

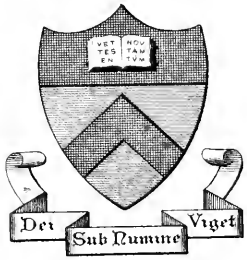
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LECTURES

ON

THEORETICAL ETHICS.

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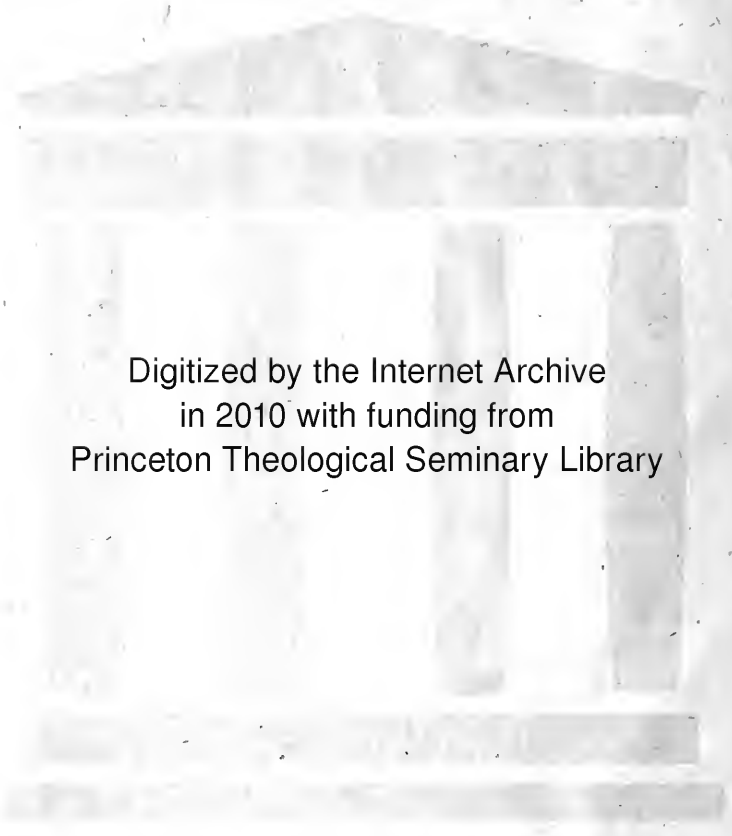
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# LECTURES

—ON—

# THEORETICAL ETHICS.

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## NOTES

TAKEN IN THE CLASS-ROOM OF

Edward John  
DR. HAMILTON.

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TRENTON, N. J.:

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# THEORETICAL ETHICS.

## LECTURE I.

THEORETICAL ETHICS is a *difficult* branch and can be mastered only by attentive study. Practical ethics pertains to those moral laws which are very commonly known and appreciated by all mankind. But great difficulties arise when we attempt to give *reasons* for these common modes of action, because we enter a metaphysical realm. We must go out of ourselves and look at our own lives and actions, making two beings, as it were, of one. In Ethics, man, as the creature and doer of duty, looks at himself in the light of God's law. He becomes, as it were, three beings: (1) The moral agent; (2) moral agent, looking at himself; (3) a philosophical agent, looking from above over all. While it is difficult, we can make some progress and can disprove Sidney Smith's saying: "All metaphysical studies are absurd, and its students are like men who try to look down their own throat by aid of a lighted candle."

### I. DEFINITION OF THE SCIENCE NECESSARY.

(1) *We must specialize field of study.* Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics, made his sphere too large. Aristotle said the end of practical wisdom was happiness. The perfect man chose a *mean* in everything and avoided extremes. This is too general, and shows that among the Greeks the moral sense was not very strong.

(2) *For avoidance of obscurity and confusion.* The scholastic theologians made a mistake in not separating ethics from theology. Some Scotch writers go over the whole of human nature, all of which is indeed concerned in duty, but in

reading their works we find great difficulty to know in what way some of their discussions bear upon Ethics.

(3) *For rejection of error:* Any system which does not include and account for all Ethical phenomena is incomplete and useless.

## II. VARIOUSLY DEFINED.

Ethics according to—

Birks,=*Science of Ideal Humanity.*

Wayland,=*Science of Moral Law.*

Bascom,=*Science of Duty.*

Whewell,=*Science of Rights and Obligations.*

Calderwood,=*Science of Moral Actions, of Moral Natures and Moral Relations.*

## III. HAMILTON—SCIENCE OF MORAL LIFE.

(1) *Science.* Exact, complete and systematic knowledge and laws of any department of existence. Science is not any more true than ordinary knowledge.

(2) *Life.* This word has not a distinct meaning in modern languages. We might define: Life, the possession and exercise of a certain kind or class of powers. We divide life into—(a) Organic and (b) Psychical. The Organic again divides into animal and vegetable life. Thus we have three ideas under the one word.

The Greeks had three words: βίος, βίωτης: Latin, vita, life of man, his rational life. Ζωή: applied to animal life, corporeal. φυτόν (φυτόν, plant,) life of a plant. Latin, fui; English, to be.

These three kinds of life were granted three words in ancient languages, but not in our English tongue. There is a community of nature between vegetable and animal life, but psychical life differs from both.

(3) *Moral Life.*—Man's life as rational, may be considered in different ways. We speak of his "individual," "social," "political," "domestic" and "religious" life.



Moral life.—The rational life of man, so far as it results from the consideration and perception of the distinction between right and wrong.

#### IV. REAL DEFINITION.

(1) This is a *real definition* and not a *nominal* one, and in this lies its importance and value. The distinction between “real” and “nominal” comes from the Schoolmen, and has been noticed by many.

*Whateley.* W. says, the “*nominal*” explains the idea of a thing and the “*real*” explains the thing itself. *Answer:* But we explain a thing and also the idea; we cannot separate “real” and “nominal” in this way.

*Locke* explained “real” and “nominal” in connection with his *two essences*. “Nominal” essence, that of which we have a conception; the name of a thing expresses its nominal essence. But he says in all substantial essences there are many things about which we know nothing. In a “nominal” definition we have only a part of the essence, while in a “real” we have the whole thing as known to the mind of God.

*Mill.* Every true definition, whatever it may be of, may be viewed in *two* lights—

1. Analytic, explanatory, giving us clear understanding of some word or idea, *nominal*.

2. Along with the nominal there may be other definitions which not only explain the nature of a thing, but make us feel that there are real things, to which the “nominal” definitions refer.

(2) *Moral beings and their lives are real things.*

(3) *Tests for results.*—Our definition being “real,” it will furnish such a test. Any theory which lands us in doctrines without any morals is *false*. Every investigation must square its results with the teachings of common sense.

