1.

**S**EVERAL analysts of the laws of thought, such as Hobbes and Locke, set out with the fascinating idea of accepting nothing upon trust, and bringing everything claim primitive judgments licentiously to the test of experimental proof. The miserable sensationalism and materialism to which this led in the hands of Priestly in England, and Condillac in France, taught men to reflect, that unless some primary judgments are allowed to start from, there can be no beginning

at all: so that some truths must have a prior authority than that of proof. By what faculty, then, are they perceived? Transcendentalists, from Spinoza to the modern, have all answered, by the intuitive reason: whose sight is direct intellection, whose conclusions are super-logical, and not, therefore, amenable to logical refutation. The frightful license of dogmatizing to which these schools have proceeded, shows the motive; it is to enjoy an emancipation from the logical obligations of proving dogmas. Do we say to them, Your assertions do not seem to us true, and we disprove them thus and thus: they reply, "Ah, that is by your plodding, logical understanding; intuitions of the pure reason are not amenable to it; and if you do not see that our opinion is necessarily true, in spite of objections, it is only because the reason is less developed in you." So the quarrel now stands. It seems to me obvious, therefore, that the next adjustment and improvement, which the science of mind must receive, should be an adjustment of the relations between intuitions and valid deductions.

Now, we might practically bring the transcendentalist to  
 How resisted. reason by saying, first, that they always claim the validity of the logical understanding, when they find it convenient to use it. [The very evasion above stated is a deduction, by one step, from false premises!] Hence, consistency requires them to bow to it everywhere. Second; we might apply the established tests of a true intuition to their pretended ones, primariness, truth, and universality; and thus show that, when they profess by the pure reason to see dogmas which contradict or transcend the common sense of mankind, they are but making wild hypotheses. But third: I am convinced the radical overthrow of their system will be seen to be, at length, in this position: that the mind sees the truth of a valid deduction by the same faculty, and with equal authority, as an axiom or other first truth—i. e., when major and minor premise have a conclusive relation, and that relation is fairly comprehended, the reason sees the conclusion as immediately, as necessarily, as intuitively, as authoritatively, as when it sees a primary truth.

To my mind, the simple and sufficient proof of this view of  
 the logical function is in these questions. All judgments intuitive and necessary, if valid. What is the human intelligence, but a function of seeing truth? As the eye only sees by looking, and all looking is direct and immediate sense intuition, how else can the mind see, than by looking—i. e., by rational intuition? Whether the object of bodily sight be immediate or reflective, an object or its *spectrum*, it is still equally true that the eye only sees by looking—looking immediately; in the latter case the *spectrum* only is its immediate object. So the mind only sees by looking; and all its looking is intuition; if not immediate, it is not its own; it is naught. One of the

earliest, Locke, inconsistently concurs with one of the latest, McGuffey, of the great English-speaking psychologists, in asserting the view I adopted before consulting either. Locke's proof of it seems to me perfectly valid. He argues (*loco citato*,) that if the mind's perception of a valid relation between a proposition and its next premise were not immediate, then there must be, between the two, some proposition to mediate our view of it. But between a proposition and its next premise, there can be no other interposed.

But to this view many sound philosophers, even, would probably object strenuously. That the first great mark of intuitive authority, primariness, was lacking; that the position is utterly overthrown by the wide and various differences of opinion on subjects of deduction; while in first truths, there must be universal agreement; and that it is inconsistent with the fact that many derived conclusions claim no more than a probable evidence. To the first, I reply, the action of the reason in seeing a deduced truth, is not indeed a primary judgment; but the fact that the truth is seen only by relation to premises, does not make the intellection less immediate and necessary. Just so truly as the first truth is seen to be necessarily true, so the deduced truth is seen to be necessarily true, the premises being as they are. Several of our intuitions are intuitions of relations. Why should it be thought so strange that these intellections by relations should be intuitive? To the second, propositions called axioms have not always commanded universal agreement; and we are obliged to explain this fact by misapprehension of terms, or ignorance of relations included in the propositions. Well, the same explanation accounts consistently for the differences men have in their deductions; and the more numerous differences in this class of propositions are accounted for by the facts, that while the axioms are few, deductions are countless; and in any one there are more terms, because more propositions liable to misconception. But I do assert that, in a valid syllogism, if the major and minor are known to be true, and the terms are all fairly comprehended, the belief of the conclusion by the hearer is as inevitable, as necessary, as universal, as when an axiom is stated. Third; though in many deductions the evidence is but probable, the fact that there is probable evidence, may be as necessarily admitted, as in an intuitive and positive truth.

