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*AN EXAMINATION OF MR. MILL'S THREE ESSAYS  
ON RELIGION.* By the Rev. W. J. IRONS, D.D., Pre-  
bendary of St. Paul's, Bampton Lecturer for 1870, &c.

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A general anxiety as to this matter.

1. **EVERY ONE** was anxious to know the real opinions of Mr. Mill on the primary subjects of Religious thought.

At the time of the election for Westminster, some ten years since, the charge of Atheism was freely brought against Mr. Mill—some said unjustly—as constituting a serious disqualification for the task of legislator in a country still professedly Christian. It was remembered that a judge in open court had refused evidence offered by a witness who avowed unbelief in God. Deism being thus regarded as the least amount of creed expected

The charge of Atheism against the candidate for Westminster proved this.

in a public man, Mr. Mill, when suspected and questioned, refused to satisfy the inquirer on this point, urging that no one had any right to demand a confession of the religious opinions of another. He said, too—and the evasive saying dazzled a few—that he thought it a duty to vindicate entire liberty of thought as belonging to men in Parliament as well as out of Parliament.

They, then, who had looked for a warm and instant repudiation of the “charge” against Mr. Mill were certainly disappointed, and took refuge in admiring his courage. It was said, “If he would admit nothing, he would deny nothing”: he simply, “on principle, would not be cross-examined.” It was found to be useless even for those who yet were importunately asked to elect him as their “representative,” to urge that they had a right to know his principal opinions, and that that knowledge might touch the principal opinions of some, at least, of the electors; and also that frankness between electors and elected was but fair. No; Mr. Mill maintained his position, and was supported in it by persons of eminence in Church and State, who preferred to allege that there was no *arrière pensée*, and at all events resolutely subscribed to promote his return to Parliament.

2. There can be no doubt, too, that the desire to know Mr. Mill's views was not mere curiosity. Many hoped for a grand thoughtful book. Then he was regarded even by the popular mind as what, in the language of the day, is called a “thinker”; a logician, of even terrible exactness. (The vulgar, indeed, commonly suppose a logician to be pre-eminently a thinker, not knowing that his science, as such, is primarily engaged with the technicalities and modes, rather than with subjects, materials, or even grounds, of thought.) The announcement, then, that some “Essays on RELIGION” had been found among Mr. Mill's papers after his death, was not unwelcome to the world. It was painful to observe, however, the tone which soon began to prevail

The interest in his views was enhanced by his reputation.

His refusal to meet it.

both with the non-religious and with some of the religious portions of the community; the former anticipating, the latter dreading, the expected "searching analysis" (p. 4) of all the grounds of Theism.

3. Another source of interest in the subject was doubtless found among those who had observed the Theistic controversy from a higher ground. The more recent, and too evidently feeble, surrender in some quarters of the *à priori* defence of "first truths," (and therefore of the Religious first truths), raised among many the anticipation of a great dialectical display—(some sort of attempt perhaps like that of Professor Clifford and others to resolve into simpler elements the axioms and postulates of Euclid): or, again, it was surmised that Mr. Mill could not help dealing with the *à posteriori* as Mr. Herbert Spencer had done, or might possibly be found working very near to Professor Huxley's protoplasm, or to Professor Tyndall's molecules.—The result, however, of the publication of Mr. Mill's book has been the disappointment probably of all classes. They who long persisted in saying that the candidate for Westminster might be a believer in God, have found that they were mistaken. They who were hoping for some new force of argument to support unbelief were not prepared for so halting a champion. They who expected a really scientific manipulation of these solemn subjects may justly have a sense of surprise, if not humiliation. The collapse was unprecedented in literature. The editorial Preface, with natural partiality perhaps, expresses an opinion that these Essays are "exhaustive." The editor of the *Fortnightly Review* is scarcely of that opinion. Indeed it should be added, in justice to Mr. Mill's kind panegyrist, that it is acknowledged also, in her Preface, that the Essays are not a "connected body of thought." (See Preface.)

And by his expected treatment of the logical arguments as to Theism.

Mr. Mill's book now issued seems to have disappointed all parties.

4. We find ourselves of course under a kind of necessity, in examining a book on such a subject, to compare it as we go on with principles we ourselves vindicate. It must be remembered, however, that we are not writing a treatise, but examining one which comes from an assumed master on his side of the questions raised. And we shall insist on good reasoning at all events.

The Three Essays to be now examined are defective in arrangement.

The titles of the Three Essays are "Nature," "Utility of Religion," and "Theism,"—an arrangement, we would observe, somewhat illogical, leading to a certain overlapping of the subjects, and not providing for the entire discussion. This is an inconvenience to begin with.—Lord Bacon, for example, in the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, having

to deal with the same matter, fitly divides the objects of Philosophy as "God, Nature, Man," the three comprehending the universe of thought, yet each being so far distinct ideally as to be capable of treatment *per se*. We feel at every turn, that many confusions, assumptions, and ambiguities, some anticipations which ought to have been proved and apparent concessions which have often virtually to be recalled, might have been spared had Mr. Mill's arrangement been more logical. Unhappily he begins with no precise premisses. Having to treat of "Religion," he felt obliged to look to "Nature," for he denied the Supernatural. He had Religion as an existing *fact* to deal with; and so also to consider common arguments for God; and the teaching of Christ.

Comparing the book with the writer as known to us by his own Biography, there may indeed be recognized a kind of order in his course of thought. Born and brought up with no Religion, his father having relinquished even Presbyterian Calvinism, he seems to have been "left to Nature" by no fault of his own, while yet we see him feeling in thought for Religion of some kind, as his life wears on. Quite naturally, it may be, in such a position he scarcely came across Christianity as an Historical Revelation: it stood on one side. The discarded Presbyterianism of his father seems to have brought to a previous close any real Christian examination. Mr. Mill began where his father left off, and never seriously turned back. Yet he found he could not but think of Religion, and write about it in some way. It seemed as if he were not able to help it. It was the subjacent thought of his books, even when not expressed. Was a "Religion" to be found by him, then, in "Nature"? And could he trust Nature?—He thinks not, but he will say "why." Might Religion, however, since it existed on every side, be a delusion of some "Utility" even if untrue?—He doubts that; but he will see. But, to try yet again,—Is there a God at all? What are the logical arguments for it? But was not the Christian Founder a marvellous fact of the past, influencing a vast moral future?—He would consider yet again.

The three Essays thus may be easily accounted for, as to their form, and show a rough coherence of their own. Most readers will probably suppose their sequence to be sufficiently practical even if unscientific, though their want of right method will be seen often to mislead the writer. We will take them in their own order, however, (for we must take the work as it is), and endeavour also to look at the Essays as what they announce themselves to be, and what we wish they had been, investigations "according to the Platonic method (p. 4), questioning and testing common maxims and opinions."—(See Note A.)

But have a rough kind of unity.

§ 1. *Nature.*

5. The Essay entitled "NATURE" begins by calling attention to the meaning of the terms "Nature, natural, and the group of words derived from them, or allied to them in etymology." Nature is the platform on the level of which, one would think, a man who has no Religion must needs stand (§ 4). If that fail him, he has nothing to look to. We are willing to pause here at once. This part of the examination must not be lightly made, either from Mr. Mill's point of view or our own, for it is absolutely necessary. Nature and Revelation — Nature and Grace — and Nature and the Supernatural, are in such sense correlatives, that the student of the latter may not decline the former.

It may seem needless to premise, that "Nature as it now is" is not regarded by the Christian philosophy as the rest of man's heart, or a satisfaction for all his thoughts. But rejectors of the Supernatural usually take the Natural as their alternative. We own that we were not prepared for such an account of Nature *de facto*, as would enable Mr. Mill to repudiate Nature as completely at last (p. 58) as he had repudiated Revelation. As his latest effort, he would tear off the mask which enabled Nature to tempt man to any Religion at all. But his treatment of Nature will be found as unjust and illogical as could be possible.

We are led, as just observed, to expect a Socratic inquiry; and first, as to what is meant by the "Nature of any particular object." But the writer at once proceeds, without any inquiry Socratic or otherwise, to announce as "evident," *à priori*, a governing definition of his own. He looks around him, and then says, "that the *Nature* of a particular object (as of fire, water, or some individual plant, or animal), evidently is the *ensemble* or aggregate of its powers or properties; the modes in which it acts on other things, (counting among those things the senses of the observer), and the modes in which other things act upon it; to which in the case of a sentient being must be added its own capacities of feeling, or being conscious. The Nature of the thing means all this; its entire capacity of exhibiting phenomena" (p. 5).—Mr. Mill does not observe that each object may even thus be more than we know.

From this definition "of the Nature of any given thing," or particular object, we then advance to what is called "Nature in the abstract," which is described as "the aggregate of the powers and properties of *all* things," the sum of all "phenomena together with the causes which produce them" . . . . "the unused capabilities of causes" being also

Essay I.  
"Nature."

"Nature of  
a particular  
object."

"Nature in  
the abstract."

included in the definition of "Nature in the abstract,"—"consciousness," "capabilities," and "causes which produce phenomena" being indefinitely conceded, so as to include apparently everything, (even "Religion," or the desire for one, if it existed anywhere)—(p. 5). This is explained a little farther on (p. 6), as being "not so much the multitudinous detail of the phenomena, as the *conception* which might be formed of their manner of existence, as a mental whole, by a mind possessing a complete knowledge of them." This then would seem to be unattainable by man.

6. The "Nature of a particular object," and also "Nature in the abstract," being thus defined, we should next have expected some exact application of these two definitions to the critical purpose of the inquiry. It is to be observed at once, however, that these definitions provide for no use of the term "Nature" as an abstract term applying to any *number of particular things* which have, (as a little Socratic questioning here would have shown), what the world takes to be some Nature in common.\* The two definitions given provide only for each "particular thing," and for the universal "abstraction"; yet the only illustration of his definitions which Mr. Mill proceeds to give is one which suits neither of them, and only suits that which he omits. "It is," he says, "a law of the Nature of water, that under the mean pressure of the atmosphere at the level of the sea, it boils at 212° Fahrenheit." If he means by this, that it is a "law of the nature of *all* water," what is this but indirectly admitting *common* nature to many waters, each in itself a "particular object" or "thing," with this in "common"?—A further endeavour to supplement the first definition of the "nature of *each particular object*," by here adding the idea expressed by the unexplained word "Law," is useless, because all the *modes* in which each particular thing "acts" are, in both cases, previously included in the very wide definition of its "Nature" (p. 5).

not providing for "common natures": hence his first dilemma.

"The abstract idea of nature," as expressed by Mr. Mill, also fails to serve the purpose of the argument,

7. Not only does Mr. Mill's definition of the "Nature of each particular object" thus fail, however, in his own chosen illustration, which requires a recognition of a Nature *common to several objects*, but the broad definition of "Nature in the abstract" proves also to be equally unpractical; and so we have an emendation of it as early as possible.

After adverting (p. 7) to "the phenomena produced by Human agency," Mr. Mill proposes, (and feels obliged to

\* Take a sentence, for instance, which every one understands, "a touch of *Nature* makes the whole world kin"; Mr. Mill's definitions of "Nature" will give us no assistance in treating of such pervading "Nature."

do so), further to recognize two principal meanings in the word "Nature" even as an "abstraction." "In one sense Nature means all the powers existing in either the outer or the inner world, and everything which takes place by means of those powers. In another sense it means not every-<sup>and needs</sup> thing which happens, but only what takes place <sup>subdivision;</sup> without the agency, or without the voluntary and intentional agency of Man." This is inserted easily by Mr. Mill, as though we all knew that the "Voluntary and intentional agency" of man were an admitted part of his philosophy—which, however, he quite neglects. After this new complication of his definition of "Nature in the abstract," (separating "Man" from "Nature" in a way approaching to Bacon's more logical division), Mr. Mill proceeds (p. 9) to inquire, whether the word Nature is used in either of his two senses, when "Moral obligation" is connected with it? In other words, this is actually <sup>and cannot</sup> to inquire whether his own definitions, or any of them, <sup>even then be</sup> are available in the practical questions before him? <sup>used in Moral</sup> <sup>inquiry.</sup>

He finds, and owns, that the philosophy and jurisprudence of the world adopt the rule of "following Nature" in some way, as good in morals and politics. All thinkers before him, (as they would decline the theory, for instance, that water may "run uphill,") declined, on the principle of "following Nature," to impose on mankind, as Duty, what was repugnant to their "Nature" in its best, that is its truest, condition. Yet our author, in the midst of this *consensus* <sup>Hence his second dilemma.</sup> against him, still prepares boldly to question the "Sequi Naturam." We must let him do it then in his own way, for he is apparently in great straits.

It is difficult to understand—and we cannot help saying so even now—what Mr. Mill would have us *follow*, if not Nature; for, according to the "definitions," whatever we do is a following of our own particular Nature; and our own particular Nature (be we "things," "objects," or "conscious beings"), is part of the "aggregate," or "Nature in the abstract." But how, properly speaking, can we choose to *follow* at all?—Let us try, however, to follow Mr. Mill.

8. Mr. Mill's purely speculative definitions, as thus put before us, seem indeed, by this time, to have bewildered him. It might have been otherwise had he kept at all to that "Socratic method" which he promised us (p. 2). Let us see: Socrates would have probably begun by asking his hearer various questions of his own practical experience, to bring out the actual use and meaning, or meanings, of this word "Nature." He would have taken <sup>Mr. Mill's</sup> examples. He would have asked, for instance, whether men <sup>failure compared with the</sup> are said to have the same "Nature" as animals? or how far? <sup>Socratic analysis.</sup>

and in what sense? He would have inquired what the term "*Human Nature*" meant?—Whether it included women as well as men? Whether we did not consider it the Nature of a certain number of plants to grow out of the earth?—And found the Nature of fishes to be herein different from the Nature of such plants?—And of birds, again, different? And of man also different? From these, or similar inquiries, the Platonic dialogue would have sought to elicit thoughts and facts as to the term "*Nature*," the outcome of all which would have been no speculation, but a statement of the general result, as testified by the minds of all men.—So Mr. Mill's method is the opposite of the Socratic, and seems almost ostentatiously to comprise all the faults which modern philosophy has been wont to condemn in inferior dogmatic inquirers.