## V. VALUE OF ETHICAL STUDIES.

- (1) They exhibit to us the highest form of life and being.  
 (2) Call for the keenest exercise of intellect. (3) Aid to a right determination of one's personal life. (4) Prepare for a satisfactory understanding of the most important sciences.  
 Ethics, the highest plane of purely human thought.
- 

## LECTURE II.

## Problems, Methods, Theories.

- I. Theoretical Ethics, philosophy of moral life.  
 II. Method Necessary.  
 III. Three General Theories.

- (1) Egoism. (2) Utilitarianism. (3) Intuitionism.

I. Being the *philosophy of moral life*, it treats four classes of phenomena: these pertain to—

1. (a) Moral conceptions and the thinkings of men.

(b) The animus of the soul in seeking the right and doing it, and avoiding the wrong. The *animus*, the desires of the soul in aiming at moral ends, must be included in this science.

(c) The moral actions which the soul performs and the moral ends which it seeks and accomplishes.

(d) Man's feelings, in view of the moral conduct of himself and others; feelings of approbation and disapprobation towards ourselves and others.

2. Moral conceptions to be studied first and most:

(a) The *animus* is practically first. Herein lies virtue and vice. But conceptions are philosophically first.

(b) They *explain* the rest. The other parts thus become plain and easy. The *animus* will always be explained by

the *aim*. The actions of moral life are those with which the intellect of man is most constantly concerned.

(c) The *principal controversies* concern the nature of the moral law. This is not the divine law, but the law written on the heart of man.

(d) *Two fundamental questions* :

(a) What is the essential matter of the law? Of what substance can moral rightness be predicated?

(β) What is that moral rightness, and what makes it obligatory upon moral beings? What are the peculiar characteristics of this *rightness* and "obligatoriness"?

## II. METHOD NECESSARY.

1. (a) Even in the simplest undertaking in life.

(b) This is especially true when one part of the work conditions those which follow, when the work is *progressive*.

(c) Most of all, in delicate investigations of philosophy. We want to find the right method, then we shall have a clue.

2. Two methods in philosophy—analytic and synthetic.

(a) Only prominent parts of philosophical method in general are indicated by these terms.

(b) Not to be confounded with analysis and synthesis. These two are absolutely inseparable in all philosophical progress.

(c) Analytic method starts with analysis and not synthesis. It begins with individual facts and ascends to specific, generic and *supremum genus* when possible.

Synthetic takes ready-made principles and deduces important truths.

(d) Only those sciences admit of the Synthetic method whose principles have been fully and clearly ascertained—such as mathematics. Those sciences embraced under *law* may be synthetic also.

3. Which method in Ethics?

Two departments here:

(a) *Practical*; here we may use the *synthetic* method. We may assume some things which *Common Sense* approves. Hence synthesis may be used in practical ethics. We cannot theoretically construct a whole system of ethics, we must consult human needs, natures, and experience.

(b) *Theoretical*; here we must adhere rigidly to the analytic method or bring confusion into our system.

### III. THREE GENERAL THEORIES.

#### 1. *Egoism or Selfism.*

Here the moral life arises from the pursuit of one's own happiness, and we use the term Hedonists, although this may contain a slander.

(a) Epicurus did not make pleasure the supreme end of life; he had a higher end, viz., happiness.

(b) Paley. Do good to men. Deny present gratification for our future and everlasting happiness.

#### 2. *Utilitarianism.*

(a) Spencer contrasts Egoism and Altruism. There is or might be a reason according to which it may be our duty to devote ourselves wholly to the good and happiness of others. This doctrine never existed except in his philosophy.

(b) Aristotle makes the chief good happiness, and we obtain this by choosing a "golden mean" in all things.

(c) Bentham. Greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(d) Jonathan Edwards. The great, the universal duty—Love of Being as such, greatest love to God as greatest being, and special love to virtuous beings.

(e) These systems are unsatisfactory. We cannot identify the right with what is useful.

3. *Intuitionism.*—No conscious process in the perception of moral truth.

(a) A-priori, truths are eternal and immediately perceived by the mind.

(b) Empirical—so called because it does not attempt to analyze the well-known specific laws of morality. It appeals

immediately to man's experience and practical judgment.  
The Older Scotch School.

(c) Analytical. This accepts the teachings of practical reason and seeks to draw from them a deep and broad philosophy which may comprehend and explain them all.

Dr. McCosh invites us to this last method, for he teaches that "the intuitions of the mind" should be inductively examined.

### LECTURE III.

#### Man's Motive Constitution.

*First*—Man's Natural Constitution.

*Second*—Man's Moral Faculty.

#### I. Man's natural constitution apart from morality.

(1) *Man seeks many ends, not one end under many forms.* Butler says selfishness is the suicide of self-love. Self-love seeks happiness of man, but selfishness defeats its own ends.

(2) *We naturally and directly seek gratification for others as well as for ourselves*—even though great selfishness exists in the world. Man is not wholly a selfish being. Sympathy is a natural result. Illustration: Story of Robert and Maggie.

(3) *The ends of desire or motivity always include the realization of some psychical result.* Every human desire aims at some psychical result, some kind of spiritual gratification. Even Instinct seeks such ends. The instinct of an animal desires some useful result without the knowledge of the animal. Bees build hexagonal cells because of some pleasure in doing so. A hen on eggs has a natural gratification but no brood of chickens, before her mind. When we rise from instincts to appetites we seek some psychical result, *e. g.*, removal of hunger. When we rise from appetites to propensities we

must always have a personal experience in view. He who seeks for power would hold the reins.

(4) *Reason constructs ends on the basis of other ends which present themselves without rational thought.*

What Butler says of self-interest is true of all the rational motives of man. Man is capable of many kinds of gratification. The benevolent man seeks to relieve suffering and advance the best interests of the human race. The structure of man's nature is like the classes in society, the upper rest upon the lower.

(5) *Reason modifies the other motives of man by conforming them to her own ends, and assigns them grades among each other.* Reason without giving morality to ends may rationalize them, and this is the great difference between brute and human affections.

Reason has ends of her own, takes the lead, and assigns to all other motives their proper places.

## II. ANALOGICAL CONJECTURES.

The Moral faculty.

(1) This may have *peculiar ends* of its own, differing from all others. If self-love and benevolence each has its own end, the moral faculty may have its own end also.

(2) It may *construct* these after and *upon other ends*—other and lower ends. This would make the moral faculty analogous to common reason.

(3) It may have *psychical results* as essential parts of its ends.

(4) It may *regulate* life by requiring *conformity* and subordination to itself in seeking its own ends. In some systems the conscience is wholly *regulative*. But it has ends of its own, and also regulates.

(5) It may, intellectually speaking, be a very *high faculty*, and that showing the greatest practical wisdom. Natural reason is comprehensive, looking into the future and organizing the ends of man. So moral reason may=wisdom, the highest form of which is found in God alone.

## LECTURE IV.

## Ends or Final Cause.

How is an end a cause?

