OF

THE UTILITARIAN THEORY

OF

MORALS.

BY THE

REV. JOHN PENROSE, M.A.,

FORMERLY OF C. C. C., OXFORD.

"In omni vita sua quemque a recta conscientia transversum unguem non oportet discedere."—*Cicero to Atticus*, xiii. 20.

"Atque ipsa utilitas, justi *prope* mater et æqui."—*Horace.*

LONDON:

J., G., AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1836.

G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Tract was commenced with an intention of inserting it in one of the Reviews. The Author hopes, therefore, that the reader will excuse the assumption of the plural *we*, which it can scarcely be requisite to lay aside.

OF THE

UTILITARIAN THEORY OF MORALS.

THE easiest way by which to arrive at the true theory of morals is to begin, as in all other things, at the beginning; to take up, in the first instance, a very simple case, and thence to proceed to more complicated cases, and to trace out the common and essential quality which runs through them all.

The earliest and simplest germination of moral feeling which we observe to subsist in the human race, is to be found in the obedience paid by the infant to the mother and nurse; not, indeed, in the child's persuasion that he *must*, (for in mere compulsion there can be no morality at all,) but that he *ought* to obey them. What process in the infant's mind may give birth to this persuasion; by what association with his pains or his pleasures it may become a motive power of his conduct; is a question of no direct importance in any moral inquiry. The fact is, that he very soon, certainly in the first months of his existence, becomes sensible to it, becomes sensible to the feeling of duty, of

the το δεον, or of conscience, all these being only different names of the same principle,—a principle quite distinct from all external compulsion. In other words, he is not only impressed with the notion that his nurse can *force* him to do as she likes, (and this, moreover, is a matter of *knowledge* which, we believe, comes later than the other *sentiment,*) but also that he is a good boy if he obeys, and a bad boy if he disobeys, her word, or her frown.

These infantile morals are, we suppose, very nearly the same all over the world. The nurse, during the first periods of infancy, exacts very nearly the same duties, and by the same methods, in Tripoli, and in New York, in the plains of Tartary, and in the streets of London. But then, as the boy advances to manhood, his moral feeling varies with that of the century, or the latitude, in which it is his good or his evil fortune to have been born, and to live. A semi-barbarous African may deem revenge to be one of the most sacred of duties: the well-instructed Christian never doubts that *his* duty is to forgive. If, in those relations of life on which these opposite sentiments bear, each acts on his own sentiment, the acts of the one confirm and exasperate him in fierceness of temper, and embrue him in blood; whilst the acts of the other confirm his brotherly tenderness for all the failings of mankind, and lead him to the imitation

of that confessedly most perfect of all examples of virtue which have been ever given to mankind. Is it then possible that this one tie of connection, this suffrage of conscience, this feeling of each party, that he is doing what his position requires him to do, can unite conduct and characters so dissimilar in a common bond?—The answer is, that if both parties are conscientious, the acts of both are *generically* moral, those of the one party as much so as those of the other; and that the difference between them is, that the one has been brought up in a bad school, and the other in a good school of morals; and, consequently, that the difference of their moral characters, which is very great, is to be sought, not in the nature of the moral principle with which they set out,—for that is the same in both,—but in the skill, or the justice, the benevolence, or the piety, or some other known or unknown principle, by which it is guided. Of all good morals conscience is the root, without which no fruit at all can be had; but the specific nature of the fruit which we obtain depends on the grafting: and thus, in tracing the principles of morals beyond that first principle of obeying our consciences, which is common throughout, we come at once into an immense field of specific differences. These differences, although in this sense only specific, are yet no less than the differences between good and evil; between the means of attaining a

temperate and happy, a meek and a benevolent, and useful character on the one hand, and of contracting a fierce, and miserable, and mischievous character on the other hand. This is that doctrine of conscience as the governing faculty of our moral nature, which Butler has stated with his usual and almost unrivalled judgement and accuracy, but which we may also find unfolded with much higher power of genius, and much greater fertility of illustration, by his still more distinguished predecessor, Jeremy Taylor. Aquinas[1] teaches distinctly that even the *conscientia errans ligat*, and argues the whole topic on the same principle with his characteristic fulness and ability. In like manner, the advocate for any rule of justice or fitness, supposes always, of course, that the conscience conforms to them. The Christian is warned in express words, by the greatest of the Apostles, that he that condemneth himself in that which he alloweth, is sinful in so doing. If a Roman Catholic confessor require from a penitent a blind conformity to the decisions of his church, he yet no less requires from him the conviction that he *ought* to give that blind conformity. When the Protestant makes his appeal to reason, or Scripture, it is on the very principle that he *ought* to make it. And so also the Utilitarian never, we believe, sets up any theory or rule

[1] Summa, prima secundæ, xix. 5, 6.

of utility in opposition to conscience. The point which he urges, or, at all events, that which he *may* urge the most reasonably, is, that the best, or the ultimate guide or rule of conscience, is the rule of utility.