We now approach, young gentlemen, that great class of our judgments which are of supreme importance in theology, as in practical life—the class known as our moral judgments. Every sane man is conscious of acts of soul, which pronounce certain rational agents right or wrong in certain acts. With these right or wrong acts our souls unavoidably conjoin certain

2. Source of our Moral Judgments.

notions and feelings of obligation, merit, demerit, approbation or disapprobation, and desert of reward or penalty. It is this peculiar class of mental states which constitutes the subject of the science of ethicks, or morals. All questions as to the nature and validity of moral judgments run into the radical question, as to their origin. Are they the results of a fundamental and intuitive law of reason? Or are they artificial or factitious of some other natural principles developed into a form only apparently peculiar, by habit, association, or training? In answering this all-important question, I shall pursue this method, to set aside the various false analyses, until we reach the true one.

The Selfish System, presenting itself in many varied forms from Hobbes (natural desire of enjoyment only motive) through Mandeville (the desire of being applauded is the moral motive) down to Paley, has always this characteristic: it resolves our idea of virtue into self-interest. Its most refined form, perhaps, is that which says, since acts of benevolence, sympathy, justice, are found to be attended with an immediate inward pleasure, (self-approbation,) that pleasure is the motive of our moral acts. We discuss several phases together.

I remark, that on the selfish system, the notion of right, duty, obligation, free-agency, could never have arisen in the mind, and have no relevancy or meaning. Let man frame the proposition: "That which furthers self-interest is right;" the very employment of the word right betrays the fact that the mind recognizes a standard other than that of self-interest. And any analysis of the notion shows that it is utterly violated and falsified, when made identical with self-interest. Thus, Hobbes says, each man's natural right is to pursue his own natural self-interest supremely. But according to his own showing, this "right" in A implies no corresponding duty in him, and no obligation in his neighbour, B, to respect it, and no recognition on the part of any other. Any body has a "right" to prevent A from having his "right." Queer right this!

If interest is the whole motive, then, when the question arises, whether I shall do, or omit a certain action, you cannot consistently expect me to consider anything but this: whether or not the doing of it will promote my own advantage, and that, in the form I happen to prefer. If I say, "This result will most gratify me," the argument is at an end; my proposed act is, for me, right; there is no longer any standard of uniform moral distinction. The same remark shows that the judgment of obligation to a given act is then baseless. Attempt to apply any of those arguments, by which Epicureanism attempts to interpose an "ought not" between a man and any natural in-

dulgence; (as this: "This sensual pleasure will indeed promote animal, but hinder intellectual pleasure, which is higher. And since pleasure is the rational chief good, you should prefer the more to the less;") the reply is: "Animal joys are to me larger than intellectual;" and the ground of obligation is gone. If no indulgence is less or more virtuous than any other, then no possible argument of obligation can be constructed, in the face of an existing preference, for refraining from any. If the sensualistic psychology is true, from which the selfish schemes proceed, then desire for natural good, which they make the only moral motive, is a passive affection of the soul. It is no more voluntary, when the object of desire is presented, than is pain when you are struck, or a chill when you are deluged with cold water. Where, now, is that free-agency which, we intuitively feel, is rudimental to all moral action and responsibility? Man is no longer self-directed by subjective, rational motives, but drawn hither and thither like a puppet, by external forces. But if not a free, he cannot be a moral agent. Of course, also, there is no longer any basis for any judgment of merit or demerit in acts, or any moral obligation to punishment. Penalties become the mere expedients of the stronger for protecting their own selfishness. And as this is as true of the future, all religious sanctions are at an end!

This theory teaches that this selfish pleasure apprehended by the mind, in acquiring an object, must always be the motive for seeking it. The analysis is false; desire must be instinctive; otherwise man could not have his first volition till after the volition had put him on the way of experiencing the pleasant result of the fruition! Many desires are obviously instinctive; e. g., curiosity. Now, since the self-pleasing cannot be the original element of the desire, it cannot be proved that this is our element of rightness, in classifying our desires. See now, how this analysis would assign the effect as the cause of its own cause. A does a disinterested act. The consciousness of having done disinterestedly gives A an inward pleasure. This after-pleasure, proceeding from the consciousness that the act was unselfish, prompted to the act! Thus the effect caused its own cause! The absurdity of the scheme is further proved by this: If the fact that a disinterested act results in inward satisfaction to him who did it, proves that act selfish; then the fact that a selfish act usually results in inward pain to him who perpetrates it, proves that act to have been a disinterested one in motive.