Only as the conception of the end may be causative. An end, the last of a thing; but here we speak of that which exists at or before the very beginning of a work and continues throughout the whole course. There may be a final cause, as in the case of ten billiard balls lying in contact—number *nine* gives final cause of motion to ball number *ten*. But we do not mean this.

We speak of a cause, which is a result and of a consummation which is a cause. One of these must be figurative, and since the cause cannot be, the end must. The same thing is set forth in these terms in two lights. We shall consider it in each light:

I. Final cause is the more literal expression.

(1) These causes may literally exist, and are then the motive conceptions of the mind—those which lead us to enter upon any plan of work or procedure. A “final” cause entered the heart of Columbus and carried him to the end of his work.

(2) They do not in themselves have any efficiency, and are to be distinguished from efficient causes. This distinction is made and unmade by Aristotle. He illustrated his *four* causes by a statue: *Material*, the marble; *formal*, the beautiful form; *efficient*, mental skill and muscular aptness of the sculptor; *final*, desire of fame and production of an object of beauty. This beginning must be approved, but when Aristotle goes on to apply his doctrine of causes, he becomes confused, and instead of four different causes he gives us *four* which all partake more or less of the “efficient cause.” The material and formal have a tendency, naturally, to unite; back of these is the efficient, which keeps these moving. Final cause is back of all these, and gives useful ends to all the different operations of the universe.

(3) In what sense may we speak of final causes and their causality? The modern doctrine of cause is not *simply* that of an efficient agency, but of that agent considered as combined and united with all the different conditions which are necessary to the actual production of the phenomenon. *Illustration:* Cannon discharging solid shot. We may say that the motion of the ball lay in the explosive nature of the powder, but we would have to take in also the structure of the gun, position of ball, powder to be ignited, etc. We often speak of many things as causes, besides that thing in which the efficiency resides.

Then a condition may be spoken of as a cause, because necessary to the final result: *e. g.*, a boiler explodes because there is a lack of water in it; here the want of water is only the condition necessary to the overheating of the boiler; and in this way we speak of *Final* causes.

II. *We often speak of an object as an end, and not of the conception of the object as a final cause.* We speak of cause as of something in the mind, but of end as of something which attracts mind to it.

(1) An end does not literally exist. It is an ideal object, not real, but to be realized. *Illustration:* Napoleon's object was to be Emperor of France and Dictator of Europe. But after he became Emperor this was an end no longer.

Moral law—a collection of practical ideas which the human mind employs and uses for its own ends.

All these ideas of imagination are constructed by the mind from elements obtained from the cognition of things in the actual world, and they look to a consummation in man's present or future life.

(2) Ends are objects characterized *ab extra*, yet each also as having a nature of its own. When one thing corresponds to another that thing must correspond to the first.

*Story*—Sorely smitten, soft young man in Hanover College.

(3) Strictly, every end is an *ultimate* object of pursuit. The very definition involves this. Some distinguish between



ultimate and proximate ends, but this is of no radical importance. Ethics mentions proximate or mediate ends only to say they are not the objects of its discussions, save as connected with true or ultimate ends.

## LECTURE V.

### Moral Actions.

Actions constitute an important part of moral life. The moral law is a collection of practical conceptions which man is bound to realize in action.

I. *Actions in general* are of the following varieties: For the human mind has power to expand the conceptions embodied in words. "Man is mortal," includes not only man, but every woman, child, etc. Human language tends towards the expansion or contraction of our ideas.

(1) *A mere exercise of power.* This is the simplest and most radical idea—*e. g.*, the boy runs, wind blows. But there is no action which does not produce some result, otherwise we would contradict the doctrine of the "conservation of energy." We may call these actions *intransitive*.

(2) *An exercise of power so as to produce a result*—*e. g.*, fire hardens clay. This has in it, as an essential part, the effectuation of a result. These we may call *transitive*—passing of a power from the agent to the thing acted upon.

(3) *An intentional exercise of power* so as to produce a result. We say the orator addressed the people. Here there is an enlargement of our conception, and we take into consideration the *intention had in view* in the effectuation of a result.

Here we may also class all those actions where a person endeavors to effect an end and fails or misses his aim. Hence we say there is an attemptive as well as an effective action—*e. g.*, hunter wounding bird. Such actions fully

agree and coincide with intentional actions as far as the intentions and resolutions of man to perform go. Hence these occupy an important place in human and divine law. A man endeavoring to do his duty is reckoned guiltless though he fail, as a pilot or engineer.

*desiderative* (4) An intentional doing of something from a given animus or motivity. We think of the life of some conquerors, and say it was full of ambitious actions, or that of a philanthropist full of benevolent actions. Hence, from the spirit, we class actions as "base," "honorable," "ignoble," and "interested" actions.

Actions, therefore, are *intransitive, transitive, intentional, desiderative*. These different classes are not so distinguished as that the same radical activity can not belong to two, or even all four, at once.

An intransitive action is so called because of that particular view and conception which the mind takes of it, and not of its own intrinsic nature.

The same is true of transitive actions. Hence a transitive action is often founded upon and has an intransitive aspect. Sometimes transitive actions may be conceived of as intransitive. But we can not make an intransitive action the object of an intentional doing.

The intentional embraces less than the desiderative.

The desiderative is founded upon the intentional. The intentional is the desiderative viewed in a more limited light. We are not acquainted with a man's motives, and hence we may consider an action merely intentional. The desiderative is related to the intentional as the transitive is to the intransitive.

## II. MORAL ACTIONS.

(1) No action is moral simply as an exercise of power, or even as effectuating a result—e. g., the wind blows. In order to have a moral character they must have some relation to a rational being. Story—Johnnie Schoonmaker.

(2) Every moral action, fully considered, is both the intentional and the desiderative effectuation of a result, or at least an intentional and desiderative attempt. Moral action is not always the actual effectuation of a result. An attempted assassination would make the man an assassin, even though he failed. The moral action includes the intention and *peculiar animus*.

(3) Actions as morally right and wrong are merely intentional, but as virtuous and vicious they are desiderative also. An action may be right while yet it is not virtuous. A man who is honest because honesty is the best policy does right, but he is only a politic and selfish man. A wrong action can not be done without a vicious animus, though a right action may be done without a virtuous animus. Any wrong action is the intentional effectuation of what is bad—the words used to denote wrong acts carry with them an idea of viciousness.

(4) The word “intentional” here signifies either intentionable or intended at least, or they could have no place or care in a moral law. Irish policeman threatens one for breaking an *unknown* law.

No action can have a moral nature which is not actually or possibly related to the understanding of a moral being.

(5) We should distinguish between what is absolutely and divinely right and what is humanly or relatively so. This will clear up difficulties and perplexities. Men sometimes looked upon slavery as divine. So, in consequence of human infirmity, what is absolutely wrong may be relatively right, and *vice versa*.