Thus far, then, we may say that we apprehend no *real* difference of opinion to subsist between moralists[1], (we say no *real* difference, because there is much which is merely verbal,) in account-

[1] In saying this, we are afraid that we are at issue with Sir James Mackintosh, who, in page 62 of his Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy, lately republished by Mr. Whewell of Cambridge, says that "the essential distinction between the theory of moral sentiments," which theory he bases wholly and rightly on conscience, "and the criterion of morality, has seldom been made by moral philosophers." With regard to the Utilitarians in particular, Sir James observes, (p. 63,) that "Dr. Paley represents the principle of a moral sense as being opposed to that of utility." True—Paley does so represent it; and it is a great defect of his work on morals, that he has not brought forward in it, as he ought to have done, the office of conscience. But then, by a moral sense, he does not mean conscience; he means a faculty which does not rise beyond the innate and instinctive, not a faculty capable of being, and requiring to be, directed and educated. Paley, though unskilful in the habits and language of philosophical generalisation, and, therefore, often incorrect and unhappy in the enunciation of theory, was too shrewd and penetrating not to see and feel a distinction which is felt even by the peasant, who says of his neighbour, that "though what he did was wrong, yet, as he thought it right, *he* was right in the doing it." And so, in the maxim cited in the preceding paragraph from the schools. No man can hold that an erring conscience obliges, without holding also that there must be some criterion extrinsic to conscience, by which its errors ought to be purged or corrected.

ing conscientiousness the essential element of morality. That man, also, is *generically* the most moral in whom conscience possesses the most complete and undivided authority,—in whose mind it meets with the least friction from opposite principles. For though the overcoming friction may be a great triumph, yet the perfection of the moral powers, no less than of the mechanical, is to "run glibly." "That horse is the best, which, reaching the goal in the least time, reaches it also with the greatest facility; and the human character is then most imbued with true moral temper and power, when the whole man holds a steady course with the greatest firmness and alacrity, and with the least access of regret and perturbation of mind." We also find by experience, that the easier the *going* of a man's conscience, or the slighter the effect of the common rubs which he finds in his way, the more assured is the victory which he may hope to obtain over any great or unexpected impediments.

We have now to inquire, in the next place, whether, as conscientiousness is thus the first and essential principle of morals, and, indeed, nothing less than the elementary name of the science itself, we can find any other common principle which runs through the whole? And here the first point to occur to us is, that conscience itself is, as has already been intimated, by no means a blind or an

indolent, but a very active and inquiring, or, in the language of Taylor, a very "pragmatical" faculty. Every conscientious man must act, and act by some rule or rules, or with some one view or another. Can we then discover any single principle by which alone it may be reasonable, or proper, to guide it? This, as we apprehend, is the question on which the whole Utilitarian controversy turns. That utility is one principle is, we suppose, on all sides admitted. The point is, whether it be the only one, or whether it include all the subordinate principles?

To resolve this question, in the resolution of which it will be convenient to exclude for the present all reference to the doctrines of revelation, our best method will be, to place, in the first instance, before our eyes some aggregate of the moral qualities themselves. We shall then be prepared to inquire, whether any one principle can be found, and, if any, whether it be the principle of utility, which runs through them all, and by which their moral value may be estimated or defined.—It is plain, then, that every man who possesses *all* the moral qualities must be active, social, and benevolent. It is no less plain, that he must also be patient, temperate, and self-denying. And to this we add, that if he be taught, or have the means of learning anything, concerning the wisdom and goodness of that great Being who has

created and who pervades the universe, he must be devout, and grateful, and obedient to Him. On this last point we shall be met with the objection that this is religion, not morals. But if morals be the same with duty, all our duties must be included in morals: and unless the moralist will hold either that the Almighty is not great and good, or that a man who acknowledges him to be great and good is yet acquitted to his conscience, and can be rightly and wisely directed through life, without regarding him, he cannot avoid the taking in religion as a part of his code. In truth, morals and religion cannot be severed: and a man who, knowing or believing that there is a God who has filled the world with bounty, and with stupendous wisdom, can yet be content to creep about in that world, without raising his mind to any serious thoughts of, or without the desire of conforming his will to that of its author, cannot possibly, we think, be a truly high-minded man in any moral capacity.