If the selfish theory of action were true, the adaptation of another person's conduct to confer personal advantage on us, should be synonymous with merit in our eyes. The villain who shared with us the reward of his misdeeds, to bribe us to aid or ap-

2d. From Precedence of Intuitive Desire to Calculation.

3d. From intuitive Difference of advantage and merit.

plaud him, would evoke the same sentiment of gratitude, as the mother who blessed us with her virtuous self-sacrifice; and there would be no generic difference between the hollow flattery of the courtier for the monster on whose bounty he fattened, and the approbation of the virtuous for patriotism or benevolence.

If our notion of good acts is nothing but a generalization of the idea of acts promotive of our self-interest, he who has most experimental knowledge of human affairs (i. e., he who is most hackneyed in this world's ways,) must have the clearest and stroughest apprehensions of moral distinctions; because he would most clearly apprehend this tendency of actions. He who was wholly inexperienced, could have no moral distinctions. Is this so? Do we not find the most unsophisticated have the most vivid moral sympathies? The ignorant child in the nursery more than the hackneyed man of experience?

But the crowning absurdity of the theory appears here; that our consciousness always teaches us, that the pleasure we have in well-doing depends wholly upon our feeling that the virtuous act had no reference to self; and the moment we feel that self-pleasing was our prime motive, we feel that our moral pleasure therein is wholly marred. Indeed, the best and the sufficient argument against this miserable theory would, perhaps, be the instinctive loathing and denial uttered against it by every man's soul, who is rightly constituted. The honest man knows, by his immediate consciousness, that when he does right, selfishness is not his motive; and that if it were, he would be utterly self-condemned. As *Cousin* nervously remarks: Our consciousness tells us, that the approbation we feel for disinterested virtue is wholly disinterested, and it is impossible for us to feel it unless we feel that the agent for whom we feel it was disinterested in this act. Thus, a thousand things in the acts, the language, and the consciousnesses of men are utterly irreconcilable with this hateful analysis, and show it to be as unphilosophical as degrading. Our crowning objection is found in its effect on our view of the divine character. That which is man's finite virtue must be conceived infinite, as constituting the virtue of God, (if there is a God.) His holiness must be only sovereign self-interest!

In the next place, I group together three theories of the nature of virtue, which really amount to the same; that of David Hume, who taught that an act is apprehended by us as virtuous, because it is seen to be useful to mankind; that of Jeremy Bentham, who taught that whatever conduct is conducive to the greatest good of the greatest number, is right; and that of some New England divines and philosophers, who teach that

4th. From Vividness of Unsophisticated Moral Sentiments.

5th. From Consciousness. No Merit where Self reigns.

11. Utilitarian Ethics.

virtue consists in benevolence. The latter is practically synonymous with the two former. For the practical expression of benevolence is beneficence. This theory of virtue is a natural off-shoot of Jonathan Edwards' theory of virtue. This great and good man would probably be shocked to have his speculation, as to "the nature of true virtue," classed with those of the infidel, utilitarian school. But the historical development of it since his death, proves the justice of the charge. It is, moreover, so interesting an exposition of the unavoidable tendencies of the "Benevolence Theory," and has so important relations to existing errors in theology, that I must ask you to pause a moment to consider Edwards' view.

As is suggested by the Rev'd Ro. Hall, Edwards was probably impelled to this piece of false analysis, by his love of simplifying. His desire was to unify the ultimate principles of the rational spirit, as much as possible. Hence, instead of regarding virtuous acts and states of soul as an ultimate and independent category, he teaches that they all most essentially consist in "Benevolence to Being in General," meaning, of course, rational being, or, "love to being in general." And this love, which is the essence of all virtue, he expressly defines as the love of benevolence only, as distinct from the love of moral complacency. This is essential to his system; for, as he himself argues, the love of moral complacency must imply moral beauty in its object. The perception of moral beauty generates the love which is moral complacency. If the love which constitutes moral beauty were that moral complacency, Edwards argues that we should make a thing its own parent. Of this, more anon. He then proceeds: "The first object of virtuous benevolence is Being, simply considered;" and hence: "Being in general is its object." That to which its ultimate propensity tends is "the highest good of being in general." From this conclusion, Edwards draws this corollary: There may be a benevolence towards a particular Being, which is virtuous, because that particular Being is a part of the aggregate, general being; but the affection is virtuous, only provided it consists with the "highest good of being in general." Again: That being who has the greatest *quantum* of existence must attract the largest share of this benevolence. Hence, we must love God more than all creatures, because He is infinite in the dimensions of His existence; and we ought, among creatures, to love a great and good man proportionably more than one less able and full of being. The grounds of proof on which Edwards seems to rest his conclusion are these: That every judgment of beauty, of every kind, is analysable into a perception of order and harmony; but the most beautiful and lofty of all rational harmonies is this *concent* or benevolence of an intelligent Being to all like Being: That the Scriptures say

“God is love;” and “Love is the fulfilling of the whole law” between man and his neighbour: And that this theory explains so well the superior claims of God to our love, over creatures’ claims to our love.