But let us look closer; for Mr. Mill's entire view of the subject of Religion which he proposed to treat is made dependent on his definitions.

9. To regard a mass of objects, and then just affirm that it was the "*Nature*" of the antecedents to produce, or lead to them, is, to say the least, no analysis, but very raw and unobservant dealing with facts. This is Mr. Mill's method, and we object at the outset, that it is uncritical as well as illogical. It evades investigation, instead of entering on it. If Mr. Mill had said, for instance, "I deny all species (with Mr. Darwin); I consider that the science of the future will generalize more and more, in some respects, and individualize more and more in others; I ignore classifications, and decline to notice or inquire into distinctions," he would have been candid; though he would in that case have had difficulty in advancing to his consideration of the subject. Adopting so uncouth a way, he would have been obliged to violate every principle of examination, Socratic or utilitarian; for any one must needs be foiled who attempts to construct a theory without previous consideration of facts.

We must ask attention to this, for it well displays Mr. Mill's primary error. The first movement of the philosophic mind, after a fair induction of particulars, is towards discrimination and arrangement. Without this, the whole universe might be indexed, and no science arrived at. The competent thinker, (*See Note A,*

Comparison of Mr. Mill's method with that of all science.

*at the end of this paper*), on regarding any objects, or series or number of objects, begins to look for the, at least possible, *differentia* of each being; at all events for that which now distinguishes it from other beings; and perhaps, also, he would look in each class for that which marks it off from other classes. None but the rudest, and the most uneducated usually, *à priori* discard the special characteristics of particular objects, or orders, and their mutual points of contact, and just aim to construct, (so far as life and memory hold out), a Chinese alphabet

of all things. Now this is Mr. Mill's method. Let us place it in contrast with Bacon's or Cuvier's carefulness when they define. (*See also Cicero, De Nat. D., and Aristotle, Eth. ad Nic.*)

10. Take Cuvier first; He writes thus;—"Dans notre langue, et dans la plupart des autres, le mot Nature signifie : tantôt les propriétés qu'un être tient de naissance, Cuvier. par opposition à celle qu'il peut devoir à l'art; tantôt enfin les lois qui régissent ces êtres. C'est surtout dans ce dernier sens que l'on a coutume de personifier la Nature, et d'employer par respect son nom pour celui de son Auteur." Every one must recognize at once the simplicity, penetration, and genuine reverence of this, and is prepared to follow the ensuing distinctions of that chapter of Cuvier, (*on Methods*), as clearly as if each paragraph had been elicited and confirmed *in extenso* as it might have been by that Socratic questioning of phenomena and uses, which Mr. Mill promised and did not give. The line is drawn between the Nature of a being, and the Artificial acquirements of that being; then we are taught to observe the laws which regulate beings; and finally reach the abstraction, or, as Cuvier says, the personification, which may be regarded as in some sense including the whole.

11. Lord Bacon, as an example not likely to be questioned, may come next. In the Sum of the Second Part of his *Novum Organum*, he writes thus, in the true Bacon. spirit of that *Sequi Naturam* which Mr. Mill cannot understand: "Homo, Naturæ minister et interpres, tantum facit et intelligit quantum de Naturæ ordine re vel mente observaverit; nec amplius scit aut potest." Here, again, is the genuine ring, the true echo of all science and all philosophy since man began to think of his condition and its surroundings. Bacon, again, in one brief sentence tersely condenses a kind of philosophy of the relative terms Cause and Law, thus: "Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur; et quod in contemplatione instar causæ est, id in operatione instar regulæ est."

Such writing belongs, too clearly, to another order of mind than Mr. Mill's. If every reader is conscious that Bacon states truths sublimely and with transparent simplicity; and if Cuvier lays it before us logically, Mr. Mill's strange stumbling in definition is beyond all that could have been expected by any one who had thought of him either as a worthy opponent or a respectable ally.

12. We are warned, as we now proceed, to look back, and note how our author's "definitions" are alternately used and neglected, even as though he had not grasped their significance himself. He is now about to neglect them again. His *à priori* dogmatism, indeed, never forsakes him; in Mr. Mill's confusion of his own definitions.

that he is consistent ; but in expressing that, he seems unconscious or forgets that his theories are irreconcilable.

This is nowhere more conspicuous than here. He has occasion, (as "Religion" was his general subject), to introduce the Human or "conscious" agency somewhere among the factors of his universe. No ingenuity, however, can rationally interpret the statement, that Nature, (having been defined as the "aggregate" of *all* the unexamined forces and phenomena of the Universe), may still be philosophically regarded as a whole, after certain "conscious" forces are eliminated. But there is not even an attempt to grapple with this difficulty.

His definition had established that Nature is not really "the abstract idea of Nature" *without* the "conscious" beings ; and, after that, he excuses the presence of those "conscious beings" so far as to make of them another "Nature," apart from that whole to which they were declared to be essential, and without which they could do nothing. He declares, "the phenomena produced by Human agency depend on the properties of the elementary forces, or of the elementary substances, and their compounds" (p. 7). But this, which no one wholly denies, does not protect materialism. Yet then he adds, "*we* take advantage, for *our* purposes, of the properties which *we* find"! What was here surely required was some explanation of the "we," the "our purposes," in a word the "conscious agent," who acts upon and in the midst of the unconscious universe, and uses it. Surely we needed some frank distinction such as Aristotle confesses, ἀλλή τις φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς, ἄλογος, κ.τ.λ., or what Plato, (to whom Mr. Mill graciously defers), so plainly owns, τὸ δὲ καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ οὐσία πρότερον τῆ φύσει.

13. We do not wish, in this matter, to be requiring with our Essayist—yet we want the truth. Of course for convenience sake, and for any temporary occasion, a part of universal Nature may be mentally separated off, and regarded *per se* for its own sake. We are not finding fault with that. No logical blame can be imputed to such division. It simply reminds us of old Aldrich and his *particula* "*non.*" But that is not the case here. It was as far as possible too from the scope and intention of Mr. Mill's Essay ever to contemplate "Man," apart from "Nature" as a distinct whole. His definitions set out with evidently making "Nature to be such as we either must,—or else ought not and cannot,—follow ; and nothing, probably, but the felt impossibility of treating conscious and unconscious being on one level throughout his "Essays on Religion," now introduced a division into the definition of "abstract Nature." Hence alone this recognition of Man, as apart from Nature—a recognition defied or neglected, of course, in his later argument.

His double definition seems forced upon him by the facts.

But there is a still further complication of definition, as he writer advances towards his object. Enlarging on the "ambiguity" of the term Nature, (as if that might be a constant shield for looseness of definitions), Mr. Mill finds easy occasion to modify, or seem to modify, what he had so confidently laid down.

14. "The two senses of the word Nature in the abstract" (p. 12), which had been supposed, "agreed in referring only to what is,"—in contradistinction from what *ought* to be! In the first of these meanings, as Mr. Mill now repeats, "Nature is a *collective name* for every thing which is. In the second, it is a name for every thing which is of itself, without *Voluntary human* intervention." "But," he continues, "the employment of the word Nature as a term of ethics seems to disclose a third meaning, in which Nature does not stand for what is, but for what ought to be; or for the rule or standard of what ought to be." But what is this "ought to be"? He remarks,—that after all is not really a third meaning of the word. It is only intended by it, that "what is (p. 13), constitutes the rule and standard of what ought to be—the examination of this notion being the object of the Essay." He insists, however, that the definitions which have gone before are his mainstay, and, altogether are to be considered as the indispensable preliminaries to his work.

Without it Mr. Mill could not proceed to his object in this Essay.

15. How inconsistent with each other these really are, how incongruous and even self-contradictory, we have perhaps sufficiently seen; and how contrary also to the mind of all philosophy, and to the rules of logic. But we shall have to follow somewhat further their incoherencies; for the conclusions to be ultimately arrived at are now said to be that, (1) viewing Nature as a whole including Man, there is absolutely no meaning whatever in bidding him to "follow Nature"; and that (2) viewing Nature as a whole without including man, it is immoral as well as irrational to require him to "follow Nature."

The "*Sequi Naturam*" is denied by Mr. Mill.

And that in both his senses of "Nature."

As a comment on the "first view" of Nature, which we must first notice, Mr. Mill says, "to bid people conform to the laws of Nature, when they have *no power* but what the laws of Nature gave them—when it is a physical impossibility for them to do the smallest thing otherwise than through some law of Nature, is an absurdity" (p. 16).

16. Here the immediate inquiry might naturally be, Does Mr. Mill, in this somewhat guarded sentence, accept the position that man is not real cause? Or had he made up his mind as to which view he would adopt as the true hypothesis of "Nature"? We are anything but sure that he finally had done so. *Utrum horum?* Is

His further dilemma as to the two senses of "Nature."

the "conscious agent," with him, simply one part of fixed uniform universal Nature? or is he, as the second hypothesis supposes, a being essentially apart, a Cause of action, *sui generis*? If the former, the pretended alternative is unreal; if the latter, the assertion that there is absolutely no power to "do the smallest thing," even with the qualification accompanying it, is without meaning. We repeat—In the first sense of the word "Nature" we are assured that "no one can possibly help conforming to Nature" (p. 15). Then accepting the second sense, it is dimly said (p. 17) that "*we can* use one law of Nature to counteract another"; as though this "we" were not a necessary part of Nature, in both cases, or else a real Cause—*in se*.

17. It is hardly possible to exceed this logomachy. Which-ever horn of the dilemma Mr. Mill might choose, he is self-convicted, first as to both his definitions, and then as to his attempted use of them. He struggles hard to make the double definition serve him a little later; saying, "while human action cannot help conforming to Nature in the *one meaning of the term*, the very aim and object of *action* is to alter and improve Nature in the other" (p. 17). But what does he gain by this? Are not the "aim," the "action," the "altering," and "improving," already included in his term "Nature"? And if so, *why* this division into conscious and unconscious being? Why not be satisfied with the simple *dictum* that it is a physical impossibility for man to act except necessarily, and so as a part of the Natural whole? Of course these definitions within definitions may have been prepared to bring about Mr. Mill's conclusions, but the conclusions refuse to come. "The ways of Nature," he apologetically says, "are to be conquered, not obeyed"; but then, according to him, the "power" that "conquers" is a part of Nature; and though spoken of as if outside Nature, because in fact its "improver,"—yet it is no distinct power!

18. Surely one half of these lucubrations would have sufficed to crush any one who set up as a thinker, had he not a party pledged in some sense to his reputation, and eager followers wishing beforehand to find his conclusions true. It is with the equipment of these broken definitions, and sub-definitions, that our Essayist has the assurance to encounter Plato and Aristotle, Bacon and Cuvier, Berkeley and Butler—in a word, every student of Nature, every lover of Nature, who has ever revealed his thoughts and heart to his fellow-man.

It is not at all superfluous again, however, to reiterate, that in all Mr. Mill's attempted analysis of the doctrine implied in "Sequi Naturam" the alternate denial, and use, of the ideas of volition,

His two senses of Nature prove incoherent as hypotheses.

Yet he opposes them to all previous philosophy, in discussing "Sequi naturam."

and causation, and initiatory power are inevitable to him. Not once can he venture, however, to explain what he means by any of these terms which yet he employs. Are præ-phenomenal "powers," *e. g.*, or "causes" of any kind, reckoned in his vocabulary as "phenomena"? (and if so, we ask—"phenomena" to whom?—*Φαινόμενον* implies *ᾧ φαίνεται*; and if not, what is it?) What is the place of the "phenomena" in reference to "Nature"? Are unseen "*powers of Nature*," *e. g.*, force, volition, intelligence, simply mechanical (p. 8) *parts of Nature*? Is this assumed, or is it proved? Certainly they are contained in the totality of being; but how? is the question. Mr. Mill says, "Nature is a *collective* name for all facts, actual and possible"; which, no doubt, is comprehensive enough. Does he mean by a "collective name," then, the same as he meant before by an "abstraction"?

19. Is Mr. Mill as a metaphysician committed to that? We shall see, perhaps, when we discuss his notice of the *à priori* in a future page. Meanwhile, we observe that the essayist seemed at this point again to suspect his own accuracy, for he adds as another modification, "To speak more accurately, Nature is a name for the *mode* partly known to us, and partly unknown, in which all things take place." This is our logician's notion of "*speaking more accurately*"! Only look at it. "Nature" was the "aggregate" of the Universe, including mind; then it was an aggregate excepting mind; now, it is a "mode." And this is said by way of being "accurate." And as to the very unmanageable quantity—"conscious" being, or "mind"—which troubles Mr. Mill at every turn, we may suppose, for the time, that it also is a "mode"!

Still further  
modifications  
of the defini-  
tion of Nature.

But, it will be noted, some things in Nature have been admitted "as far as we are concerned, to be spontaneous" (p. 7); (does that mean "consciously"?)—and yet to be quite dependent on mere "elementary forces." So then it is not easy, at least, to say that the "spontaneous" conscious being is anything more than a "mode" dependent on forces. But a "mode" is an abstraction. Are we all of us, then, abstractions? Mr. Mill seems to admit man to be something, and then to resolve him into nearly nothing, depending on abstractions. Perhaps man is intended to come in under the category of agents "partly known and partly unknown"? Even "spontaneity," however, is not peculiar to man; for Mr. Mill attributes a figurative spontaneity to abstract Nature itself,—even though it seems to be spontaneity without "*spons.*" Nature, as a guide, is thus finally dismissed; and yet man as a conscious agent stands alone in her midst.