LECTURE VI. *omit***Moral Reason or Conscience.**

To understand moral laws and actions we should understand the nature of the Moral Faculty, and this, in itself, is worthy of study. We shall consider *first*—the nature of its operations, and *second*—its principal products.

The *faculty* may be viewed under *three lights* and under *three names*. No study throws more light on our ideas than the careful study of synonyms. It is very seldom, indeed, that two words or names are completely synonymous.

(1) *Conscience*—*conscientia*—*συνείδησις*. If we viewed only its etymological meaning we would find it=*consciousness*=concomitant knowing, and indeed originally among the Scholastics conscience did mean consciousness. The idea of a concomitant knowledge may have a two-fold meaning. Man has thoughts, desires, feelings, but he can also observe these as they flow along. Then there is another concomitant knowledge which follows and exists together with other states—*e. g.*, beautiful young maiden pleasing a company and *conscious* of it. This adds a new and different meaning to the word. Now conscience is rather of the latter kind; for, knowing our lives we may also know them in their moral relations.

(2) *Moral sense*—a power of cognition accompanied by a power of feeling, yet not merely the result of feelings. The Latin word, *sentio*, indicates that cognition which takes place in connection with feeling.

In English the first and simple meaning of *sense* is seen when we contrast it with intellect. Then sense signifies sense perception. Used in a higher meaning it loses almost entirely all idea of feeling—*e. g.*, a man of good sense.

The Greek word—*αισθησις*—gives us the intellectual character in stronger form. *Æsthetics*=that exercise and judgment of taste by which we discover the elements of

beauty and have a corresponding feeling. The Germans give it a wider significance and include morals. The truth to be noted is that it is the peculiar quality of moral perceptions to rouse within us feelings which correspond to the nature of the actions contemplated.

(3) *Right or Moral Reason*—is the best term philosophically when properly restricted. It is so called not because it is any more *right* than any other *reason*. Right Reason is directed toward moral rightness.

Limitations—(a) Reason has an intuitive as well as a discursive mode. Some men look upon it only as the discursive power.

*Locke*. Reason—that faculty of intelligence whereby man and his intellect is distinguished from the brute and his intelligence.

*Hamilton*. Reason—that comprehending and penetrating power of the human intellect whereby it is enabled to have a complete and satisfactory knowledge of things. It may be exercised synthetically or analytically.

(b) Reason may be motive as well as intellectual. Mere thought has no motivity, but the soul has motivity and it is a condition of the soul's motivity that it should have thought.

If we allow, then, that the soul has moral motivities, we can easily enlarge and amplify the meaning of reason. Hence, *Moral or Right Reason* is the best term for our moral faculty.

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## LECTURE VII.

### The Conceptions of the Moral Reason.

These are distinguished from those of the Speculative Reason in being Motive, hence, the Moral Reason may be considered a particular development of the Practical Reason.

I. *Moral ends*. Some ethical systems speak of *ends* almost

exclusively. Egoism or Epicureanism has an end of personal ease or pleasure. When we rise to *Utilitarianism* the end is very prominent, though here not a personal end but the *welfare* of *all* who are affected by our actions—"greatest good of the greatest number."

Other systems look almost exclusively to *actions*. Alexander, in his moral science, gives almost no reference to moral ends. He says our desires and motivations have a moral character, but makes no mention of ends as having a moral character.

*Both these errors* are to be avoided. Moral actions involve ends—they are the intentional effectuation of a result. The doctrine of ends is absolutely necessary, but a system looking to ends alone is defective. Moral ends are an important class of conceptions formulated by the Moral Reason.

The end of *punitive justice* is the rebuke of sin, the maintenance of law, the establishment and continuance of God's moral government over rational beings.

II. *Actions, or doings, as right and wrong—and hence positively and negatively obligatory.* Some actions are in themselves true and ultimate moral ends.

Actions are right or wrong, *per se* or *essentiam*, and *per accidens* or *consequens*. Simply stated, some actions are inherently, necessarily and eternally right and wrong, but others are right and wrong only from surrounding circumstances. This divides right and obligatory actions from one another, and does not divide right and obligatory from those which are not right and obligatory. Those actions which in their full development are essentially wrong may be contracted and include actions which are not wrong *per se*. Many actions are right *per se*, and only by a special contraction of view can a part of them *per accidens* be deemed right. Ordinary business transactions may take on a moral character.

III. *Moral agents and their desires and doings as obligated or bound.* We now speak of actions as due or obligated in

addition to being right or wrong. The agent and his actions and desires cannot be separated in reality. But we may separate and speak of them by abstraction.

That which primarily binds is the moral end, that which is primarily bound is the moral desire. There may be cases of duty where a man can do nothing, still it is his duty to *desire* to do that duty.

Actions are due or bound as effective or conducive to the moral end. The same action in different relations is either right and obligatory, or obligated and bound. To speak of an action as right and obligatory is not the same as to speak of it as due and bound.

As actions and desires are simply abstract ways of considering persons as acting and desiring, the ultimate truth may be expressed by saying that the person is bound to do or to desire.

IV. *We conceive of human character, life and conduct as virtuous or as vicious.* The conceptions already discussed pertain directly to the moral law. Ends, right actions, duty, are conceptions of the moral law; virtue and vice set forth the realized effect of the law as obeyed or broken. The conception of conduct as virtuous, or as vicious, is more comprehensive than any of the other conceptions considered.

## LECTURE VIII.

### The Moral Law.

In Ethics we deal with two fundamental questions: *First, the body of the moral law*: what is that essential nature of that of which moral rightness and obligatoriness may be predicated? and, *second, what is the nature of this obligatoriness?*

I. *By the Moral Law we do not mean the law as published by divine authority, but the law as naturally known to mankind.* The

divine law is, without question, the most perfect expression of it for all moral creatures. We look at the law of God, as understood without revelation, as written on the heart of man. We find that it consists of certain general conceptions which men naturally form, fixing their ends of pursuit and modes of activity. To be honest, truthful, obedient to parents, concerned for the public good and peace—these are the spontaneous dictates of man's nature.

II. This law cannot be accounted for by materialistic philosophers. This is scarcely worthy of consideration. Matter cannot act upon matter to produce a conscience or a moral rule.

Two theories have divided men :

(1) There is an ultimate and universal nature in which these moral ideas reside. These ideas being "everywhere, and everywhen" they become specially present in the mind of God and in the minds of his rational creatures.

(2) This law is not an immediate perception of the "Ultimate Reason." Moral rules are formed by the mind in the same way as other rules, *i. e.*, by generalization from individual cases of duty. None of these rules are the original possessions of the mind. All our earliest ideas are *specific* and *individual*, and from these we rise to general ideas. We do get some things from parents and older people, but these rules came originally by generalization. Every man has power to judge of the morality of these rules.