The transition between this plausible, but most sophistical speculation, and the utilitarian scheme, and ethics of expediency, which underlie the New England Theology, of our day, is found in the writings of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, (and “the younger Edwards.”) In their hands, “Love to Being in General,” became simply the affection of benevolence; and the theory became this: That benevolence is all virtue, and all virtue is benevolence. I have already disclosed the affinity of this theory to the utilitarian, by the simple remark, that beneficence is the practical expression of benevolence. Hence, when he who has defined virtue as benevolence, comes to treat of virtue as a practical principle, he makes nothing else of it than Jeremy Bentham’s “greatest good of the greatest number.” We shall detect Dr. Hopkins adopting this, and even the most thoroughly selfish theory of virtue, in carrying out his benevolence-scheme, with an amusing candour, simplicity and inconsistency.

Proceeding to the refutation of Edwards’ scheme, I begin with his Scriptures. The same logic which infers it from the expression, “God is love,” would infer from the text, “God is light,” that He is nothing but pure intelligence; and from the text, “Our God is a consuming fire,” that He is nothing but vindicatory justice. All Scriptures must be interpreted consistently. Neither can we overstrain the declarations of our Saviour and the apostle, that “love fulfils the whole law” between man and man, into the theory that benevolence is the whole essence of virtue. The proposition of the Scripture contains a beautiful practical fact: that the virtue of love (which, in Scripture nomenclature, includes far more than benevolence) prompts to all other virtues. I exclude the overstrained inference by simply referring to the other passages of Scripture, which expressly name other distinguishable virtues in addition to love. “Now abideth faith, hope, love: these three: but the greatest of these is love.”—1 Cor. xiii: 13. “Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”—2 Pet. 1: 5, 6. When the Scriptures declare love to God the great Commandment, they mean a very different thing from Edwards’ benevolence to Being; “a propensity to its highest good.” The supreme object of holy love in the Scriptures is always God’s holiness. The affection is as distinct from mere benevolence, as adoration from kindness. The love of the Scriptures, in which all man’s holiness centres, is the attraction of the whole

soul, in all its active principles, towards all that is pure and venerable, and righteous and true, as well as good, in the divine character.

To Edwards' speculative grounds, I reply, 1st. His grounding of moral virtue in a harmony or order perceived, is utterly invalid as a support of his theory, unless he holds that æsthetic beauty, logical propriety and moral praiseworthiness, are all generically the same beauty, only differing in degree. For if not, the order and harmony whose perception gives the feeling of virtuousness, are a different kind; and Edwards, as much as I, is bound to answer the question: In what does moral beauty differ from the æsthetic and the logical? I can answer consistently: In conformity to a peculiar, original intuition, that of conscience. Indeed, the fact that every sane mind intuitively perceives that difference, is, of itself, a sufficient refutation of Edwards' and of every other false analysis of the moral sentiment.

We have seen that Edwards regards the love of benevolence, not the love of moral complacency, as Edwards' paradox. the primary essence of virtue: and I showed you the argument which led him to this consistent conclusion. The love of complacency, then, is love to a rational agent on account of his love of benevolence; and the former is not primarily of the essence of virtue. That is: it is not virtuous to love virtue! It is true that on a subsequent page, he retracts this absurdity; availing himself virtually of a theory of sympathy between the virtuous (or benevolent) agent and the approving spectator, to argue what he had before disproved. This is but the anticipation of the vicious analysis of Adam Smith. By a parallel process, Edwards' principles should lead him to conclude that disinterested gratitude is not virtuous. Saith he, "the first benevolence cannot be gratitude." True; for this first benevolence must regard its object simply as being, not as beneficent. Hence, for me to love a being because he has been a benefactor to me, is not virtue! Edwards, in a subsequent chapter, resolves gratitude into self-love, but he is not thereby designing to depreciate the affection of gratitude, for in the same chapter he analyses the judgments and emotions of conscience into the same self-love!