20. We may now, perhaps, taking our leave of the "definitions," best understand on the whole Mr. Mill's attitude

if we give his final indictment against "Nature" in his own words. How utterly he fails to perceive the great philosopher's *τὰ κατὰ φύσιν ὡς οἶον τε κάλλιστα* and "fol. low Nature." *ἔχειν* (*Eth.* i. 8) will thus fully appear.

"Fancied dictates," "supposed standard," "so-called law of Nature," are our Essayist's scornful terms. He rejects the thought that a man should be blamed for being "unnatural"; although even the poets of Atheism, Lucretius or Shelley, had amidst all their wreck of ethical feeling shrunk from this, and retained reverence for Nature, as parent and mother. Nay, barbarians (*Xenoph., Cyrop.*, viii.), themselves have not been untouched with affection to Nature as the source of so much happiness that most men at least desire to live. To defend the "unnatural" is for Mr. Mill only. Let any one who would fully see his position in the rejection of the "*sequi Naturam*," compare the sweet reverence for Nature's laws, (in itself a "religion," binding philosophers, saints, and psalmists to the order around), with the passage which we are about to quote. Let us think of those who have delighted in the beautiful, from Albert the school-philosopher down to Newton, Kepler, Faraday—and may we not include some greatest living names?—and then read the following ebullition of unnatural hatred:

21. "If," says Mr. Mill, "a tenth part of the pains which have been expended in finding beneficent adaptations in all Nature had been employed in collecting evidence to blacken the character of the Creator, what scope for comment would not have been found, in the *entire existence* of the lower animals, divided with scarcely any exception into devourers and devoured, and a prey to a thousand ills, from which they are denied the faculties for protecting themselves. If we are not obliged to believe the animal creation to be the work of a demon, it is because we need not suppose it to have been made by a Being of Infinite Power."

22. In this alternative, to my own mind very revolting in its terms, there is a kind of perverseness, too, like that of a wayward child crying for an impossibility. It reminds one, too, of the Brahmin whose untaught soul sickened at the microscopic revelations of "life preying on life" in the cup of water which he refused to drink; or the wrong-headed Manichee exposed by St. Augustin. But we have here, however unconsciously, an acknowledgment of Nature's having undergone injury of some kind, and a dim recognition of what, in the language of Christians, is called "Original Sin," the fearful catastrophe first wrought by a "demon" of evil.

Mr. Mill brings this indictment against Nature.

"the character of the Creator, what scope for comment would not have been found, in the *entire existence* of the lower animals, divided with scarcely any exception into devourers and devoured, and a

We may take this however as a new point of departure in our examination. In connection with it a few remarks follow, on some "attributes of the Divine Being," especially His Omnipotence and Benevolence; as to which Mr. Mill adds a needless chapter a little further on in the volume; the more needless, because he mistakes those ideas in the phenomenal for the Essence of the Præ-phenomenal, or absolute. Hitherto we have occupied ourselves chiefly with the logical incoherences of Mr. Mill's book; we will now deal specially with his subject.

He puts his point briefly (p. 37) in these words:—"If the Maker *can* do all that He wills, He wills misery." Again: "If the Creator of mankind willed that they should all be virtuous, His designs are as completely baffled as if He had willed that they should all be happy." In strange, and we could even say uncultured, sentences like these we perceive at once the origin of much perverse speculation. Now we have no intention at all of just asking our essayist, (as some do), to strike a balance in favour of the Divine benevolence in Nature. We must go to first principles.

He here *assumes* primarily in the First Cause some kind of Will as well as Power; but he does not hint what they are; and leaves out altogether the secondary conception of finite wills, and finite powers as "working together with God." An intelligent Creator and a mechanical Universe are the sum of his theory; and even conscious Happiness and Virtue in his universe, he speaks of as definite constructions—the result of a fiat of Omnipotence. He does not perceive that the kind of will and power attributed by him to the Supreme Himself *in limine* is a contradiction *in se*; nor that his own notion of virtue is distinct from volition. We might judge, indeed, from the common scope of his writing, that, except when he takes it as a part of fixed organization, he only conceives of "will" as what may be termed caprice, and quite apart from that relation to the Good, without which Will would not be even "thinkable" in the Perfect Being; nor does he conceive of Power except as phenomenal *potentiality*, and so apart from the Essential. All this is far too vital to be hastily passed by.

23. If, in contemplating the Will and Power of the Creator, we think of Him as the præ-phenomenal Essential Intelligence, existing in Himself, His Will would mean His "good pleasure," (as an apostle has phrased it), and His Power, essential activity according with that "good pleasure." The notion of merely capricious *capacity* for boundless phenomenal exertion is so great an outrage on thought as to be inconceivable of the Perfect Being.

Mr. Mill here confuses the Præ-phenomenal with the Phenomenal.

Mr. Mill, then, and writers of his views, never appear to place themselves in the mental attitude which at all contemplates the præ-phenomenal; and yet, undeniably, if for the mere working of the problem we hypothesize a Perfect Cause of the universe, He must be supremely præ-phenomenal. The materialist's notion of previous Omnipotence in the Self-existent having the phenomenal as basis is a contradiction; and so this sensualistic theory of "will" identified with "preference," (even as a hesitating balance of phenomena,) is a denial of that Perfect or Absolute Good, on the existence of which the co-existing phenomenals are depending. If, indeed, a created conscious being, gifted for an instant with phenomenal omnipotence and will, (a kind of contradiction), could be supposed, Mr. Mill's alternative might perhaps, be apprehended, and there might seem place for the difficulty as put by him; and, we must add, by materialists and predestinarian writers generally.

(Aquinas's treatise, if it may be so called, *de Potentiâ*, is an endeavour to state the impossibility of attributing to the Supreme that kind of *Potentia* which the Averröistic ontology perhaps required. The Schools generally expressed the Divine power as "pure act," and identify Will with the Good. The distinction has been observed in various ways by every philosophy from Parmenides to the *de Principiis* of Origen, and from him to Leibnitz and Berkeley.)

24. But this confusion of the absolute and the mechanical is less surprising in Mr. Mill than the Moral confusion which, of course, next ensues. "Nature" with him "is every thing," and so nothing is or can be "contrary to Nature"! Surely, it was needless, then, for a logician to have defended the "unnatural," for, according to this, it does not and cannot exist. The very definition of Nature as the totality of the Universe, precludes it. If Nature really meant "every thing that is"—both what Mr. Mill pleases to blame as "evil," or speculate on as "good"—it is plain that no one ever adopted the rule "*Sequi Naturam*," and Mr. Mill was simply, perhaps unawares, fighting a shadow. None among those who have regarded Nature as a guide, have conceived that we are to "follow *every thing that is*." Of course, had there been any one—which we cannot suppose—who accepted Mr. Mill's self-contradictions as definitions and premisses, he might perhaps be ready to endorse the conclusion, which no one else would do (p. 62), that conformity to Nature has no "connexion whatever with right and wrong." Moral philosophy speaks otherwise. The Christian hypothesis is, that Nature, or whatever God made, "He saw to be very Good" as He made it: וְהָיָה טוֹב מְאֹד

(Gen. i. 31). What Mr. Mill's hypothesis is seems, after all, hard to say.

25. It is with satisfaction we notice in this very sentence, however, that Mr. Mill cannot help conceiving of "right" and "wrong" as realities in themselves. His mind bears witness to the moral absolute, in spite of his argument. We all of us, when appealing to our fellow-men, appeal to their perception of the Right and the True. We expect them to compare what is said, by us or others, with reason, the "true-always"; nor is this supposing them to strike an average of opinion—though even that implies antecedent reason to guide them—but it is that we anticipate in many cases, and rightly, a much shorter process. And, little as he might have thought it, Mr. Mill exactly thus presupposes the *a priori*. Such a sentence, as we occasionally meet with in his pages, as—"Right action must mean something more and other than merely intelligent action"—discovers, as if by accident, an ethical conception which no mere utilitarian calculations could satisfy. If, then, the antecedent idea of right, or reason, or the Good, be thus in us by "Nature," as an "improving" rule, or a rectifying principle, it is a part of that "every thing that is" which Mr. Mill's definition includes; and it would follow from this that Mr. Mill's fierce assault on Nature has no real foundation even with him; for Nature, he says, is to be regarded as *a whole*. The very faculty which sits in judgment on the animal kingdom, where pain and evil and destruction are found so largely, is an active and indestructible part of Nature whose voice is against Evil, affirming that it *ought not* to be. Nature has in it a "reasonable" and "right," which is essential to it, and, as Mr. Mill himself feels, even demands supremacy.

26. Now, what is this but what Augustin says against the Manichees? "If in one and the same thing, or order of things, one finds something to praise and something to blame—take away what is blamed, and true Nature remains; while to take away what is praised as good, and to leave only what was blamed, is to destroy Nature, and introduce entire confusion. Join with me, then, in commending form, classification, arrangement, harmony and unity of forms, symmetry and correspondence of members, control by mind, acquiescence of body,"—and so on. *What hinders or deranges* must be the opposition, and not the Nature; "every nature, as nature, being a good." There is a passage in Butler in harmony with this, and enlarging the view in a moral direction: Not only "is general benevolence a pervading law of ethics," but indignation against vice and wickedness

Yet he is himself better than his argument.

Mr. Mill's unconscious admissions compared with St. Augustin against the Manicheans, c. xxxiii.

is natural, since "it is necessary to the very subsistence of the world that injury, injustice, and cruelty should be punished."

Had not Mr. Mill failed to examine then what he meant by "Goodness," (as well as Power), he would not have given his present account of "Nature"; for even if "Nature" is taken as a name for "every thing," "Goodness," is not a name for nothing. Mr. Mill saw that "every thing" is not now good; he owns, however, that "every thing" is not evil. If something is good, what is it? That question he did not consider.

27. Again:—Socrates, to whom, as we now know so well, Mr. Mill thought to appeal, never found fault with phenomena, mental or physical, generally approved by the human experience and understanding. But that kind of optimism which would exclude from the world all possibility of failure, or evil, would be automatism, unknown to Socrates and his method. His object always was to ascertain Nature. A universe of automata is perhaps conceivable; but it was the reverse of the hypothesis of Socrates. A machine is not regarded by the Socratic thinker as the ultimate perfection of being, even though the alternative of conscious action and volition must involve the possibility of moral failure. But it must be added, that possible injury is no peculiarity of moral life. All phenomenal being implies possible *change*, and therefore alternative results. The "absence of all possible collision or disaster" can hardly be reckoned as a scientific supposition, even if at all conceivable in physical life where evil may be physically irremediable, any more than it is in moral life where new moral causation may happily be found.

This again, most inconsistently, is recognized by Mr. Mill in such a passage as the following:—(p. 54), where he is once more a "backslider" from Materialism, and his previous principles. "The artificially-created, or at least artificially-perfected Nature of the best and noblest human beings is the only Nature that is commendable to follow"!—And so, after all, it is as Butler in his matchless *Three Sermons on Human Nature* says: "The perfection of Nature is 'Nature,'" or as Aristotle has it (*Eth.*, x.), the  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$  is the law of virtue. But then this is the entire meaning of the *Sequi Naturam* in Morals,—which Mr. Mill so mis-states.

28. The recognition in some way of the evils that afflict our world both physically and morally can be avoided by no one. It is Mr. Mill's peculiarity, as it was that of some Gnostic sects, to confound those evils with Nature itself; which we now see to be impossible. He was first misled in this by his own attempted definitions, in

Again, what is Mr. Mill's idea of goodness?

Compared with the ideas and method of Socrates.

All must recognize evil as a fact.

which, though he tried to make a place for human volition as originative, he, *at the same time*, treated man as part of a fixed organization called "Nature," and also as a "former of his own character" towards some *à priori* standard, which he called "noblest," "best," and "commendable,"—which is impossible; for he cannot be both. To be so inconsistent is indeed very honourable to Mr. Mill as a man; but as a "thinker," it shows him to have been unequal to his subject, which we might now dismiss, as intellectually disposed of; but that something further is to be done before we dispose of the task which belongs to us.

29. In dealing as we have dealt with Mr. Mill's ideas of Nature, and his thesis, that "Nature is not to be followed" because so evil that in one department it might even be regarded as the work of "a demon,"—we have for the most part confined ourselves to the exposure of his first principles, and so, we suppose, destroyed the entire ground of his assault. Some thoughts as to details may, however, be added; though details are passed over by us if we find them without argumentative value.

We should, of course, distinguish between those parts of the animal kingdom which are so constituted as to be capable of what Mr. Mill would simply call "suffering," or pain, and those which are not. The lower organizations *e.g.* have only slight inconvenience from accidents which to the higher would be painful,—in most cases only enough to suggest self-preservation. This is so commonly ordered as to be to them a good, a guard of life. As to the higher organizations, pain results from changes of state in some cases salutary, in others useful and more than countervailing the inconvenience. The first coming into being, the growth of consciousness, the progress to higher life,—all transitions involving separation from what went before,—imply unsettlement and a restless condition, having some analogy to pain, if not to evil. But all these which are births to a nobler future, though they be "a travailing in pain together" as an apostle said, are frequently welcomed by the advancing nature of man. And this thought opens to us a train of moral reflections much unperceived, we suppose, by Mr. Mill. The transforming and elevating power of Enduring, in the loftier conscious agent, reveals to us the dignity of suffering, and shows that pain is not to be dissociated from its moral influence. The evil or the good of any condition is gauged by the individual consciousness. To St. Paul Death itself was a grand movement to immortal life; not only *Κέρδος*, but *στέφανος, τιμῆ*; the conscious being's mightiest action here.