III. This law has an inherent supreme authority. Sometimes we say that conscience is supreme; sometimes that duty is obligatory. Conscience is a faculty which claims to regulate all things for us. This is true, but conscience is only an interpreter of the law, *e. g.*, Supreme judges of U. S. Court. When we say that "duty is obligatory," we recognize a superlative obligation, from which we cannot escape. This is true, but what are these duties which draw and bind us? They do not as yet exist; they are ideal and not real things,



to be realized in our future conduct. It is best to say, "Law is supreme." Law = a collection and simplification of all those dutiful ideals which are binding upon the soul. There is no place where we can be free from the requirements of duty, no time in life when we are free from moral law.

IV. *The law consists of commandments and prohibitions, i. e., of things right, good and obligatory to do or seek, and of things wrong, evil, and obligatory not to do or seek.* It has thus a positive and a negative character. In Christian duty we have commandments and prohibitions. Actions as right and wrong are not related to each other as merely *privative*. There are actions which are indifferent. Wrong is not simply *opposition* to right; it has in it something *inherently* and *positively* wrong. We should study the right before the wrong, because all rational beings are and must be striving toward right as their goal.

V. *Certain senses of the adjective "right" and the noun "right" are to be distinguished from that moral Rightness which is the basis of obligations, and which is the distinguishing characteristic of the moral law. By "right" things we mean what the law sets forth as good and obligatory upon moral beings, and not either "rights," or "things not wrong."*

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## LECTURE IX.

### Primary Generalization.

In Ethics we deal with two fundamental questions: *First*, The body of the moral law; what is the nature of that of which moral rightness and obligatoriness may be predicated? *Second*, What is the nature of that obligatoriness? Now, which of these two shall we understand first? Many have considered the question of moral rightness as

something immediately known by intuitive or practical reason.

The matter of the law should be studied in order to an understanding of its own nature and its rightness. In physical science, to determine the nature of the directive tendency of loadstone we accumulate a mass of facts—needles, magnets, electric currents, currents over the earth—in all these we seek the cause of this directive tendency. Thus an ascending generalization results.

So we direct our attention to the *matter* of the moral law, seeking the *common nature* which belongs to all right actions and ends.

It will be an ascending generalization by elimination. The great claims of actions are right and obligatory apart from their *peculiarities*; there must be some feature which renders them all right and obligatory.

Our generalizations need not begin absolutely with individual instances. Men have fashioned many *general conceptions* of right and wrong, and these are practically all we need. Philosophically, they may not be correct or ultimate or exclusive. Their object is *practical*, not *speculative*. All scientists use more or less ordinary classifications. So we would begin with conceptions of duty found in the ordinary mind and language of mankind. Here we must explain terms. In English we are necessitated to use terms which refer rather to the virtues than to the duties themselves. Still we can indicate duties by terms expressive of the corresponding virtues.

#### Four great classes of Virtues and Duty :

1. MORAL GOODNESS.
2. MORAL ESTEEM.
3. REGULATIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS.
4. CAUSATIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

We neglect the prohibitions of the law, presenting only the positive side, since an understanding of the positive side will lead to an understanding of the negative side.

## I. MORAL GOODNESS.

We can use the term Moral Goodness in a very wide sense, including every form of beneficence and benevolence, anything that aims at the happiness and welfare of human beings. This virtue manifests itself in *two* ways: (1) the relief of wretchedness and sorrow, and (2) the production of happiness and gladness. It not only does good, but also cherishes the spirit of love in our hearts for all beings. *Love for God and for man* is the "fulfilling" of the law.

## II. MORAL ESTEEM.

Moral Esteem gives special regard and treatment to rational beings according to their moral character. It says practically: Do good to all men, but especially to those who are upright and virtuous. There are two ways of exercising this: We must shew a special practical favor to good men, to those who are of the "household of faith." This does not require evil of us, though under certain circumstances we must withdraw our practical kindness and regard from those who are unworthy of it. The *second* manifestation is exhibited in *special love* to the virtuous—spiritual brotherhood, God for our father and Christ for our elder brother.

Moral beings may sink to such a state as to be no longer the proper object of the love of rational beings. This law does not conflict with Moral Goodness. It operates more fully in affections than in actions.

## III. REGULATIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Regulative Righteousness, or *Righteousness*, simply urges all the ordinary rules of right conduct, *Justitia generalis*, or general justice. We say Regulative Righteousness because the aim is not positive, and is not to advance the general welfare of mankind, but to keep men from seeking ends conflicting with the requirements of duty. It includes all the morality that is enforced in human courts, and all rules

of right and honorable dealing. There are many things which we do—pay debts, abstain from wrong language—that are manifestations of Righteousness, but not of Moral Goodness. The legislation of courts and civil law fall under this form. It has its affectional as well as its practical development. There are natural affections and dispositions which we must exercise—modesty, humility, liberality, and chastity. These natural dispositions of themselves have no moral character, if not rightly regulated they may degenerate into feelings that are wrong—modesty may become awkward bashfulness. They are virtuous when *regulated*.

#### IV. CAUSATIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Causative Righteousness is that which aims to cause righteousness and moral excellence of every kind. It is a duty in which virtue is causative of itself. It may be informal or formal. Its ground is two-fold—we may simply desire honest things to be done for their own *inherent* rightness; or we may promote *virtue* as moral good.

Its prominent development is *Rectoral Righteousness*, and of this the most important development is *Punitive Righteousness*—Justice. This occupies a large place both in human and divine government.

## LECTURE X.

### Moral Goodness.

Moral goodness should come first because of its very simplicity, having one great aim, and that positive. Regulative Righteousness has a preventive application, but Moral Goodness gives us only a progressive aim. We introduce *two new terms*, *Practive* and *Commotive*.

We have already distinguished between the duty of beneficence and benevolence, also practical and affectional duties

of Regulative Righteousness ; one consists of doing rightly, the other consists of cherishing right feelings within our hearts. We have as yet no word for those moral motivities which aim at those duties, hence we propose Practive and Commotive. Practive aims at practical activity and Commotive aims at cherishing internal motives. There is a difference between the affection and the moral motivity which aims at that affection; the motivity mingles with the affection which it aims to cherish and regulate. We need so to distinguish because the affection may be in some cases right and in others wrong.

I. The law of Practive Goodness is "Do Good." Good is happiness or whatever contributes to happiness—whatever banishes pain or diminishes the amount of misery in the world. The loss of good or actual causation of misery are both alike bad. A drunkard finds *enjoyment* and not *happiness*, for the wretchedness and misery far exceeds the enjoyment.

Happiness is the ultimate end sought by Moral Goodness or beneficence, and as secondary whatsoever serves or promotes happiness. Merchants call their articles "goods," health, strength are good; from these we rise in the scale until we enter into the moral sphere and find the virtues of the human soul the highest good. Dr. Hopkins. The secondary forms are good for *something*, but happiness as the ultimate good is "good for nothing." Happiness is not good for anything beyond itself.