We have seen that Edwards makes the essence of virtue to be "love to being in general." Another fatal objection to this is, that it assigns us as the object of every virtuous affection, a mere abstraction, a general idea. Whereas, if consciousness tells you anything clearly of your moral sentiments, it is that their objects must be personal. Only a person can oblige us to a duty. Only a person can be the object of a right. Pantheism, as we saw, abolishes morality by obliterating the personality of God. Edwards' speculation would do it as effectually, in

Makes an abstraction  
the object of virtue.

another way. Again, says Edwards, love to a particular being is compatible with the definition of virtue as consisting in "love to being in general," provided the particular affection is consistent with the highest good of being in general. But I object again; this proviso is one which cannot be practically ascertained, by ordinary moral agents, in one of ten thousand cases in which they are called to act morally towards a particular object. The motive of the peasant-mother may be virtuous, when she forsakes the industrial avocation which she was pursuing, promotive of the public good, to nurse her own sick and dying child, provided she has successfully calculated the preponderance of the resultant general benefit of the nursing over the industry! I object farther, that this theory might lead a man to the breach of a nearer, and therefore more obligatory duty, for the sake of one remoter, and therefore less obligatory. The son would be bound to rescue a great and gifted stranger from fire or water, in preference to his own father, because the great man presented to his love a greater *quantum* of existence.

I object again; that on Edwards' theory it might be impossible to explain how it is our duty to honor a dead man for his virtues. He is beyond the reach of our benevolence; he can be neither benefited nor pleased by our plaudits. And especially is it impossible, on this theory, to include God directly in our virtuous affections. Remember, the essence of all virtue with him is that simple love of benevolence, whose propension is to promote the highest good of being in general. But God is infinitely blessed; His good cannot be promoted by creatures. Does this not obviously exempt Him from our benevolence? Edwards answers this laboriously, by pleading that our homage can promote God's declarative glory; the Scriptures exhort us to love, adore and praise Him. This is true, but the Scriptures ground these duties of love and adoration expressly upon God's moral perfections. It is these, not existence, which constitute Him the object of our moral homage. This fact alone overthrows Edwards' whole speculation.

All benevolence-schemes tacitly assume the validity of the *a priori* moral intuition, with which they propose to dispense. For, suppose an advocate of the sensual selfish system to demand of their advocates: "Why is it my duty to make the greatest good of the greatest number my chief end, instead of my own personal good?" The respondent could find no answer, without resorting to the original distinction of advantage from right, and the obligation to the latter.

The most mischievous part of Edwards' scheme I conceive to be, his derivation of the judgments and emotions of conscience itself, from general self-love. As that direct and simple love of benevolence, which is the pure essence of virtue, is concent and harmony with

The moral judgment assumed.

The scheme selfish.

general being, as being; so self-love, according to Edwards, is a propension towards the concert and harmony or unity of one's own being. The former principle tends to unite the individual with general Being. Hence the consciousness of an affection tending to break that benevolent unison, disunites the man's own being within itself. Self-love then produces the judgment and pain of remorse; for this pain is nothing but the sense of the breach of that self-unity, which is self-love's main object. Thus it follows that the sentiments of conscience, (like gratitude) are only of secondary rank in ethics! By this ill-starred logical jugglery is that imperial faculty degraded, whose intuitions and affections are the very spring-head of all the ethical acts of the human soul, and made an inferior consequence of the virtuous principle; a consequence of its defect, a modification of self-love. It would follow, of course; that the perfect man might be too virtuous to have any conscience at all. It is simpler reasoning still, to conclude as many of Edwards' followers have done, from his premises; that, as simple benevolence is virtue, self-love is sin. [And thus would come about that marvelous interpretation, which is one of the most recent triumphs of the New England theology; when in expounding Gen. 3: 22, it tells us that Adam and Eve acquired a knowledge of moral distinctions only by their fall. For, conscience is a development of the principle of self-love, as Edwards teaches; and self-love is the essence of sin, as the moderns say: whence it follows, that man acquires his moral nature only by his immorality.

These fatuous absurdities Edwards was too shrewd to adopt.

Sin and self-love yet  
not identical.