It will not be supposed then that we accept even in the least Mr. Mill's inflated account of the evils which afflict the "animal creation." Physical suffering, to which alone he refers, is limited and utilized by sensation and consciousness; and even

death is, as a rule, physically painless. But the Christian philosophy, while eliminating Evil from Nature as constituted by God, (as indeed all philosophy and all science must, because, to suppose it as an aboriginal fact, is to suppose a destructive contradiction), perceives also, as Mr. Mill does not, that evil is under control, is transitional, and is not the end.

That evil could be, is the very hypothesis of the existence of variable Force, Potentiality, or Moral agency itself, as morality and Christianity conceive it. But we do not stop there, as materialism does and must. We conceive a future implied even in potentiality itself. If on

How the Christian philosophy recognizes it.

the one hand we could suppose an unconscious mechanical universe; on the other hand we see and own conscious being capable of originating thought and action, and in thought and action freely conforming, or else refusing to conform, to the Eternal ideal of Good. It must be one or other. A universe of automata would *not* of course win praise as virtuous, or the opposite. A universe in which conscious agency, or alternative "force," *i.e.* power to choose action, (and not merely seem to do so, which is ridiculous), existed, *might* have virtuous agents and it might not. To be *capable* of so being a "force," and so *ab interno* capable of the good, and capable of declining the good, is all that our philosophy needs; and it is surely a very fanaticism of the mechanical that would assign "force," *i.e.* phenomenal power, to a molecule or an atom, and deny it to a man.

30. The uneducated and impatient many who inquire in a merely wilful way as to the "origin of evil" should ask themselves, whether they think the Supreme Being *could* originate free agents, or variable forces? Mr.

The theory of the uneducated unthinkable ultimately.

Spenser says that if there be any Will, there can be no psychology. Well, but does the world seem to exhibit, in manifold phenomena, finite agency having apparently in itself an inscrutable alternative power of choosing and refusing? Is it "scientific" to treat these phenomena, as well as the præ-phenomenal postulate, as unreal? To call upon us to manipulate the præ-phenomenal in the forms of post-phenomenal argument, is to mistake the first premiss. Any so-called "proof" could but push the *à priori* one step farther back. All that is possible for us is to gather *phenomena*, to come at length to the most primary, and perceive that there could not previously have been universal Nothing; and to be thus certain of the necessity of the præ-phenomenal. We may try to express that in the nearest suitable terms; but after all it *precedes us*. It is,—but it defies our forms.

The philosopher knows that he has not to construct Nature; he has with all humility to set to work to understand Nature.

What would be thought of some astronomer, or chemist, who found some untractable facts, and instead of sitting down steadily to ascertain their meaning, grew angry, and scolded the facts, and attributed them to a "demon"? Yet this is what Mr. Mill does, on account of his own hypothesis as to what is *best*; and as to what *Omnipotence* could have done, and *Goodness* should have done; giving no definition of his meaning, too, in any of those terms.

31. But that we may leave nothing untried, let us, to help any one's conviction, imagine, and concede for the moment, Mr. Mill's perfect world. It would seem Mr. Mill's world imagined. to be a world of organization purely mechanical, endowed from within or without with the gift, (which Science does not warrant), of never wearing out. If it had sensation, let it be an agreeable one, and so uniform as to be neither more nor less; no part of it capable of accidental collision—not even a fall which might displace or injure. Let any one try to work out this thought, and say, Whether on the whole it would be a higher kind of world than this in which we are? Then if he thought so, what we ask would he do with his theory, as a man of science? Would he not say, "This kind of world without possible variation is not the world I have to deal with now. I have to try to learn and understand the real world around me. If it prove to have evil in it, let me see what may be meant by it; and what is to be done with it ultimately."

32. The Christian is not the man to shrink from this. His is a philosophy as to "what is to be done with it." The Christian treatment of the facts. Surely, it is high time that this stupid *crux* as to the "origin of evil" should give place to the worthy and thoughtful inquiry as to the "end of evil." St. Paul, a very resolute thinker, said the "whole creation" was in its birth-throe to a higher future, not mechanical but a "glorious liberty of sons of God." From another point of view another, (and also once Calvinistic), thinker, of our own time, in his *Apologia* and elsewhere, gives a fearful picture of the present world, yet interprets its jarring conditions as implying a need of an "infallible" and perfect settlement. This may be intelligible; but Mr. Mill's hopeless talk of an *à priori* "demon" is irrational, as "un-thinkable," as it is irreverent. Here, as always, Nature's highest suggestion is that there must be a "Super-Natural" Supreme.

33. A great difficulty no doubt in the way of the Moral and Religious philosophy of the future lies in the fact, that the ground of inquiry as to Volition, Power, Force, and the like ideas, has been pre-occupied by the inert Difficulty of the moral science of the future. predestinarian preferences of the unelevated many, coinciding now with a sort of "materialism made easy." (See Note B.)

In Christendom for more than a thousand years, from Prosper to Bradwardine, from him to Calvin, Jansenius, and Jonathan Edwards, a fatalistic literature has greatly infected our Religious philosophy, supposed by its adherents to be "doing honour to God," and scarcely protested against except among the Jesuits. Once let us get men to grasp in thought, (as they are obliged to do in practical life), that the "Ego" is a force, and that "volition" is but a word that idealizes the going forth of that force, and then the first step to higher thinking is taken. We have not at the outset to formulate, important as it is, the præ-phenomenal—of which we have been obliged here to speak. The nearer fact is the "Ego" as a Conscious Force, and its latent sense of Responsibility. We know, if we know anything, that we are, in some things, the praiseworthy or blameworthy Originators of what we rightly call "our own acts," and we repudiate the acts of others as "not ours." Men may equivocate; but without this there is no Moral world at all, and they had better say so.\*

34. This conscious force, "the Ego," is, we all know, a variable force, acting in the midst of a world of many unconscious forces, which may be invariable; and it voluntarily and from itself displays phenomena different in kind from the invariable, as being outward results of its own free inner being; for which results it is approved or disapproved by itself, and by beings of a common Nature and common Reason, and above all by the Supreme.

Such, we repeat, is the pervading fatalism of modern literature, that nothing but a philosophy beginning at the beginning will meet it. No pious-seeming theories must turn us aside, if our Christianity is to be upheld hereafter on moral grounds. To commence, (as Mr. Mill), with "attributes of God," when we have not, in our time, even attempted an Ontology or thought of the Præ-phenomenal, can only mislead. The γνώριμα ἡμῖν will no doubt introduce us to the γνώριμα ἀπλῶς, but slowly we learn the γνώριμα ἐξ ἐμπειρίας, because πλήθος δὲ χρόνου ποιῆ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν (*Eth.*, vi. 8).

When any are prepared again to maintain the popular and ever-attractive quasi-fatalism in Religion, they will find coadjutors like Mr. Mill, when they will least wish for them; and they will have to vindicate at last the position that, whatever be the appearances, God has not made free originators of Responsible action, and that finite conscious beings, freely choosing "good or evil," are probably *impossible in the nature of things!*—Let them prepare for that.

\* See "The Analysis of Moral Responsibility," (Vol. IV. of the *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*); as to the "True-always."

Bad arguments for God—His prescience or His power—recoil at last on those who use them; and we conclude, warning all who use such arguments, that Mr. Mill's notions of "Nature" and Religion here exposed, have their roots in too many religious-fatalistic antecedents, for the existence of which ill-taught Christian teachers have to answer.

We now pass on.

## § 2.—*Utility of Religion.*

35. It is at first with a feeling of surprise, after discovering the entire repudiation of Religion, (even "Natural Religion"), that one reads the title of Mr. Mill's Second Essay, "UTILITY OF RELIGION." If he had really persuaded himself that Religion had no foundation at all in *truth*, (even as a part of "Nature," or as a suggestion in Nature that there might be something above Nature), he could hardly have thought of discussing the "Utility of Religion" at all. It may be, however, that the very zeal of his search for some rule of Right and Duty led him to say: "it is perfectly conceivable that Religion may be morally useful without yet being intellectually sustainable" (p. 74). He had, as we observed, begun his religious inquiries into "Nature," having nothing else to look to. Traditions he had none, to which sacredness or authority of any kind could be attached by him. He seemed almost the solitary specimen of a man, a "conscious being" as he says, who was in a position to begin from "mere Nature," and ascertain in his own way Nature's teachings. His conclusion, however, was that those teachings, as he observed them, morally fail. Yet it appears that the idea of Duty, the need of some rule or standard of right more than mere positive law, he could not but recognize, however indistinctly. *De facto* Nature, considered as a whole, with or without man, could not indeed, as we saw, give him the needed perfect law. To an ideal of Nature, as contemplated by the higher intellect, his mind narrowed by the philosophy of Utility could not rise. He drops the inquiry as to Nature, therefore, and asks—how indeed could he help it?—can the "Utility" of Religion, in any form, be so practically or empirically established, that a law of practical duty may be found by it,—suspending for the time the question of its ascertainable truth?

36. It is not uninteresting to observe how he propounds this strange inquiry. He says, "We propose to inquire whether the belief in Religion considered as a mere *persuasion*, apart from the question of its truth, is really indispensable ["advantageous" he should have said] to the

Essay II.  
"Utility of  
Religion."

How he  
comes to dis-  
cuss this.

The question  
as stated by  
Mr. Mill.

temporal welfare of mankind?" This he finally determines in the negative, only reserving a doubt in behalf of what he calls a "Religion of Humanity" (p. 108), which must be mechanical, and yet is love of country, developing into love of race, which he thinks is more than a morality, being *founded* on "large and wise views of the good of the whole, neither sacrificing the individual to the aggregate nor the aggregate to the individual."

He explains this possible Religion of Humanity best perhaps in the following sentences: "The essence of Religion is the strong and earliest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognized as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire. This condition is fulfilled by the Religion of Humanity in as eminent a degree, and in as high a sense, as by the Supernatural Religions, even in their best manifestations" (p. 109). Again: "Apart from all dogmatic belief, there is *for those who need it* an ample domain in the region of the imagination, with possibilities, with hypotheses which cannot be known to be false" (p. 117). Of this scoffed-at Religion of Humanity which may or may not be "Natural," a future life is no part; nor even the being of God,—except possibly on some Manichæan hypothesis (p. 116). Is free volition in it?

37. In discussing his subject, Mr. Mill follows, as he says, very largely in the footsteps of Jeremy Bentham and Auguste Comte. He treats it briefly, both in its social and individual aspect. He acknowledges, at once, the deplorable condition to which men would be reduced if virtue were not taught and vice repressed, publicly and privately, by the praise and blame, reasonable or not, of mankind. But he observes that Religion receives too much of the credit of teaching all the morals of the world. AUTHORITY and tradition, he insists, even if not religious, are "all-powerful with the immense majority of mankind." He quotes, as good, the telling words of Novalis: "My belief has gained infinitely to me, from the moment when one other human being has begun to believe the same." Then education, he rightly adds, is a "tremendous power"; (and none, surely, could have more reason to urge both these considerations than our essayist). His words on early education, and the comparison of their powerful hold on us with the "investigations" of later life, have a solemn pathos, like an involuntarily uttered secret of the soul, which could not be restrained (p. 81).

38. He imagines, further, that the needful Authority, and an Educational tradition for the many might be attained eventually by the supposed "Religion of Humanity" gaining possession of the heart of "those who need it,"—of whom Mr. Mill does not profess to be one. It seems to him perhaps a weakness.

With a possible exception in favour of a "Religion of Humanity."

Bentham and Comte are followed.

But in support of the view that social morality is largely independent of professedly Divine Religion, Mr. Mill then refers to Greece as perhaps an historical instance.

We wholly demur to this, however, and a man's historical knowledge must, we think, be slender who accepts it. Any who may wish brief satisfaction on the subject, as matter of fact, may find it in the work of Professor Du Coulanges, of Strasbourg, entitled *La Cité Antique*, crowned by the French Academy. As a simple inductive proof that the primitive bond of all human society was Religion, it has a kind of completeness. There ever was a religious sacredness in all social "authority," little as Mr. Mill seems to recognize it, whether in the family, the tribe, the race, the city, or the state. Not only every city, but every society within a city, had its special "religion." To speculate now that men could have done without it, or that the ends of society were otherwise attainable, is useless, if the truth be that an association without, in some sense, its God is not to be found.

The social law of ancient Greece specially referred to, (or of ancient Rome also), was all founded as much on Religion as was that of Egypt itself. The Lacedæmonians even believed that their laws came not from Lycurgus, but from Apollo; the Cretans theirs, not from Minos, but from Jupiter; the Romans, not from Numa, but from the goddess Egeria; and so on. Mr. Mill must have forgotten the Homer and the Aristotle, which we are told he read in his very early childhood. (See Aristot., *Pol.*, iii. 14.) Lacedæmon is a peculiarly unfortunate allusion for Mr. Mill's case, for the Lacedæmonians committed to their kings the ordering of all the high concerns of the entire national Religion, as much as the Athenians did to the Archons, or the Romans to the Pontiff.

39. The facts of "Authority," "Tradition," "Education," or "Public Opinion," as alluded to by Mr. Mill and his two teachers, prove then to tell all against his hypothesis. If history is to be appealed to at all, it shows Religion to be so imbedded in the social consciousness that nothing could ever displace it.

To maintain this as historically certain is to destroy the ground of those who would uphold Religion, merely for the sake of its usefulness. A tacit admission of the untruth of Religion is at the bottom of their supposition; and this could not be concealed. And who can doubt that to discover a falsehood is to deprive it of its power? It must long since have died out.