II. The conception good is most flexible and applies to a great variety of things. "Pain is not an evil to a wise man"—it comes for our discipline and development in manhood. The term is applied to the transitory amusements and pleasures of the present hour—again to the blessedness of the saints throughout all eternity.

Hence Practive Moral Goodness is most comprehensive in its scope; we must seek and promote every form of good. The lowest form of good is comfort and gratification. *Story*

—Irish peasant woman: “I’ve had baith a warmin’ and a fillin’.” *James 2: 16.*

This duty becomes very excellent when it assumes a permanent form.

III. The good at which Moral Goodness aims is sought under a *most absolute and unrestricted view of man’s practical relations.* It is all the good of which the case admits, or a part of that total considered as part of it. We may take limited views of good. We may pursue only one kind of good; or the good of only one individual, or of only one class of individuals, excluding others. We should contribute to every form of good to which our actions can lend an aid. We should seek good purely and simply and all the good attainable in the case.

IV. It is not easy to find a name for so comprehensive a conception. The term “good” is but a feeble expression when called to take in both earthly things and the blessedness of the saints in heaven. It is generally bound to some limited object and aim; but no phrase is better than “*Absolute Good.*” This law of moral good is not Utilitarian, because (a) it is not confined to any low view of good, and (b) it concerns only one department of duty and not the whole law. *Absolute Good* and the *Summum Bonum* are not identical.

We must seek whatever is right and good for its own sake, and virtue is the highest and purest good. This illustrates the exceedingly rational character of the Moral Faculty and what we mean by Rational Intuitionism.

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## LECTURE XI.

### Commotive Goodness.

These distinctions of Practive and Commotive Goodness somewhat run counter to common thought and language. We commonly distinguish affections and desires, not as actions, as the springs and causes of actions.

I. Commotive Virtue in general is conditioned:

- (1) On the existence of desires and affections.
- (2) On a self-regard or intelligent consciousness.
- (3) A power of guiding the attention to objects of desire.

All motivities whatever spring from the consideration of such objects. This power resembles the helm of a great ship—the ship cannot escape winds and waves, but it can use both to drive it to its destination. We cannot stifle desires but we have power to control them.

(4) A rationality which may use this power for one's self-control and guidance. Brutes have no attentive consciousness; they cannot control their lives as the human spirit. Man has a rational power which devises ends, compares ends and seeks some of them. Reason claims a superiority, to be a ruler, a judge of the other motivities of the human soul.

II. Commotive Goodness—negatively.

(1) Benevolence is not all virtue or duty. The mistake made by New England theologians was to reduce all virtue to an exercise of Christian love.

(2) Benevolence in itself has no moral character; it receives this from right reason. To live in purity, justice, truth and honesty constitute a part but not all of our duty.

(3) Not loving simply, but a certain style or mode of loving is our duty. Hence Aristotle's Golden Mean has an important place in morals.

III. The Law of Commotive Goodness.

The rational soul, or *ego*, feels and follows this law intuitively; it has no necessary conception of the law above it. Some say we should love beings according to their dignity; it is true that we should have a special love for morally excellent beings, but this cannot be said to be an exercise of affectional goodness.

The Law of Commotive Goodness requires consentaneity of affection with Practive Goodness—one should exercise love to others consentaneously with doing them good.

(1) So as not to *conflict* with other duty—never love man more than God.

(2) So as to *give assistance* and *coöperation*—thus we should live, with special love to our neighbor, to whom we may do more good than to people at a distance.

(3) When these regulations are observed there arises a call for a free exercise of affection to all beings. In this way God loves all who are capable of being loved.

IV. *Reasons for this rule* are in the rule itself but may be more distinctly considered. To secure (a) a unity or harmony of man's life as an active moral being; (b) to reinforce Practive Goodness; (c) to realize in right-loving itself one of the highest and most absolute of good things.

## LECTURE XII.

*Practive Goodness* enjoins us to do all the good that the case admits of. Commotive goodness follows the same law. We should love as many beings as possible, and as much as may be. Regulative Righteousness is a law allied to Moral Goodness. The term Regulative Righteousness may have a very wide signification. General Righteousness may comprehend all duty, including Moral Goodness and Moral Ethics. So the theologians of the Middle Ages spoke of *justitia tota*.

### Regulative Righteousness.

I. But commonly, and as now used, the terms Righteousness and Justice have a more restricted sense. Righteousness, as we now employ it, does not cover the whole of the moral law, but designates that morality which regulates life by rules, rather than guides life by positive *aims*. But we must not limit Righteousness too much. Civil law enforces only rules of Righteousness, but the rules of Righteousness are



not all included in civil law, since it embraces much more. A great heresy was introduced by Thomas Hobbes when he claimed that the *right* was fixed by the will of the sovereign and by civil authority. There are many things which are just and right and obligatory, of which civil law takes no notice. Thus the laws of Regulative Righteousness are fashioned by the moral sense—the conscience. When we compare Regulative Righteousness and Moral Goodness, one gives us aims and the other gives us rules.

II. Since the rules of Righteousness and aims of Goodness are both alike right and obligatory, we naturally look for a common basis for this in both. The laws of Righteousness are many and diverse; the aims of goodness are essentially one. In all our moral aims and hopes, we want only the good of men. If there be anything common, it must be related to the general end of goodness.

Analyzing the laws of Righteousness, we find each really concerns a *general good* or *interest*. Notice the four principal classes in the decalogue of man's relations to his fellow men:

- (1) Obey superiors—fifth commandment.
- (2) Do not kill—cause no bodily harm to any one.
- (3) Do not commit adultery—a chaste and pure life.
- (4) Do not steal—rights of property sacred.
- (5) Or bear false-witness—truth or veracity always.

Going over these again, we see the great and radical interest involved in each:

(1) Obedience—without this the home would be broken up. Even the state could not exist without obedience.

(2) Cruelty is abhorrent to us, everywhere. Necessity, alone, can justify the taking away of life.

(3) Family relations must be conserved or the world will be simply the dwelling-place of brutes and animals.

(4) Man has a right to become rich and prosperous.

(5) At first sight this appears separate from men's interests, on the ground that we should tell the truth always. But truth is one of the most fundamental and vital interests of mankind.

The affectional rules of Righteousness follow the practical rules in much the same way that the duty of loving follows the duty of doing good. They agree in one respect: they both relate to good. They are contrasted: one is progressive, the other conservative.

III. Regulative Righteousness is defensive and conservative morality, and is contrasted with goodness as not being essentially progressive. We should not only refrain from evil but should also conserve the good. Some have called Moral Goodness a positive virtue, and Righteousness a negative virtue. But a rule of Regulative Righteousness is like a railroad bridge: does not contribute directly to our onward progress, but yet performs a part.

This *conservativeness* is its radical essence, but it has a positive bearing. Its rules or modes of action are not so immediately and evidently connected with their ends or results as those of Moral Goodness. Hence, there is sometimes a tendency to break loose from right rules and seek ends at variance with Regulative Righteousness. *Veracity*—duty of giving truth to those who have the right to know the truth.