He does not teach, as his premises should have taught him, that self-love is sin. Indeed, in a part of his treatise, he adopts the correct analysis of Bp. Butler, as to this affection. Inform yourselves of that analysis in his sermons, from the 11th to the 14th. He there teaches us, with his customary profound simplicity, the true testimony of our consciousness; That benevolence and self-love are in fact distinguishable, but not opposite affections of the soul (as is so often popularly assumed); That instead of being universally opposed, they often co-operate as motives to the same act; That the act thus educed may be either virtuous or vicious, according to its conditions; That both benevolence and self-love are so far in the same moral categories, that notoriously, some acts of simple self-love, (as when a man directly seeks his own calculated but lawful, or obligatory personal good) and many acts of benevolence are virtuous; and that many acts of self-love (as when a man prefers his own mischievous animal pleasure), and many acts of disinterestedness (as when a man deliberately injures himself for the sake of revenge), are vicious. From these clear statements it follows obviously, that the benevolent cannot be exalted into the universal essence of virtue, nor the selfish into that of sin.

These theories derive all the plausibility of their sophistries from three facts. It has been so often said, <sup>What has suggested these Benevolence schemes?</sup> that "Honesty is the best policy," that men come to think the goodness of the policy is what makes it honest; To promote utility, or, in other words, to do acts of beneficence to mankind, is, in a multitude of cases, right and praiseworthy; The duties of benevolence are duties, and a very extensive class thereof; but not, therefore, exhaustive of all duties. Once more, in the business of legislation, the expedient is very much the guide; and crimes are punished chiefly in proportion to their tendency to injure the well-doing of society. This might easily deceive one who, like Bentham, was far more of a legislator than philosopher, to suppose that he had found, in the beneficence of acts, the essential element of their virtue. He forgets that human laws propose as their proximate end only the protection of human well-being in this world; and not the accurate final apportionment of merits. This is God's function alone.

The utilitarian schemes of ethics profess to stand in contrast to the selfish, because they propose <sup>1st. It is selfish, in fact.</sup> not the selfish good of the agent, but the well-being of mankind, as the element and test of virtue. But they would really involve, as Jouffroy argues, the vice of the selfish systems, if consistently carried out to their last result. For when the question is raised, "Why do men come to regard the utile as the right?" the answer must be, because well-being (natural enjoyment) is the properest end of man. But thence it must follow, that desire of natural good is man's properest motive of action. Thus the moral motive is as effectually left out of the analysis as by Hobbes himself; and the same absurd psychology is assumed, which makes desire for natural good the result of experienced good, whereas the desire must act first, or the good would never have come to be experienced. But more; if desire for natural good is man's properest motive of action, it must follow, that his own personal good must always be the properest end of moral action; because this must always be the nearest, most immediate object of the natural desire. These schemes make aggregate humanity the supreme object of moral action; the true God. But the individual agent is a part of that aggregate; a part of his own God! And as he is the most attainable part—the only part for whose natural welfare he can labour effectually—I see not how the practical conclusion is to be avoided; that he is his own properest supreme end. Thus we are led back to the vilest results of the selfish system; and such, experience teaches us, is the practical tendency. While the utilitarian schemes profess great beneficence, they make their votaries supremely politic and selfish.

But farther; the scheme does not correctly state the facts

of our consciousness. The mind does not feel that obligation to an act is always its mere utility or beneficence, nor that the merit of the agent arises out of the advantage his act effects. How often, for instance, do questions arise, as to the obligation of speaking truth; where, if utility were the element of obligation, none would be felt; yet the mind would feel most guilty, had falsehood been uttered in the case. Again; were utility the element of virtue, the rightness or wrongness of an act would only be apprehended so far as experience had given us knowledge as to the beneficence or mischievousness of its effects. Is this so? Does not the conscience lash us for secret sins which leave no loss of reputation, health, or capacity behind them; and lash us all the more promptly and keenly, as we are inexperienced of crime and its wretched consequences? Farther; were this theory true, all truly useful things should affect us with similar sentiments of moral approbation, a convenient bureau, or good milch cow, as truly as a faithful friend, or a benevolent rescuer. Does Hume attempt to escape by saying that it is the rational and voluntary useful act which affects us with the sentiment of approbation? Then, we reply, he has given up the case; for evidently the morality of the act is not in its utility, but in its rational motive. Once more; if utility is the sole element of virtue, then the degree of utility should also be the measure of virtuous merit. We should always feel those acts to be most meritorious which were most conducive to natural good. But do we? e. g. Which ennobles Daniel most in our eyes: the heroism which refused to bow his conscience to an impious prohibition of his king, when the penalty was the lions' den, or the diligence which dispensed order and prosperity over one hundred and twenty provinces? And the extravagant conclusions of Godwin must be accepted—that duties must be graded by us in proportion to the public importance of the person who was their object; so that it might be the son's duty to see his own father drown, in order to save some more valuable life, who is a stranger to him.