Without question, the Utility of Religion to society, or to the individual, (*i. e.* the actual and subsequent utility,) is included in the idea of its anterior necessity, but it is no part of the argu-

Du Coulanges gives a complete refutation as to Mr. Mill's supposed facts.

Examples in opposition to Mr. Mill's suppositions.

The anterior necessity of Religion yet hinders not the subsequent utility, but supposes it.

ment for its necessity. If indeed we affirm, as we do, that society has always had Religion among its foundations, we imply that it is useful ; but more, it is vital. To talk simply of its utility is like speaking of the utility of vision or locomotion ; and in so insisting we do not lose sight of the individual any more than of society. For it is an irrational paradox, and doubly so if in the mouth of Utilitarianism, to say that the well-being of the social system, as a whole, could be our object, apart from that of the man himself. There is no motive for promoting the good of either apart from the other ultimately. The appeal to an imagined "unselfishness" and the deprecation of "reward" in either case is unworthy, because, as Mr. Mill confesses (p. 84), "social morality is the summary of the conduct which each one of the multitude, whether he observes it with any strictness or not, desires that others should observe towards him,"—a truth more tersely expressed by a far higher authority as the sum "of the law and the prophets." But is not this also "exceeding great Reward"?

40. But the "Utility" which pertains to Christianity, as the one true Religion, differs from that which is indeed generally inseparable from the Religious Institute, even in its corrupt forms. It consists in its promoting the well-being, to the highest ideal, both of the individual and the community. Christianity also, it should be remembered, develops many of the higher principles of human association, and the mingled result not unfrequently is practically a "great reward." Nor is this to be thought in any way derogatory to its theory, but the reverse. A true utilitarian philosophy is based also on the fact, which Mr. Mill ought to have weighed, that some things reward us, and some punish ; and that the former are to be chosen when rightly possible. We add this, because the objections in this essay to the Christian promises in the hereafter are all tinged with the same fallacy. The highest "reward" is never a mechanical addition to present effort ; it is in ourselves ; it is a conscious development, which even becomes a crown. The philosophy of Reward and of Utility will be found fundamentally in agreement.

41. The primary logical blot on this second Essay is that it uses the word "Religion" ambiguously, so that the idea is never properly grasped. Mr. Mill sees but indistinctly its two-fold meaning, for it expresses on the one hand the general sense of a community, or, on the other, the inward conviction of the individual, identified with his reason and his discernment of right throughout life and action. In the latter sense, perhaps, none

would venture to deny its "utility." But can the former be separated from the latter?

The intellectual condition of the majority of individuals is always such that an honest, if dim, acceptance of the best traditions of Duty and Right known in their community is all that can be had. Mr. Mill admits it. A minority will rise above that, but tradition, and not always a very good tradition, has to sustain and guide the conscience of the generality. The more thoughtful and ever-reforming few have the task of elevating the "public opinion," or tradition, towards external "reason"; and thus, as Coleridge said, the metaphysics of the present age may become the common sense or tradition of the next. One of the greatest Scottish writers now living has quaintly expressed the incapacity of the multitude as yet for thinking justly and fully on the higher subjects, in his odd sentence, "there be many millions of people in the world—maistly fules": of course this meant "mostly unequal to independent thinking." This is more widely true in philosophy than in morals; but Religion touches both morals and philosophy, and it seems scarcely intelligible to question its "utility" in either, if in fact it be inseparable from them. At least it can be only of the lower Religious traditions that Mr. Mill can be supposed to be doubting the "use"; and not the "utility" of truth and righteousness, which every capable conscious being must desire for himself.

Religion in the individual, and the community.

As familiar illustrations of the place and Utility of traditional Religion and morals in the general conscience of a community, Judaism, Christianity, or Paganism might be equally referred to. The very definite Religion of the Jews, with its social life, and its literature, no doubt was a training for many an individual conscience; but, much more than this, it was of the highest utility, as it created a better civilization, in the midst of which a higher law of Right, the Christian law, came in the "fulness of time." So the Christianity of the Roman Empire was a civilization for the peoples, making possible to many that higher life which first became accessible only to the Jew. That new public opinion under which Christendom was henceforth formed is not denied by us, of course, to have been "useful"; yet it is not to be confounded with the personal knowledge and goodness which are the essential life of Religion. The civilization of the Christianized nations is the exoteric, the life of sanctity the esoteric form of our Religion.

Something analogous has been found in all ages, as far back as history can reach,—as in Egypt, Greece, Persia, and India. A superficial tradition for the majority, and a thoughtful life venerated in some. Mr. Mill entirely fails to use this plain fact, and

generalizes, as though the "religious element" in human nature were not really allied with the right, the noble, and the true, both in thought and action. The bearing of these considerations on individual Responsibility, and on social and political duty, cannot of course be here examined, though it is not to be unnoticed.

We now have omitted nothing of the nature of argument in this intermediate essay of Mr. Mill. It really concerns us but little. We only again remark, that the unexplained use and misuse of terms, now implying and now refusing the moral freedom of man, pervades this essay as much as the last, and would of itself mar the whole attempted reasoning. With this we will proceed to the Third Essay, the largest and most important of the three, and at least intended as the chief work of the volume.

### § 3.—*Theism.*

42. The Third Essay is entitled "THEISM." The subject is so laid out in a kind of syllabus as to seem at first

Essay III.  
"Theism."

sight to cover the ground of the usual controversies.

This prospect is delusive; and what has been already said as to the præ-phenomenal, in examining the former essays, supplies almost all that is needed for the reply to this. We must, however, go over the course, though it is unnecessary to tarry long on any part of it, as there is but little that is new in point of thinking though the tone is somewhat different.

We detect a worthy consciousness of the responsibility of making

The tone of  
this Essay.

a final decision on some of the issues in this Essay.

While not owning it in terms, the writer seems to feel that it is he himself, and not a "reasoning machine," as some had called him, who was making his conclusion. For this is free agency in action—the putting forth the awful inner power of saying "Yes" or "No" to truth and goodness. There is something overawing, too, in the reflection that this inner power at times, and perhaps not unfrequently, exhausts its freshness in some one effort or act; so that a choice really made for evil or for good, leaves the agent not exactly what he was before.

The motions of a mind like Mr. Mill's are worth watching for their own sake; and his conclusions of avowed—even if reluctant—Atheism, or non-Theism, are not common utterances. They have a harmony, too, far more than Strauss's, with the spirit of our times. If they reach Strauss's conclusions, it is not by the same way. Strauss once professed Christianity; Mr. Mill, we believe, had not done so. The "unique" majesty of

Christ Himself had a charm for Mr. Mill; Strauss, at length, seemed blind to it.

There is a painful account, if we remember rightly, in the Letters of Byron, or in the notes, about Shelley's having had the conviction that, to get rid of the alleged ineradicable tendency of man to Theism, it would be desirable to form an artificial community from which the very name and thought of God should be rigorously shut out, and the children be brought up entirely without the tradition of a Deity in any form. It is said that Shelley purchased an island in the Ægean, with a view of carrying out this barbarous project. It might, by excluding all literature, have been possible, in this unnatural way of determining our nature, (as Coleridge would say), to "hunt men out of their humanity"; but the plan was abortive through the unhappy poet's death. The vessel in which he put forth to go to his island foundered, and he was lost. We had thought the theory had been lost too.

Anecdote of Shelley.

In truth, such idea of excluding the thought of God from the nature and mind of man resembles that of the king in Herodotus, who shut up a child in order to ascertain, by excluding him from definite knowledge of human speech, what would be the first sounds he might produce,—as if he might so determine what were the aboriginal elements of "natural" language. Such treatment might possibly produce imbecility, if attempted on any child, or elicit entirely unhealthy development even in the strong.

Story in Herodotus.

43. But we can hardly help being thus reminded of Mr. Mill's own training, excluded from the ways of men. It may explain so much of his apparent inability to deal with the natural, and his misapprehension of tradition, and especially also of the *à priori*. Shut out too much from common homes and habits, he seemed scarcely one of his kind. There is a gentle self-contemplation in his life which touches the reader at times profoundly, as it gives us glimpses of what he might have been. Our feeling concerning him is deepened by the fact that he really wrestled with the ruinous predestinarian philosophy, and only succumbed to it as a materialist for want of the *à priori*, which had withered in him from his earliest hours. It was with him, then, no mere theory to be "without God."

Mr. Mill's account of his own training.

The Essay is in Five Parts: the First of them, in its miscellaneous subdivisions, contains the germs of what follows. "Theism," and its "Evidences," "Causation," the "*Consensus omnium*," "Consciousness," and "Design," pass rapidly before us; and afterwards, in Parts

Arrangement of the Essay.

2, 3, 4, and 5, God's "Attributes," man's "Immortality," and supernatural "Revelation" are briefly reviewed. We shall have need, for the argument, chiefly to notice Part 1, and its several points; the remaining Parts will follow the fate of the main position of our author.

44. (i.) The quietude of Mr. Mill's manner in approaching his subject (p. 126) has a grace and truthfulness about it which contrasts, as we intimated, with the common tones of unbelief; and his refinement in this respect is broken, though rarely, by a note of hollow despair, coming as if from the bottom of a fatally-wounded heart. He speaks as if believing in nothing,—not even his own arguments, or his own self. If he refers to hope as a possibility for some, it is still quite evident that he has it not. One would think that as he mused at any time of the birth of children into such a world as this, he might almost adopt Dante's motto for the entrance to a lower region—"no hope" for those who come here! Were it discovered, universally, that all Religious faith had ceased

Its introduction and calmness of tone.

But it is not hopeful.

from the earth, and if a cry of terror then went up from all who thus far had sustained themselves by some Religion,—even infidels standing awestruck,—it would seem as if Mr. Mill would be more than resigned. In such a spirit as this to approach the subject of Theism is, even to lookers-on, distressing. There is a languor as of coming death in every line that is written; a reaction from the very suspicion of a "Religion of Humanity" for him. Perhaps, too, a little reaction here and there against the domineering "canons of scientific evidence" may be felt; but he must, as of necessity, come to the consideration of the existence and attributes of God as to a "scientific theorem only." He says (p. 134):—

45. "Looking at the problem as it is our duty to do, merely as a scientific inquiry, it resolves itself into two questions; first, is the theory which refers the origin of all the phenomena of nature to the will of a Creator, consistent or not with the results of science?" And he calmly replies that, at all events, "the conception of a God governing the world by variable acts of *Will* is inconsistent with the most general truths made known to us by scientific investigation" (p. 135). Of course, if this be the case, *cadit quæstio*. But had not the supposition of such Will been previously used by him? And is not physical science itself in need of something to begin either molecular or atomic motion?

First inquiry whether the idea of the will of a Creator contradicts science.

Before we go any further then, we must know what "governing the world" means in this case. To speak of "governing," without will in the governor, is to deny all intentional "governing" while admitting the term. What "governing" can be, we perceive

not, if "invariable law" so works of itself as to be untouched by any distinct "governing" power, even at first. If a power or force can only act in a previously fixed way, (and yet there is nothing "previous"), in what sense, we repeat, can it be said to "govern"? If science really obliged us to think thus, science would not, (as Mr. Mill does), speak of a "governing Power" at all. But our most advanced men, whether in thought or science, quite refusè to decide in this peremptory way, that anterior governing Power is inconsistent with the known results of science; as we shall see.

46. Professor Tyndall, in his latest utterance, that in the Free Trades' Hall at Manchester, (*See Note C*), informs us that the question of the present day is, "*how far* does this wondrous display of molecular force extend?" And he directly declines to forestall the answer of science; and rather retorts on those who charge him with scepticism, that probably they are really greater "sceptics" than himself. Mr. Morley, in his discussion on Voltaire, speaks, of course, with more openness than Professor Tyndall, and expresses himself with that clearness which distinguishes him.—"*There is an unknown element,*" he says, "*at the bottom of the varieties of creation, whether we agree to call that element a Volition of a Superior Being, or an undiscovered set of facts in embryology.*"

Professor Tyndall and Mr. Morley oppose Mr. Mill's dogma.

So the testimony of philosophy, as well as science, as thus offered, is alike against Mr. Mill. It is suggested by those, like Professors Tyndall and Huxley, and Mr. Morley, men whom we take to be looking honestly at facts, that as far as we yet know, "invariable law" does *not* account for everything. A "Governing" volition of a Superior Being may, at one point at least, be quite consistent "with science"; and is, with scientific men, a suggestion warranted at present by the state of our knowledge.

Competent physicists recognize of course the distinction between vital and other force. Abiogenesis is as yet a dream; life not being known to arise without previous life. We need not dwell further here on Mr. Mill's "science."

47. We may pass then, with some reason, to Mr. Mill's second inquiry, (though its hypothesis now is like the Irish second plea of "justification,"—after the first plea of "not guilty").

Second inquiry. What is the evidence for a will governing Nature?

"Supposing a Superior Being's Volition to be consistent with our scientific results, can this existence be scientifically tested?" Of what nature is the "evidence" for it?—He does not seem to know that it is, as previous Force, a postulate of Science itself.

But under the impression that the *a priori* is not only unscientific, but condemned by science, he has no need of axioms or

postulates. Unaware that science suggests some *precedentia* of existing results,—and that the *à priori* has done good service to science heretofore—(if *e.g.* Kepler first hypothesized his “Laws,” and subsequently found them scientifically true)—he begins by an illogical demand of “evidence” for the *præ*-evidential. If, as we have shown, science itself as yet stands on some *à priori*, the scientific “tests” could have no immediate place. They might even be irrational, as applying to the *præ*-phenomenal, what pertains only to the phenomenal. Just as Leibnitz, in a passage referred to by Mr. Mill (p. 136), repudiated as unworthy of God, the idea of perpetual subsequent interference with His own laws as such; so, equally, the competent Theist might be forgiven, if he recoiled from the thought of an Eternal subjected to the interference of scientific manipulation, as if He were but the logical conclusion of phenomenal premisses. It seems as if Mr. Mill could not, as we have pointed out, so far realize what is even meant by the *à priori* as to state it. He further betrays this, perhaps, in saying, “that *à priori* arguments are frequently *à posteriori* arguments in disguise.”