IV. Yet, in every case, they not only defend or conserve some good, but also some absolute good. Thus, the idea of absolute good or absoluteness of good, directly or indirectly, seems to shape the laws of Practive Goodness, of Commotive Goodness, and of Regulative Righteousness.

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## LECTURE XIII.

### Causative Righteousness.

We pass over Moral Esteem, in its two developments, practical and affectional, remarking only that neither of these conflicts with the law of Moral Goodness, but, like that law, and like the law of Regulative Righteousness, they have their basis in the conception of absolute good.

I. Causative Righteousness has *two forms*—the incipient and the developed. The first aims chiefly to stimulate virtue and make it effective. Just as in dangers, we stimulate the courage of men by earnest words. The second promotes virtue, as in itself a great and excellent end. Just as we seek education, not for what we may remember, but that we may grow into true and honorable men.

II. Virtue as formally an end has been called Moral Good.

Moral Good aims at good in its practical and affectional forms; Regulative Righteousness aims, not so positively, but still at good; the aims of Moral Esteem coincide with those of Moral Goodness and add to the sum of good and the happiness of rational beings.

THUS VIRTUE IS A GOOD :

(1) By reason of its direct operation to banish every form of evil doing and to realize beneficence and righteousness. It aims at the welfare and blessedness of human beings, and if it had its scope the millennium would soon be here.

(2) By reason of its concomitants Virtue is the proper object of a pure and high spiritual life. Its qualities make it the proper object of our admiration and affection. These are (a) its inherent beauty and loveliness, of which the character of Christ gives us the most conspicuous example. (b) The well ordered condition both of inward capacity and external relation which the virtuous enjoy. It is the way of true and eternal prosperity. In virtue man obtains more peace and happiness than anywhere else. (c) The inward and constant satisfaction which the virtuous spirit experiences from his harmony with right and with moral order. That a peaceful and happy frame of mind can only be enjoyed by him whose heart and life are in conformity with moral law, is not a doctrine of Scripture alone, but the experience of all people. It is the glory of our gospel to produce this virtue in its fullness.

III. *Virtue is the purest, greatest and best good—the Summum Bonum.* It enters into the human soul and becomes a fountain of eternal life. As such, it is the highest form of Absolute Good. We dutifully promote virtue under this aspect of it. Hence the absurdity of “Do evil that good may come.” We should do nothing accompanied by moral turpitude.

IV. Absolute Good is the highest and broadest practical conception of the human mind. But, as Dr. McCosh remarks, regarding the phrase Moral Good: “the word good here, but feebly expresses our thought, because ordinarily good refers to what is merely useful or pleasurable.” The τὸ ἄγαθόν of Plato seems to have been his expression for Absolute Good. It included every right ethical end, and embraced every divine excellence. Absolute Good, as an end, is the matter of the Moral Law.

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## LECTURE XIV.

### Conclusion.

We have reached the idea of τὸ ἄγαθόν, or absolute good, as the ultimate form of the moral law. *The doctrine of τὸ ἄγαθόν consists with the common conviction of mankind, we identify the right with absolute good as an end and moral rightness with absoluteness of good as characterizing an end.* It has been the habit of philosophers merely to meditate on duty and moral law, and then to endeavor to obtain a principle which may pervade and explain it all. Our doctrine has not been reached by *conjecture*; not by the *comparison* of theories, as is the case with Cicero and Aristotle; not by deduction from general principles. To reason here from *general principles* is to fall into *petitio principii*. We must form general principles and not reason from them. The doctrine is reached by

*patient analysis and generalization.* Moral rightness is the absoluteness of good of the absolutely good; having this absoluteness as an end, it has the attribute of rightness.

*Does it conform to the Common Sense of men?* If it disagrees with any of the phenomena which it is offered to explain, it is unsatisfactory.

We consider absolute good to be the basis of moral law.

I. It accounts for that peculiar excellence and attractiveness which belongs to right ends and actions. For the law is holy, just and *good*.

The moral law has its goodness to a great extent in being holy and just. Holiness is goodness considered in opposition to everything evil and wrong.

Then justice is a kind of deliberate and thoughtful goodness, according to which we defend the most important interests of rational beings.

Absolute goodness is at the bottom of the attractiveness which philosophers and poets ascribe to virtue, *e. g.*, the choice of Hercules.

II. It explains the legal superiority and supremacy of right ends and modes of conduct over all others which can in any way compete with them. "I would rather be right than President." "Duty should be first and pleasure afterwards." Every other pursuit besides pleasure should be subordinated to right and duty. For the absolute good, in any case, is the total amount of good of which the case admits.

In divorce laws, incompatibility of temper as a ground of separation would result in untold evils, destroying the stability of society. Special and private must be subordinated to absolute good.

III. It reveals the nature of moral obligation, *i. e.*, of the legal subjection of one's personal life to the claims of what is right and good. This relation is *sui generis*, but immediately follows from the innate superiority of all forms of the  $\tau\acute{o}$   $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\nu$  over all other aims or ends. The relation is peculiar,

like that of similarity or the relation of cause and effect. There are relations which may exist and yet may be legal relations though they do not exist, *e. g.*, the mountain traveller. The nature of the obligation arises from the nature of the ends.

Those ends which are supreme are necessarily supreme over man's actions.

IV. It shows the rational ground on which specific laws of duty may be limited or set aside for the time. *De contentione honesti et utilis* is a chapter in the *De Officiis* illustrating this. For, to be useful is a duty.

There are cases where what seems to be one absolute right interferes and sets aside another absolute right. Nothing is more necessary in the science of casuistry than a rule setting forth which duty should supercede another; it must be founded on some such principle as τὸ ἀγαθόν.

Life and liberty are inalienable rights, yet there are cases where these rights are forfeited by transgressions or sacrificed to duty.

The weaker right always sets forth something which is an absolute good in ordinary circumstances. The stronger is of the same nature but extends more deeply and widely.

V. It gives the most satisfactory explanation of *Punitive Justice*.

This principle shows itself in the natural instinct to inflict evil on the evil-doer, and more formally in Courts and Laws and Penalties; also in the doctrine of Future Punishment.

But what God and good men hate is sin and not the sinner. Even eternal punishment is employed with an end of goodness. It is founded on the principle that it is better for one man to perish rather than all be destroyed. It is the necessary means of maintaining the Moral Law and the moral stability and prosperity of Created Beings.

### § 3. DIVISIONS OF ETHICS.

There are several divisions given for this science. Calderwood has used a common one in his book, viz.: (1) the Psychology in Ethics; (2) the Metaphysic in Ethics; (3) Applied Ethics. Another common division is twofold, viz.: (1) Theoretical, and (2) Practical, Ethics. This, tho' sound, is open to objections in that (1) some topics (*e. g.* love) have to be treated in both parts and (2) the division is too mechanical. The aim of the following division will be to show the organic relations of the parts of the science.