Were the utilitarian scheme true, it might be in some cases utterly impossible to convince a man that it was immoral to "do evil that good might come." <sup>3d.</sup> If so, we might "do evil that good may come." If the consequences of the evil act, so far as foreseen by his mind, seemed beneficial, it would be right to do it. Nor could the claims of retributive justice in many cases be substantiated; the criminal who gave, by his penitence, sufficient guarantee that he would offend no more, could not be made, without immorality, to pay his debt of guilt. And above all, eternal retributions would be utterly indefensible in a God of infinite wisdom and power. How can they advantage the universe, including the sufferers, as much as their pardon and thorough conversion would benefit them, without injuring the rest?

Paley's type of the Selfish System may be said to be equally perspicuous and false. That such a specimen of impotency and sophism in philosophy should come from a mind capable of so much justice and perspicuity of reasoning, as he has exhibited in the experimental field of Natural Theology, is one of the most curious facts in the history of opinion. I shall first attempt to rebut the objections which he insinuates against the originality of moral perceptions, and then criticise his own theory.

He first proposes to test the question, whether such distinctions are originally and intuitively perceived, by supposing a case of what we call odious filial treachery, stated to a mind perfectly untutored by human associations, example, and teaching; and asking us whether he would immediately feel its vileness, with us. We answer, of course, No. But to show how absurdly preposterous the test is, we need not, with Dr. Alexander, dwell on the complexity of the moral problem involved. The simple answer is, that such a mind would not have the moral sentiment, because he would not comprehend the relations out of which the violated obligations grew, nor the very words used, to state them. In no proper sense could the untutored mind be said to see the case. Now, what a paltry trick is it, to argue that a mind has not a power of comparison, because it cannot compare objects which it does not behold at all?

Paley insinuates (none of his objections to moral intuitions are stated boldly) that our notions of the moral may all be accounted for by association and imitation. Thus, "having noticed that certain actions produced, or tended to produce, good consequences, whenever those actions are spoken of, they suggest, by the law of association, the pleasing idea of the good they are wont to produce. What association begins, imitation strengthens; this habit of connecting a feeling of pleasure with classes of acts is confirmed by similar habits of thought and feeling around us, and we dub it the sentiment of moral approbation." (Borrowed from Hume.) Now, this analysis is shown to be worthless in this one word. The law of association does not transmute, but only reproduces, the mental states connected by it. How, then, can the feeling of pleasure, which begins from a perceived tendency in a class of acts to promote natural good, be changed by association into the pleasure of moral approbation? They are distinct enough at first. Again: How, on this scheme, could men ever come to have pain of conscience at sins which are naturally pleasurable, and attended with no more direct natural ill? And how could the fact ever be explained, that we often have the sentiment of remorse for doing something in compliance with general associations and imitation?

Another class of objections is drawn from the facts that man has no innate ideas of the abstract element of moral right; and that moralists, though asserting the instinctive origin of moral perceptions, have never been able to point to any one type, or simple abstract element, (as veracity, &c.,) into which all moral acts might be resolved. After our criticism of Locke, no farther answer will be needed to the first objection. The second, when examined, will be found to be a bald begging of the question. The question is, whether the rightness of acts is an original perception of the human reason. Now, if it be, it will of course follow that it cannot be referred to some more general type of perception. Can this general idea, a truth, be analysed? Why not? Because it is already simple and primary. Who dreams of arguing now that the human reason has no original capacity of perceiving truth in propositions, because it has no more general and abstract type, into which the sorts of truth in different classes of propositions may be referred? So, of the idea of rightness.

Paley also borrows the common argument of objectors, from the wide variety, and even contrariety of moral opinions in different ages and nations. In one nation, filial duty is supposed to consist in nursing an aged parent; in another land, in eating him, &c., &c. The answers are, that no one ever pretended any human faculty was perfect in its actings, however original. Habit and association, example, passion, have great influence in perverting any faculty. Next, as justly remarked by Dr. Alexander, many of the supposed cases of contrariety of moral judgments are fully explained by the fact, that the dictate of conscience, right in the general, is perverted by some error or ignorance of the understanding. The Christian mother feels it her duty to cherish the life of her infant; the Hindoo to drown hers in Holy Ganges! True. Yet both act on the dictate of conscience—that a mother should seek the highest good of her infant. The Hindoo has been taught by her false creed, to believe that she does this by transferring it in childhood to heaven. Once more; it is a most erroneous conclusion to infer that, because men perform, in some countries, what are here regarded as odious vices, with seeming indifference and publicity, therefore their moral sentiments about them do not agree with ours. An educated Hindoo will lie for a penny, and, when detected, laugh at it as smart. A Hottentot woman will seem shameless in her lewdness. Yet we are informed that the Hindoo reverences and admires the truthfulness of a Christianized Briton; and that the poor Hottentot scorns the unchaste European missionary, just as any female here would. The amount of the case is, that conscience may be greatly stupefied or drowned by evil circumstances; but her general dictates, so far as heard, are infallibly uniform.