The *à priori* is always postulated.

Mr. Mill's *ignoratio elenchi*.

48. (ii.) In discussing, as he now would half attempt, the *à priori* “evidence” or argument of Theism, the essayist, as it is his wont, subdivides once more; and not perhaps without propriety. He distinguishes the permanent from the changeable in Nature; and thus would limit the argument for a “First Cause,” making account only of the changes of the present phenomena of the universe, and not its Beginning from Permanent Being. But here it is immediately apparent that being unable to approach the abstract and the *à priori* in its higher region, Mr. Mill is at once the victim of his crude attempt to use abstractions in their lower and popular form, in which they are little more than collective terms. Nature as an unknown whole he assumes is Permanent, (with all its “Evil” in it!) and he will only deal with it in the details of known, varying phenomena. This assumption stands instead of *à priori* with Mr. Mill. It is not argument. We will follow, as he puts it, this part of his essay, as to the “changeable” phenomena; and we shall have to note that a “change” does not produce change, and is only the occasion of it: that which effects the change being really the “element,” or cause.

A mistake in stating the proposition.

“Changes in nature (he says) are always the effects of previous changes.” Now if he had said, as before, (p. 143), of some “element” which had produced a previous change, he would have perceived his position to be ambiguous, and therefore logically useless, as well as in other respects delusive. “Change,” simply

as an abstract idea, misled him. A "changeable element," (or, as we said, "variable cause"), is that, (he allows), which "begins the existence" of an object (p. 143); but it should surely be also termed a "change-making element," and then the logical fallacy would be plainer; but to call it "change," simply, is of course inaccurate in the highest degree. Again, no one supposes all so-called "causes" to be, or to affect, what Mr. Mill calls "permanent elements" in Nature itself. A cause in nature itself may be so far "permanent" as to move the changes in one particular way; yet it may be interfered with. But of course, where Volition, which is variable, exists in a cause, (and experience does not forbid the hypothesis), the action of that "cause" may vary very largely. The same reflections must guide us, when we deal with "permanent elements" of Nature—if their assumption be not frequently a *petitio principii*. A permanent or invariable acting element is not an abstraction.

49. The same mistake, of taking an abstract idea for a distinct individual being, is of constant occurrence in Mr. Mill; as when, a little farther on, he adds Further inaccurate use of abstraction. (p. 145), "The First Cause *can be no other than* FORCE." If he had not printed "force" with a capital letter, and had said, what alone his sentence could mean, "the First Cause can be no other than *that* which first forces," he would have seen that he was not telling us much. It is simply  $A = A$ . It is the more surprising that he should have thus written, because in the very next paragraph (p. 146) he acknowledges a "possible Cause of force," strangely forgetting that if, according to his statement, "the First Cause could be no other than force," he is thus suggesting a "possible cause of the First Cause,"—which is absurd; and surrendering his distinction of the permanent Nature, and the changeable.

The self-contradiction of Mr. Mill is, however, still more complete even than this. "Volition," he says, (apparently without conceiving the idea), "does not answer to the idea of a first cause, since force must in every instance be *assumed* as prior to it"; force "being evolved" Self-contradiction of the argument. in certain "processes" of the phenomena! And yet, his "First cause is no other than Force," and "Force has all the attributes of a thing eternal and uncreated."—What are we to say to such writing? Some respect for the memory of a great name seems to forbid further comment. The essayist, evidently, had not thought of volition, except as of some "agent in the material universe," and he is hopelessly puzzled in mere "Abstractions," ("Causation," "Volition," "Force"),—which he alternately takes up and lays down, as we foretold.

50. (iii.) Mr. Mill considers in the next place the "*Consensus omnium*" argument, which he regards as the "main strength of natural Theism." Viewed as an "argument," he shows, of course, that it has no *logical* completeness; which none indeed suppose. But it is by no means an appeal to the judgment of multitudes of individuals, but to that, whatever it be, which is at the foundation of their concurrence. He takes it for granted that it rests on the not unreasonable ground, that He who gave the human intelligence could not have so "made it" that it would be universally deluded in such a matter. But may not the authority of the many, in the past or now, thus rest also on previous Reason? Does the Universe rest on no Reason? He does not deal with the *fact itself*, so as even to attempt to account for its ineradicable character. No explanations that he offers at all touch the difficulty which the anti-theist, or non-theist has, not simply in covering the fact by *explanations*, but getting rid of it from the consciousness of man. It is not an historical or a theoretical difficulty that he has, but to some extent a psychological difficulty. Remove it if you will from the domain of logic, still the fact remains; and science, theological or physical, builds on facts.

He does not meet the difficulty of the fact.

51. (iv.) The argument from "Consciousness" comes next, and about five pages are devoted to it. We cannot regret it: though it lies also beyond the range of our essayist. Once or twice he goes so far as to imply that the existence of God is "eminently desirable" on some *à priori* therefore. Here he briefly, according to his conception of it, states the argument of Descartes, but he avoids the grounds of that argument. These prolegomena we in some degree supply. (Something positive may, we hope, be a relief amidst a series of criticisms which have chiefly been of a destructive kind.) What we have briefly to say may be of use in considering at a future time the arguments of Anselm, (to which Mr. Mill gives no attention), and the theory of Kant, which he rightly finds unsatisfactory, and which he speaks of as an "optimism prior to," as Leibnitz's was subsequent to, "a belief in God." Our suggestions are these:—

52. During every movement of our own reason, (*See* § 25) we idealize some other consenting reason, (to which we defer as higher, if not supreme), external to us, and necessarily yet for our own satisfaction, sought by us. We treat it as **ABSOLUTE**. We know that it is not our own self-created standard, for if it were, it would not have a universal, or even general, character or pattern. Let any one look

Grounds of the *à priori*, implied in the Cartesian argument.

into himself, and he will find that every serious thought implies a comparison of our thinking with something beyond itself, the informal and true always. We might even stake the argument for the *à priori* on this. This is the Cartesian ground.

In this comparison of our particular reason with what we may describe (*ad hoc*) as the "Absolute," our reason is (1) conscious of itself, and then (2) commits itself to that external or absolute Reason, which also knows and is known as Reason; otherwise it would not be Reason, but only "fitness," which is phenomenal. The Self-consciousness of our reason is superior to, though inseparable from, our reason. It could not defer to the "unconscious," for that would not *be* reason. We defer to that absolute which, in reason, reality, and consciousness, is out of us, and immediately supreme, and felt by our mind to be so.

And when we speak of Mind, we speak of all that mind implies. Intellectual movement, or our individual comparison of the particular conscious reason with the absolute conscious reason, is not intellectual only. For we feel it to be *right* and *wise*; and since it could not be resisted without a sense in us that we were wrong, our intellectual movement is therefore moral. An "idea" thus proves to be more than an individual fancy when Descartes uses the word.

Moral character of thought as right or wrong.

The necessary attributes of conscious and reasoning being should all be thought out from this beginning, if we would be thorough in our treatment. The intellectual power of any one may, (if this be established,) be graduated by its moral readiness to conform to the Absolute; so that reason at its highest condition is evidently moral. Intellectual freedom, too, which pertains to true intellectual power, is marked by readiness to compare at all times with the Absolute, in whatever way, (and there are many ways), it may be truly perceived. We slowly learn, more and more clearly, to subject our "particulars" to our "universals," and our own universals to the ABSOLUTE. It is in this the Cartesian argument needs fuller statement.

53. There is often imagined to be a wider divergence than really exists between Plato and Aristotle on this whole subject. According to Plato, Noësis is prior to the simplest intellectual operation, as well as to the most perfect dialectic process. Essential Being, Reason, Consciousness, Good, are all anterior to the discursive reason of man. Aristotle *assumes* the Absolute, while he denies that our reason raises us to its perfect sphere—which, indeed, Plato never affirmed, nor could have affirmed. But we bow to it.

Views of Plato and Aristotle.

54. If *præ*-phenomenal being be thus an absolute necessity of thought, then there is sure ground, however difficult, for that *à priori* argument, which may ultimately take a far more perfect

form than Anselm, or Descartes, or Kant gave it. They all argued from mind to that which mind *implies*.—But this subject cannot of course be exhausted in analyzing these paragraphs of Mr. Mill.

It may be returned to probably in the larger examination of “Religious Responsibility,” which has been so long promised to this Institution.

It is sufficient moreover for the present to say, that on the *à priori*, as a metaphysical inquiry, Mr. Mill’s volume cannot be said to profess to enter. That which one would have been glad primarily to press on him, had it been possible, would have been, that the human mind itself anterior to any kind of syllogistic process, is a reality, a force, a power; and then, that it always compares itself and its work with an ideal. Granting freely, that the sense or consciousness of the *à priori* is far from being distinct, and in much-enfeebled intellects is, as Locke acknowledges, very dim; yet without it there could be no clear rationality. Its indistinctness may be a true ground indeed for humility, but never of denial. It becomes more distinct when we stir from lethargy, and use our mind, as few will take the trouble to do though many pretend to it.

Reasoning not unfrequently elicits latent truth, and more fully displays the sense of the *à priori*, in the capable; and this is the line of the Cartesian argument,—that a human idea relates to reality; which is not, (as Mr. Mill supposes, p. 139.) the same as saying that the idea “forms an *objective fact*,” for that may be but phenomenal.

55. (v.) The argument from “*Marks of Design in Nature*” stands for consideration last in order. This, Mr. Mill says, is an “argument of a really scientific character,” but certainly he does not shine in it. We should have been glad if this popular and applauded argument had been of any use in leading Mr. Mill to Theism. But it seems to have failed; nor are we surprised. Mr. Mill simply opposes to it Mr. Darwin’s hypothesis of the “Survival of the fittest.” If wisely stated, full of subsidiary interest indeed in Theology is the “Argument from Design,”—it is like a Bible, if in the hands of the Church; but as standing alone it is bare, and liable as a mere argument, (as Lord Bacon implied,) to much perversion—as an *à posteriori* without *à priori*. We cannot but think, too, that it is most unhappily expounded, (*e.g.*, in a passage of Paley’s *Natural Theology*, in which his hypothesis represents some creation as almost beneath the Supreme, or as if committed to a Demiurge,) whenever it is wrested from its true

The subject is at first metaphysical, and as such is not treated by Mr. Mill.

Argument from design.

Paley’s statement of it, *Nat. Th.*, c. iii.

position, as St. Paul used it in conjunction with the *à priori*. The argument from Design is even painfully pressed against us by some writers, who take advantage of its ambiguity.

56. Quoting from Paley, Mr. Morley gives us this :—“ God prescribes limits to His power that He may let in the exercise, and thereby exhibit demonstrations of His wisdom. . . . It is as though one being should have fixed certain rules, and, if we may so speak, provided certain materials; and afterwards have committed to another being, out of those materials and in subordination to those rules, the task of drawing forth a creation; a supposition which evidently leaves room and induces, indeed, a necessity for *contrivance*. Nay, there may be many such agents, and many ranks of these. We do not advance this as a doctrine, either of philosophy or of religion, but we say, the subject may be safely represented under this view, because the Deity, acting Himself by general laws, will have the same consequences, upon our reasoning, *as if He had presented those laws to another*. It has been said that the problem of CREATION was, attraction and matter being given, to make a world out of them, &c.”

We feel bound to say—“*Non tali auxilio*.” It may be old Gnosticism in modern phrase. We hope the “Argument from Design” does not mean this. A better ontology than Paley’s would have saved it. Mr. Morley’s difficulty, if briefly put, is this—Would not the Highest Agent attain His end, without that kind of incubation, which a rough statement of “*contrivance*,” or design, would imply? He rightly thinks that a sort of contrivance which derogates from the Divine perfection and absoluteness, can never be admitted. The “*fitness of things*” is the best ultimate form of the *à posteriori* argument; and to this the philosopher or man of science has no certain or comprehensive reply, so far as we can see. The argument has a *pro tanto* value then, and is not exposed to the danger latent in all analogies. (See further, the “*Whole Doctrine of Final Causes*,” &c.)

57. We feel that we have no further need to prolong our examination of Mr. Mill. His view of the “Attributes of the Supreme” or, as we have said, Præ-phenomenal Being, has already been replied to as inconsistent with philosophy. (Secs. 22, 23.) We may be spared the necessity of watching him while, balancing the “probabilities” of Immortality,—that possibility the very thought of which might hereafter, he supposes, be a burden to us! The fact, *à priori*, of our Nature having the hope in us, as truly as it has “a reaching out after God,” remains, and will remain.

This book is one that has a kind of sobering influence, as we draw to a close. We had made a higher estimate of the writer—

Recent objection to design.

Conclusion.

formed from his *Essay on Liberty*, his best achievement by far.

The Book. But he seems feeblest here, as a logician without an *à priori*. We are not untouched by his qualified decisions, therefore, on the ultimate problems of being, approached by him, (as by some others), from only one side. The failure seems as if it struck Mr. Mill himself—a failure, always certain beforehand, of every attempt from that side, to bear down the truth of God. Here it really is conspicuous, and good may come of it. Mr. Mill, as the supposed best spokesman of his school, had to bring out his forces for the battle, and the result is equivalent to a total discomfiture of Atheism in the field it had chosen; and yet nothing else in mere Nature is left for the reasoner to fall back on. The baffled logic of Natural Theism can do nothing without Revelation. Revelation stands first.