(1) The Categorical Imperative. *Ought* is the dominant word in Ethics. It may appear in two forms, viz.: (1) the which end one ought to realize (= the Good), and (2) the norm to which one ought to conform (= the Right). Under it, therefore, are two heads—the Right and the Good.

(2) *The Right* may be viewed in two ways: (1) subjectively as seen in conduct (= virtue); (2) objectively as seen in a code (= moral law).

The moral law will enjoin duties on a person in accordance to the relations in which he stands. These duties are of two kinds—

(1) The duties which a person owes as an individual, irrespective of his relations to others. These give rise to the science of Individual Ethics.

(2) The duties which grow out of the relations of a man with his fellowmen. These give rise to the science of Social Ethics.

§ 4. The Categorical Imperative. As to this three questions arise:

- (1) Why are morals founded on the Categorical Imperative?
- (2) Why are they not founded on the Right?
- (3) Why are they not founded on the Good?

(1) The idea of the Categorical Imperative corresponding to the idea of *ought*, implies that human conduct is subject to a command and that other motives are not to be considered in comparison to the command. Impulses may exist, but when they conflict with the idea of *ought* they should be at once rejected. There may be moral impulses and appetites. Dugald Stuart has treated of these and of the manner of their development. But we also act under the feeling of *oughtness*.

The question as to whether the idea of *ought* is ultimate or not, is a most important ethical problem. On its solution depends the question as to whether conduct is ruled by the idea of *ought* or by the rules of experience.

If *ought* is an a priori idea it is the most appropriate starting point for the science of Ethics: for it divides conduct into obligatory and non obligatory and rules out the non-obligatory as non ethical.

If actions cannot be commanded the whole science of Ethics must be changed. If there is no obligatory morality, the science of Ethics has to do either with the way men act now, or with the generalization of experience into rules to guide conduct. Thus if a man made pleasure the end of life, the Epicurean would teach him that the best way to prolong enjoyment would be to avoid extremes. Or if he were persuaded to live for the health and life of the social organism, Leslie Stevens could give him good advice. He would say that the moral law expresses the conditions necessary to the healthy perpetuation of humanity. But the humanity preached would be advice and not command.

Whether the Categorical Imperative has a right to its place or not is a question that we must discuss. But if it has a place, morality must be based on it.

(2) Our system of Ethics should not be founded on the idea of Right: for this idea implies a standard by which conduct is to be judged. It is predicable of an action, not of an agent. The prior question why we ought to do right shows that the idea of *ought* is above that of Right.

(3) We should not found our system of Ethics on the idea of Good, not for the reason given by Calderwood—that good is predicable only of things—but because the good is generally understood to mean the desirable and therefore the end or final cause of action. We always have some purpose in life, and when we have answered the question what we intend to make of ourselves, we have found what is for us the good. It may be “getting on in life,” or usefulness, or success in our profession, etc. Again we should not make the Good the basis of our ethical system because the Good may have two different meanings. It may mean (1) what men individually and collectively actually desire; and (2) what they ought to desire.



Suppose we found our system on the *Summum Bonum* and begin by defining the Good as what men *ought* to desire. It is clear that we take for granted the word *ought*. If, on the other hand, we define the Good as what men actually desire, our system of Ethics, lacking the idea of obligation, will be merely a system of advices using only the hypothetical imperative.

§ 5. (a) The question now arises, "What is moral conduct?" What conduct is capable of moral measurement?

As far as Ethics regulates conduct, we must consider conduct moral. But all conduct is not ethical. Therefore there is moral and non-moral conduct. Many things have no moral quality in them except in relation to other things.

(b) A second question is, "What conduct is worthy of moral approval?"

A bad act is the subject of moral measurement, but not of moral approval. Again the giving a large gift to a benevolent institution is the subject of our approval. But this approval is to us not necessarily moral. We would not have condemned the giver if he had not given the money. But the man himself may feel moral approval for the act. He may view it from a moral standpoint—feeling that he ought to put his money to the best use. If a man acts as he feels he ought, his conduct is right. Whether the act is right or not is another matter. But all this only leads to the conclusion that every act to be judged as morally right must (1) be capable of moral measurement—must be, or be felt to be, obligatory—and must (2) be performed unaffected by non-moral influences. Thus the man who does not lie or steal merely because he fears detection is not acting morally. Kant presents this very strongly. He says that duty is a necessity to act out of respect for law. Hence, no matter how pure one's motive may be, unless he feels it his duty so to do, the act is not a moral one. One may feel both an obligation and an appetite or impulse. If these conflict, the idea of obligation should come to the front. If duty and interest agree, and if the man regards only his interest his act is not worthy of moral approval. Kant goes further. He says that if a man's aim by nature be honorable and the bad is offensive to him, if such a man follows his natural instincts in action, his act is not moral. *E. g.* If there are three men, one of whom is honest because honesty pays, a second is honest because honesty is right, and a third is honest because his whole nature rebels

against dishonesty, Kant would give his moral approval only to the second. "The act of the first is," he says, "not moral—infra-moral." The act of the third should therefore be supra-moral. Kant does not say so, but he says that oughtness is a quality predicable only of imperfect moral agents. We cannot agree with him here. Moral beings cannot transcend the morally right. If inclination and obligation coincide the latter should not be ruled out, the act should be regarded as capable of moral measurement.

§ 6. The idea of oughtness has been assumed above to be given a priori. This has been objected to and we must discuss the question. We cannot stop with the idea of oughtness as ultimate, but must ask what is behind it. We discuss, therefore, three topics which underlie the Categorical Imperative:

- (1) Oughtness as a psychological fact.
- (2) Metaphysical aspect of oughtness.
- (3) The relations of oughtness and human freedom.

§ 7. Oughtness as a psychological fact.

It may help to reconcile us to the old intuitional idea of oughtness if we observe the diversity of ideas among those who deny it.

(1) Those who maintain that there is no legitimate place for the idea of duty or oughtness in Ethics. Thus Schopenhauer says that oughtness is only a superficial and vulgar idea and that Ethics is only theoretical: that the principle of good arose from the pity men have for each other, and the principle of wrong, from the insensibility of men for each other. In his view moral science would describe men as Biology does animals.

He puts sympathy for obligation and leads to conduct which he approves but does not command. Yet he acknowledges that only moral agents can be commanded.

Adam Smith makes the same mistake in ignoring oughtness.

(2) Those who claim that the doctrine of moral obligation rests on the idea of will. Thus Hobbes claims that no right exists until a law is enunciated by the state. Bain reproduces this.

The difference between this school and the Intuitionists turns on the relation of moral law to obligation. Hobbes and his school consider moral law and conscience as the product of human law. The Intuitionists hold the contrary.