Paley, having succeeded, to his own satisfaction, in proving that there is no sufficient evidence of moral intuitions existing in the human soul, gives his own definition. "Virtue is doing good to mankind, according to the will of God, for the sake of everlasting happiness." And moral obligation, he defines, as nothing else than a forcible motive arising out of a command of another. That this scheme should ever have seemed plausible to Christians, can only be accounted for by the fact that we intuitively feel, when a God is properly apprehended, that His will is a perfect rule of right; and that it is moral to do all His commands. But when we raise the question, why? the answer is, because His will, like His character, is holy. To do His will, then, is not obligatory merely because an Almighty has commanded it; but He has commanded it because it is obligatory. The distinction of right and wrong is intrinsic.

The objections to Paley's system are patent. He himself raises the question, wherein virtue, on his definition, differs from a prudent self-love in temporal things. His answer is, the latter has regard only to this life; the former considers also future immortal well-being. Brown well observes of this, that it is but a more odious refinement upon the selfish system; defiling man's very piety, by making it a selfish trafficking for personal advantage with God, and fostering a more gigantic moral egotism, insomuch as immortality is longer than mortal life. All the objections leveled against the selfish system by me, apply, therefore, justly here. This scheme of Paley is equally false to our consciousness, which tells us that when we act, in all relative duties, with least reference to self, then we are most praiseworthy.

But we may add, more especially, that on Paley's scheme of obligation, it is hard to see how he could deny that there may be, in some cases, as real a moral obligation to do wrong, as to do right. A company of violent men overpower me, and command me, on pain of instant death, to burn down my neighbor's dwelling. Here is "a forcible motive arising from the command of another." Why does it not constitute a moral obligation to the crime? Paley would reply, because God commands me not to burn it, on pain of eternal death; and this obligation destroys the other, because the motive is vastly more forcible. It seems, then, that in God's case, it is His might which makes His right.

Once more. On Paley's scheme, there could be no morality nor moral obligation, where there is no revelation from God; because neither the rule, nor motive, nor obligation of virtue exists. They do not exist indeed, Paley might reply,

No obligation without Revelation. And no virtue in God.

Paley's definition of duty, &c.

Objections. The system a selfish one.

Force may justify sin.

in the form of a revealed theology; but they are there in the teachings and evidences of Natural Theology. "The heathen which have not the law are a law unto themselves, their consciences," &c. But if there are no authoritative intuitions given by God to man's soul, of moral distinctions, then Natural Theology has no sufficient argument whatever to prove that God is a moral being, or that He wills us to perform moral acts. Look and see. And, in fine: What can God's morality be; since there is no will of a higher being to regulate His acts, and no being greater than He to hold out the motive of eternal rewards for obeying!

The ingenious scheme of Dr. Adam Smith, *Theory of Mor.* Sents., may be seen very perspicuously unfolded in Jouffroy. This scheme is by no means so mischievous and degrading as that of Hobbes, Hume or Paley. But it is incorrect. Its fundamental defect is, that in each step it assumes the prior existence of the moral sentiment, in order to account for it. For instance, it says: We feel approbation for an act, when we experience a sympathetic emotion with the sentiments in the agent which prompted it. But sympathy only reproduces the same emotion; it does not transmute it; so that unless the producing sentiment in the agent were moral, it could not, by sympathy, generate a moral sentiment in us. It supposes conscience comes thus: We imagine an ideal man contemplating our act, conceive the kind of sentiments he feels for us, and then sympathize therewith. But how do we determine the sentiments of this ideal man looking at our act? He is but a projection of our own moral sentiments. So, in each step, Dr. S. has to assume the phenomenon, as already produced; for the production of which he would account. Another fatal objection to Dr. Smith's scheme is, that the sympathetic affection in the beholder is always fainter than the direct sentiment in the object beheld. But conscience visits upon us stronger affections than are awakened by beholding the moral acts of another, and approving or blaming them. The sentiments of conscience should, according to Dr. Smith, be feebler; for they are the reflection of a reflection.

5th Dr. A. Smith's theory.