Yes; God has revealed Himself. The *à priori* is God's Revelation of His image in our nature. The *à posteriori*, brings His Phenomenal Revelation at length in the Incarnate.

The deep foundations of our Religion are in the "unseen and eternal." It rises out of the Præ-phenomenal, and is "ever-true." God first shines out of darkness, and then gives us the knowledge of Himself, "in the face of Jesus Christ."

58. It is with no feeling but that of forbearance or of hope that we take leave of this distressing, and to a logician even humiliating, volume. Any other spirit would be unbecoming in

The writer. the contemplation of this last work of such a man as Mr. Mill. Had he lived longer, the possibilities which he began to see of God and Christ, and immortal Life, might have ripened for him into realities, though not arguments. In reading some almost relenting words of his, we are as if standing by the couch of the departed, while his final echo dies away,—incoherently indeed at last, and yet very solemnly listened to.—Was he indeed then "feeling after God, if haply he might find Him"? There are, none can deny it, sentences here and there to make us hope this.—Was he really fascinated by the unique form and beauty of Christ our Lord,—the only Personage in all man's past history that holds now for Himself, after eighteen centuries, the earnest love of countless human hearts?—Yes, Mr. Mill spoke of Christ as, to his mind, "unique"; and in one place he did so, as if there strangely stirred within him even the love of the Son of Man.—Was this long homeless spirit beginning to be led to "the Father," in that last closing sentence, when he dimly wrote of "Supernatural hopes" as not impossible yet?—Might it mean, "LORD, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us"?

Certainly, though there is no strong reasoning in this book—

for there could not be, with the first link missing—there is here and there this softened tone, even though it be too often a voice of deepest abandonment as to an inexorable fate, or even but—

“the gurgling cry  
“Of some strong swimmer in his agony.”

59. In watching, as we have now done, the downward struggle from “Nature” to “Theism,” from Theism to Atheism, and seen the individual loneliness and helplessness that remain—a despair as to existence itself—we have pursued the course of Mr. Mill’s book. We have seen that he refuses to “follow Nature,” finding no certain “Religion” there; yet he hints a “Religion of Humanity” for those who may wish it, as unconcernedly as if he had not just before considered “Humanity” a part of Nature. We see him, then, sitting in judgment on Nature, of which he had called himself a necessary part; thus revealing how the *à priori* in his whole intelligent being was yet feeling for higher truth than mere argument could reach. Yet he goes on to deny political “Utility,” and social advantage, to “Religion,” or even to a “belief in God,” and so gives us at the close of his work an entire and acknowledged blank,—on the surface of which, nevertheless, is projected the sacred form of Jesus Christ, dimly attracting his mind and heart!

Here we must leave both the author and his work. Our task with them is done. As a logician, or even as an analyst, Mr. Mill has no place. But what is more important by far in the controversy is, that his *method* is convicted of every fallacy. It may discover, perhaps, to some that a thorough inquiry as to the *à priori* is the need of the logic of the future, since an attempted “argument” without an *à priori* is but a wrangle without a beginning, conducting to no clear rational end.

60. Mr. Spencer, for example, might reason more subtly than Mr. Mill, but he really has nothing else to say. He argues in better form, and with closer analysis. His admissions are more full and distinct; his sentiment and feeling being more refined do not so mislead him as to interfere with his logic. He sees that while he keeps to the phenomenal he is, however wrong, controversially safe. His position can only be approached from higher ground; and he is clearly aware of it. Could he not answer his own arguments?

The battle of “Atheism”—(may we not add the battle of Revelation entirely?) must be fought out, with unbeliever or with misbeliever, on the field of the *à priori*, as occupied *de facto*, and as received historically, by the Reason and Faith of Human Nature itself, in every department of its knowledge.

The possessor of Revealed Truth may take no lower ground than—"we know." It may be expressed in better words than ours:—"That which may be known of God (τὸ γνωστόν) plain in men's very selves (φανερόν ἐν αὐτοῖς). God made it plain. His unseen things (ἀόρατα), His Potentiality and Deity," (the præ-phenomenal), "are so seen of the mind as to leave men without excuse if, with knowledge so possessed, they become weakly entangled by their arguments (διαλογισμοῖς), and calling themselves philosophers lose their common understanding in total darkness." (Rom. i. 19-23.)—It is a solemn picture drawn by an apostle's hand.

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NOTE \* A (§ 5, *præc.*)

*As to the Meaning of the terms "Nature," "Natural," &c., as ascertained by "Socratic Inquiry." (See Mill, pp. 3, 4.)*

If we examine the common use of the word "Nature," and its compounds and correlatives, we can have no difficulty in arriving at its meaning; for the meaning of any word is that which men mean by it; not simply its etymological origin, though that is of literary interest.

In ordinary speech, we describe the "Nature" of a thing by selecting some distinctive feature which it has either in itself, or in common with other things which are therefore said to be of like "Nature." Every one would understand us supposing we said, "it is the *Nature* of certain vegetables to grow, if planted in the earth." We should not mean that that was a full account of them, but a distinction common to a class to which they belonged. Again, if we said, "it is the *Nature* of certain beings that they have power of locomotion"; and of others that "they remain on the same spot"; or, once more, if we spoke of it as "the *Nature* of some creatures to know their young," or "to select their proper food," and of others, (as men), "to be conscious of themselves, or know themselves," we should be very well understood. In all these instances the word "Nature" belongs not to one object exclusively, but to many.

If any particular object stood apart from all others in some determining characteristic, we might describe that characteristic as its "Nature," in order to explain its peculiarity in that respect; but even in so exceptional a case we should probably recognize that there was, in other respects, a common "Nature" associating that object with others, and we should not usually call any peculiarity the "Nature" of an object, unless it

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\* This and the following Notes are taken from the author's volume "The Church of all Ages," (*Hayes*), in which also will be found the substance of the Reply to Mill, with other discussions.

pertained to it so originally as to have come forth in it and of it, and not *ab extra*.

Such, unquestionably, is the use of the word, as elicited by any inductive inquiry ; so that by "Nature" we mean "that constitution of any beings which they have in themselves originally, and as distinguished," (says Cuvier), "from that which may be grafted on them artificially."

By this constitution they are distinguished from other beings who have a different "Nature."

When the word "Nature" is used scientifically, we may even recognize various "Natures" in the same object—various distinctions, *i.e.*, allying them with various other beings ;—as when we speak of "Human Nature," "Animal Nature," "intelligent" or "non-intelligent Natures," and the like. These distinctions may be beyond precise definition, but they are fully felt and recognized, as will readily be seen.

You observe a child of undeveloped or injured powers. Do you deny that it has human "Nature"? Surely not. Is it blind? Is it mutilated? Is it deaf? Is it dumb? Is it even defective in intellect? It may be so. But do you refuse to say that it is our human kin? Has it not still "Human Nature"? Well, then, the perfection of any individual, or the possession of certain gifts and faculties, or capacities, would not be included in the "Nature," though possibly necessary to the development, or at times to the perfection of Nature.

There is also a still more subtle use of the term "Nature," implying an ideal.

A man who has intense sympathy with his fellow-man, or with the highest efforts of the mind or skill of others, is contrasted at times with the unsympathetic and dull. They both have "human Nature," but that "Nature" is elevated towards perfection in the one and is depressed in the other, so much so at times that it absolutely degenerates. Yet, probably, the one cannot really rise above, so as to cease to be, man, nor the other sink below, so as *entirely* to lose human Nature in animal degradation.

The common, the scientific, and the philosophical uses of the term "Nature" thus are fundamentally the same ; and the mind passes from the one to the other without any strain. Qualities, capacities, potentiality, are not words that are interchangeable with the term "Nature," which describes the *sort of being* we speak of, and marks us off so far, at least ideally, from other sorts.

Nor do we confound "Nature" with "Individuality," nor with Personality. "Human Nature" is that by virtue of which we are constituted Human ; "animal Nature" is that by which we are animal. Such "Nature" in either case links us immediately with others who are in the same order. "Animal Nature" is distinguished, again, into many Individualities, each a unit, bearing that common "Nature." "Human Nature" is distinguished into many Personalities, each defined in its own Consciousness. Man treats

himself and each fellow-man as an animal "Unit," and as a conscious "Person," and as bearing a common "Nature"; and this latter in several senses.

It is certain that any other use of the word "Nature" than that which is elicited from its *ordinary* use, would mislead us, and be frequently unintelligible. All writers, both sacred and secular, in all ages, use the word thus. If they enlarge its meaning from the specific to the generic, and then speak of "Universal Nature," they do but further idealize the same truth, viz., that the Universe not only contains orders of beings, but is as a whole a great order of being.

An order of Being, whether specific, or general, or universal, has its reason and purpose included in it. "It is—because it is," and for its own end. An infraction of its order is a disarrangement as to its purpose. The "Goodness" of any "Nature" is, in the judgment of all men, its fitness for its end; its disorder is Evil, for it thwarts the end.

It is thus Cicero says, "Jus in Natura positum est" (*De Leg.*): thus "seeds of Virtue" are called "lumina Naturæ." Thus, Law is the highest Reason implanted "in Nature." Hence also the whole "Lex Naturæ," as examined by the Jurists, and thus Aristotle, ἡ φυσικὴ ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὴν κυρίαν. (*Eth.*, vi. 13.)

If again we cross examine the use of Christian writers of all ages, it is the same. St. Paul speaks of some things as "contrary to *Nature*," (meaning man's), and indentifies "Nature" in its better estate with Divine Law (Rom. i. 26; ii. 14.) St. Chrysostom contrasts the φύσιν ἀγγέλου and φύσιν ἀνθρώπου (ad Heb. ii.). St. James had contrasted the "Nature" of men, with that of wild beasts and birds (S. James iii. 7). Later on, among the Scholastics, we have "Nature" analyzed, as either "natura Naturans," (which describes the process of becoming), and "Natura naturata," (as that which is perfected); reminding us of Cicero's saying, that we may rise, "a primis inchoatisque Naturis, ad ultimas perfectasque." (*De Nat. Deo.*)

"To act according to Nature," *sequi Naturam*, if Nature be the "order of things" with its Reason in it, is the highest wisdom within our natural reach, whenever Nature itself has not been injured, or depraved. That in which all things rightly consist must be the law of the individual being everywhere. The conscious finite Being aims at this, freely.

"Goodness" being thus recognized in every "Nature" as its "fitness" to its End, it follows that there will be diversities in forms of goodness, according to various Natures, conscious or unconscious, involuntary or not, and their various ends. If indeed, we rise above the phenomenal, we have then to consider the Nature, and Goodness, of the Absolute, and Unconditioned, and Infinite; rising as our poet says, to the

"First True, first Perfect, and first Fair."

This would lead us to contemplation of the *a priori*, which cannot here be

much enlarged, though it is indispensable to the Theistic defence. The points of the inquiry must be, as to

1. The Self-existent "Being,"—as He exists in Himself; the Eternal, the Præphenomenal, the Absolute and Unconditioned, yet Ever-conscious Being.

2. The "Nature" of that Being in His relation with the Phenomenal.

3. The "Personality" of that Being, as essential Consciousness, and Life.

4. The *κωνωρία* of Consciousness and Reason in the Infinite, and in the finite.

5. The SUPERNATURAL in relation with the Natural. (See the Bampton Lectures of 1870, "On Christianity as taught by St. Paul," pp. 150-160.)

#### NOTE B.

*On the Controversy as to VOLITION, as a CAUSE in the "Unseen."*

(§ 33.)

THE Predestinarian controversialists of the last century inherited the intellectual position bequeathed by ages of speculation, and neither re-examined the data, nor carried on their argument to its ultimate conclusions. In this they were even less disposed to be philosophical and logical than the materialists who to a certain extent felt with them.

With some, the argument began with the assumption of the Divine knowledge, as essential to the Governor of the Universe, who could not be thought to rule supremely without knowledge of His Universal Dominion.

As the phenomenal Universe was not supposed to be co-eternal with its Creator—for that would be a contradiction—it was concluded that the Divine knowledge was Fore-knowledge. It preceded all phenomenal being; and as all phenomenal being was originated by the Supreme, He first determined what He would originate. His choice preceded His creative act, and was equivalent to predestination.

With other reasoners, Predestination was put as the first thought of the Supreme Governor, and Fore-knowledge as the consequence of the Eternal Design as to the future of the Universe. There were a few more subtle thinkers who declined to acknowledge either "before or after" in the Eternal mind. These were dazzled by the old Eleatic ontology, and without thinking thoroughly to the end of the old theory that the Eternal has no continuity, were content with the apparent sublimity of the old philosophy of the Absolute; and they soon subsided into the use of the common terminology of Predestination and Fore-knowledge. All the subdivisions of the party of "Divine decrees" conceived that the honour of God was concerned in the vindication of the certainty beforehand of all the phenomenal future; and they all popularly spoke of it as "ordered" and governed by a fixed plan from Eternity.

None would face the fact, that if the so-called "predestining" had always been, and so had been co-eternal in the mind of the Eternal—never

had a beginning, then it was no voluntary decision or act of God, but was equivalent to the fate of the Stoics. It was useless to call it a choice, if it had been always settled. To extend this kind of Destiny to the Universe was to displace all Theism, and affirm Pantheism. God was no First Agent in any free sense ; His action was necessity. If His first acting, so also His subsequent acting. His "governing" the phenomenal Universe was but nominal—merely a mode of speech equivalent to saying that everything happens according to Eternal plan. The plan was His because co-existent with Himself—so that He never conceived it *de novo*, never originated it, but only worked in it as the involuntary centre of an Eternal mechanism.

Another line of thought seemed for a moment to be possible to a few. God having always the design of the phenomenal future of the Universe, in every detail, unalterably within Him, created by necessity all the phenomena, together with certain necessary sub-causes, limiting Himself to the direction or sustaining of those causes, and in that sense "governing" the world. But this will not vindicate any really personal action for the Deity, since all His direction of the created sub-causes must, according to the predestining scheme, be fixed beforehand.

The object of the Religious predestinarians was to get rid of the idea of "Contingency" and "Will" from the human mind as arrogant and even profane.

"Contingency I leave to infidels," was the earnest disclaimer of one of the best and most eloquent of the deniers of "Free-will" ; not perceiving that free election or choice was thus denied to God as well as man ; nor seeing that there really is no alternative but Contingency or Pantheism. It was seen by such writers as Dr. Priestley that "Philosophical Necessity," as he termed it, stretching back into the eternal past, and onward into the everlasting future, was Materialism in another form.

The Predestinarians failed, however, in another way to think out their subject. They used the words "Eternal" and "Everlasting" as at times the same ; yet applying the former rather to the past and the latter to the future. God alone was "Eternal," but the creatures formed by Him, or some of them, were to be "everlasting." There was no co-eternal creature, but there was a co-everlasting. New confusions of thought were here involved. To conceive that Being *before* Time might not be "continuous Being," was not possible ; and to conceive of Being *after* Time as "lasting" was to assign "before and after" to the Creator as well as creature, and to conceive Him as "continuous" in the future, if not in the past, thus changing the unchangeable. Then new distinctions as to "Existence" and "Duration" were revived, and the controversy seemed on the way back to the schools, and the old philosophy ; when it came to an abrupt close, for want of an Ontology which should distinguish the absolute from the conditioned, the *à priori* from the phenomenal. (See the Bampton Lectures of 1870, pp. 168, &c.)

No one, of course, attributed immutability to the Phenomenal Universe; it was in many ways at all times changing. But the phenomenal past still exists, the predestinarian would say, in the mind of God; the phenomenal future is also, in some other way, in the Divine mind. "It could not be otherwise"; the phenomenal present holding a middle and transitory position. But past, present, and future, it was said, are equally real, and only differ to man's limited consciousness. This, however, almost anticipated the view of modern Materialism. It is a doctrine of Philosophical "Conservation" of Being, which amounts to the Eternity of the Universe, or the conditioning of the absolute with a necessity of phenomenal creation.

We have thus sketched the intellectual side of the Predestinarian philosophy of the last three centuries,—a philosophy bound to the Phenomenal and essentially Materialist. Making Predestination Eternal, it made God a necessary Agent, and the Phenomenal Universe bound to Him, in the past in one mode, in the present in another mode, in the future in another mode, or possibly many others. To affirm the certainty of all things in the Phenomenal Universe, and ground that on the very nature of God who is eternal, is a kind of Pantheism. It is a doctrine of a God without free action, and a future (phenomenal or not) latent in Him as a certainty to work itself out.

To conclude this part of our examination.

We have seen the Argument which professed to magnify God as our Divine "Ruler" ending in a denial of God; and we can but conclude that that Argument has been all wrong throughout. It even becomes a *reductio ad absurdum*, from the Theistical point of view. The real problem is, that which it was the one mighty aim of the schools to grapple with; viz., What is the relation of the Phenomenal to the Præ-phenomenal or Absolute? It is in this form only that this ancient controversy can be rationally disposed of.

It remains that we briefly indicate the principle of the Solution.

1. Every Conscious being compares his own reflections with Reason, more or less distinctly discerned, as *more than himself*; and the more he persists in "thinking reasonably," and so satisfying *himself*, the more does he recognize an external Reason which he expects other men also to recognize in dealing with him. (Secs. 25, 52.)

2. This external Reason is not ultimately disputable; it lies, therefore, beyond the region of open debate or argument. But the perception of it is unequal in different conscious beings, and at different times. Even in detailed application or use it may vary at times,—the conscious agent being imperfect, or the phenomenal conditions distracting; but it is reached after, and only satisfied by the recognition of other conscious agents. It may be, and ought to be, called by every one his own opinion, reason, or judgment; but it is held as Right *in se*, by all who would be right.

3. This external Reason, Right, or Good, is what is meant, (though not all that is meant), by the Absolute, the Præ-phenomenal. Just as there are

certain numerical proportions pervading (as Kepler saw, and all now see) the physical Universe, so, in the sphere of conscious agency, there is a ground and substance for thought, antecedent to our thought; not a method laid down as by command, but a reality which is to be directly discerned by us.

4. This previous Reason, or *à priori*, is found in relation with all conscious agency. We cannot put ourselves out of willing relation with it without self-disquiet, and at times a sense that we are wrong. We are conscious that we *ought* to be in relation with the previous Reason of things. All conscious agents should be, and tend to be; and they judge one another accordingly. We feel that if there were a Supreme Conscious being as Judge of all, He too would "judge according to right."

5. The Phenomenal Universe points to Præ-phenomenal Being and Life,—

"SPRINGS of life, and thought, and motion,  
Here are mysteries all unread;—  
Even passion's dark commotion  
Has some secret FOUNTAIN-HEAD."

Consciousness points also, as a kind of LIFE, to præ-phenomenal Consciousness; still in Relation with Reason. Many kinds of LIFE, however, seem to be indicated as præ-phenomenal; but they are variously limited in their direction and operation, and are sometimes unconscious. The highest kinds of Life, even conscious Life, require preceding conscious Life.

6. THE ETERNAL LIFE—the Ever-Living One—is the præ-phenomenal Being in whom is previous Consciousness in relation with Absolute Reason only, and distinct altogether from the Phenomena. His knowledge, essentially considered, is not phenomenal, but absolute and preceding the Universe, and essentially beyond relation to the Universe. His knowledge in Himself is absolute, and that in its essentiality is beyond our knowledge as a formal conception. When He places us in relation with Himself by an act prior to the knowledge of finite consciousness, we know Him as far as He is pleased to reveal Himself. When He works in the sphere of the phenomenal, He makes conscious finite agents subworkers with Him, freely tending towards præ-phenomenal Reason and Good. He fixes some things, leaves others unfixed, but is never made part of His own phenomena, in the past, present, or future, as Predestinarianism, Materialism, and Fatalism alike *would make HIM*. Much of the error latent in the Eleatic philosophy is traceable also to a confusion of the Phenomenal and the Absolute. (See the *Analysis of Human Responsibility*, § 60, Vol. IV. of the *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*.)

7. The same confusion pervades the modern views advocated by Mr. Spencer, and is only to be cleared by the analysis above suggested. Mr. Spencer seems at present to be endeavouring to bring himself to maintain that the *à priori*, being of course anterior to the argumentative processes of the conscious agent is "unthinkable" and "unknowable."

Dean Mansel's somewhat unhappy nomenclature in his discussion of what he termed "regulative truth," encouraged a similar way of speaking. This is assuming that the "conditioned" is all, and the unconditioned is no object of thought or knowledge, because it is not like the phenomenal subject to demonstration. It is pure *petitio*, that the knowable and the phenomenal are co-extensive. The process of argument, on the contrary, always implies impersonal reason, (except in the case of a man who would convince another of his own opinion, because it is *his own opinion*, and not because it is reasonable or right *per se*): and if impersonal reason, as an abstraction, ultimately implies personal consciousness of Reason, there is an end to the ambiguous assertion as to the "unknowable," and the double sense of the term "unthinkable"; some *à priori* being indispensable to the entire Reasoning process, which no metaphysician could suppose to be carried on simply by means of "collective terms," bringing the phenomena into ideal relation—(as Mr. Mill seemed to say, § 19, &c.).

To speak of the Eternal, and the First Cause, as "unknowable," while admitting His being, as Cause and Reason, as Mr. Spencer, and indeed his kind of "science" seems to do, (and speak even some *Religio* towards Him), is in the name of knowledge to deny the very ground and *sine quâ non* of all knowledge. It is one thing to say "that we could not by searching find out God" through mere argument; and to say that we do not "know" the Essential ONE, in whom alone we live and move and think. To say the latter is a contradiction in terms; but we must not confound all knowledge" with formal conceptions.\*

#### NOTE C (§ 46).

##### *On Life; and Professor Tyndall's Views of the Origin of Motion and Organization.*

PROFESSOR TYNDALL'S views, like Mr. Mill's, are a kind of Reaction from imperfect Christian Philosophy. The tendency of Calvinistic Puritanism in all its forms—whether as found in the ancestry of Mr. Mill or Professor Tyndall, is to Rationalism; as the more thoughtful of the "Evangelical" leaders fully recognize. This may account in some degree for his sensitiveness under the rebukes administered to him in the name of Science at times, and in the name of Philosophy and Religion yet more frequently. But a thorough inquirer ought not to shrink from thoroughness on the part of those who differ from him. To conduct people to the edge of the precipice of Atheism and prepare for the last leap, and then complain that some start back and say that it is a precipice, is scarcely fair; but to complain of being persecuted,—"begrimed" and "spattered," as he calls it, is somewhat worse.

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\* See *Collegii Sancti Thomæ Complutensis in octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Questiones*, 1719; and comp. *S. Thomæ Compendium Theologicæ*.

In the Sixth Series of the *Science Lectures for the People* (No. I. p. 12), Professor Tyndall indicates what he calls "the positions of the opposing hosts" in the following terms:—

"From the processes of Crystallization you pass by almost imperceptible gradations to the lowest vegetable organisms, and from these, through higher ones, up to the highest. . . . One class of thinkers regard the observed advance from the Crystalline through the Vegetable and Animal worlds as an unbroken process of natural growth, thus grasping the world inorganic and organic as one vast and indissolubly connected whole; the other class suppose that the passage from the inorganic to the organic required a distinct creative act," &c.

It will be noticed in this representation of the position of the "two opposing hosts," that the former is said to be one of "*regarding an observed advance*," and the other a "*supposing a creative act*." The very reverse is the true state of the case. The Christian philosopher and man of science "observe" that in no known instance is there "an advance" from pure "Crystalline" to the "Vegetable," nor an advance of the Vegetable into the Animal; but only that they stand in order, each above the other, and *not* each procreating the other. No instance of such "advance," in this active sense has been observed. The followers of Professor Tyndall "suppose" that there is, or may be. Theirs is the pure "supposition." Ours is the simple "observation" of the facts. Theirs is the imagining of a "vast and indissolubly connected whole," and to say the least it is premature. Ours, as yet, is the ground of "science."

But surely the *animus* of such a sentence as this, calling his own "supposition" by the name of "observation," and our "observation" by the name of "supposition," is very discreditable on the part of a writer who was professing truthfully to state the case and position of two opposing sides. Truthfulness is the primary virtue of philosophy; and so-called science cannot do well without it.

Professor Tyndall begins, in the passage above quoted, with Crystallization. But even here his "Push" and "Pull" will not suffice. To complete our view at all, however, let us look a little farther back.

At present, the ultimate particles of matter are called "atoms." These differ in their capacity of combination:—one atom of chlorine combines with one of hydrogen; one atom of oxygen with two of hydrogen; one atom of nitrogen with three of hydrogen; one atom of carbon with four of hydrogen. Whether the term "capacity" is the best term to express the facts, depends on its being taken passively, and in connection with that *affinity* of atoms which assists their chemical combination. Whether this capacity, or this affinity, are to be considered aboriginal in the atom, or subsequent conditions, would need to be determined: the molecule being a kind of aggregate of atoms. The atoms forming each molecule in a gaseous state are of the same nature. When atoms pass from the gaseous to the fluid state, or from fluid to solid, they arrange

themselves symmetrically, more or less perfectly, as what we call crystals ; and, as Mr. Mitchell says, in his admirable paper (Vol. II. of the *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, p. 381), these, when ultimately reduced, may be grouped in six distinct classes or systems, with innumerable possible "combinations of different species of these forms which may take place in any individual crystal."

The "crystalline phenomena" thus indicate a series of previous changes and occult causations hitherto but imperfectly explored ; and other phenomena present themselves, evidently in accordance with fixed laws. We cannot begin with Crystalline forms as though we knew all about them, as our starting-point. We touch not the cause in any case, but only, in some degree, the mode.

Now the problem for "both sides" is this,—How to think of the real causation? "Mechanical causes" can be only instruments, some way fitted for their purpose;—but how?

An inferior kind of "life" may be conceived to act mechanically ; but then it must be subordinate to *higher* direction of some kind. That higher direction or guidance may be greatly diversified. There seems to be no more reason against various kinds of "Life" than against various kinds of atoms.\* The Theist needs not the supposition of the direct action of Deity wherever life begins to move. There may have been a variety of sub-causes of an unconscious kind, each gifted to do its one work ; and a variety of other causes of higher kinds, with graduated conscious energy ; and of these originators, or conscious energies, the highest would be the Conscious Agent capable of acting or abstaining—willing or not willing.

On the other hand, the Eternal Life, or First of all Causes, Whose Eternal CONSCIOUSNESS is His Personality, may be believed with equal reasonableness to concentrate His consciousness or personality at any point of His Phenomenal Universe (Psalm xxxiv. 18, and cxlv. 18) ; as, according to the poet's words, there is,

"To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,  
He fills, He bounds, sustains, and orders all."

In the discussion which ensued, the following took part :—the Rev. Sir T. M. Lushington Tilson, Bart. ; Messrs. J. E. Howard, F.R.S., H. Coleman, LL.D., W. Melmoth Walters, E. Charlesworth, E. H. Pickersgill, and the Chairman. The Rev. Dr. Irons having replied,

The meeting was then adjourned.

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(\* See *Victoria Transactions*, especially Vol. VI. p. 296, &c., and VII. p. 137 and 162, in reply to Darwin *On Life* and Tyndall *On Science*, &c.)