We do not know or suspect that this is denied or doubted by the Utilitarian. But the point is of so much importance, so much at the root of all principles of duty whatever, that it can hardly be laid down too broadly and solidly,—and it is of the more importance, because the *word* morals, partly from an undue jealousy of it on the part of theologians, and partly from a very unwise practice of considering religion and morals as separate

or as collateral sciences, instead of considering them in the relation in which they truly are to each other, or in that of the whole and its part, has frequently been used in too contracted a signification, and with the worst effect. For thus the moralist has been often induced to neglect religion, and perhaps, sometimes, in zeal for the propagation or dignity of his own science, almost to despise it: and this error has been at the same time met, on the other hand, by a fanatical depreciation of morals on the part of religionists. Against these errors there can be no efficacious remedy, except by the restoration of the word morals to its full meaning, or by regarding morals and religion as being practically one and the same. And we say its *restoration,* because the ancients gave to the word a far more extensive signification than we do. Their *religio,* their δεισιδαιμονια, had in it less of moral feeling than ours has; it was more occupied with rituals, and with fear of punishment for the neglect of that specific worship which they paid to their gods. But their philosophers would not have accounted of any man as *moral,* who, believing in a heaven, or in celestial natures, or in a soul of the universe, would not travel forth in contemplation, if not of hopes, yet of imaginings, which should connect his destiny with some loftier anticipations than those of this merely visible diurnal sphere. Nor has the same just philo-

sophy been altogether wanting among ourselves. "Hence," says Shaftesbury, "we may determine justly the relation which virtue has to piety, the first not being complete, but in the latter, since where the latter is wanting, there can neither be the same benignity, firmness, or constancy, the same good composure of the affections or uniformity of mind."[1]

The question now recurs, how all these virtuous qualities, or acts, are to be defined or adjusted; as, for example, what a truly moral *patience* is, or ought to be, and so throughout. How are we to know that *temperance* ought not to be carried to a degree of abstinence which shall enfeeble all the bodily and mental powers? How shall we know that *benevolence* does not require of us to give the meat brought on our table for our own dinner to the crowd of needy beggars in the street? How are we know that it is not a true *piety* to offer up even human victims to God? Is the answer of the utilitarian to these questions the true answer, namely, the answer, that all these qualities are to be defined by, all partial rules of action made subordinate to, the greatest possible good of human society, or, to speak more accurately, of all sentient beings? "Whatever is expedient," says Paley, "is right." Blackstone[2] speaks unqualifiedly of

[1] Inquiry into Virtue, Book I., Part iii., sect. 3. See also Clarke's Sermon on Acts xi. 24, the 43d in his works.

[2] Introd. sect. 2.

the same principle as the very "foundation of what we call ethics, or natural law." This too, *in some sense*, we suppose is not denied. Sir James Mackintosh, though writing *against* the theory of utility as the theory of our moral convictions or sentiments, admits fully that the general utility is a "test," or rule, of all our actions, and that "all arguments against it as such, must be pure sophistry."[1] And to this we add, that we think that the actual pursuit of extensive views of utility both has, and ought to have, not only the jurisdiction thus allowed to it, as a test, or a rule, but also a larger prerogative as a direct *motive* of action, than some writers, *too* jealous perhaps of the utilitarian theory, *seem* disposed to allow to it. "Conscience," says Sir James Mackintosh[2], "rarely contemplates so distant an object as the welfare of all sentient beings." True: but it does contemplate, and ought to contemplate that object sometimes: our natures may be as much cramped by shutting out the great objects, as they may be perverted by neglecting the lesser objects. What is there for which we reverence our Saviour more, than for his being the Saviour of *all* mankind? How much lower a race we should be than we are, were there not some too of mere men, whom we regard as benefactors of the whole,

[1] Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy, p. 357—360.

[2] Ibid, p. 382.

and whom we suppose to have been warmed and rewarded in their exertions by the noble ambition of being so? And though this high privilege can be, from its nature, the lot of but few, yet we are persuaded that the carrying on our purview of the consequences of our acts from their immediate to their remoter effects,—to the very remotest effects, of which, in the orbit of whatever world ours may be, we have any cognizance,—is a very important part of morality.

The question, however, still recurs, whether this principle of the general utility include *the whole* of morality. That it includes all our duties *to others* is, we think, plain enough. For it is evident that we can have no duties to others but what consist in doing them good; and no less so that our more partial duties to individuals must be always limited by the rule or principle of the general good of the whole. Can we, however, also say that this principle of the good of the whole *both measures, and includes,* the duties which are often called our duties to ourselves, as the duties of temperance, and fortitude, and also our duties to God, as, for example, piety? Again also, how are we to interpret this very extensive expression, the good of the whole? It must be distinctly understood whether or not we are to comprehend *ourselves* in that large body. There is a generic difference between what we do for ourselves, and

what we do for others. There is also a generic difference between admitting the general utility as an accurate *index,* or *measure,* of the moral fitness and propriety of our acts, and the admitting it also as the sole or as the *inclusive principle,* on which we compute their *gist,* or their *nature.* A *measure* and a *principle* may coincide, or concur, and yet it by no means follows that they are one and the same. Every strong man in an army may be proportionally brave, and yet strength and bravery differ exceedingly.

First, then, as to the *measure.* Is the good of society, all consideration of self excluded, an accurate measure of all human duties, the self-controlling, and the devotional, as well as the beneficent? The utilitarians do not, that we know, affirm so much. They commonly, we believe, *include* the agent in their computations; and yet, (so happily are all really good tendencies made by the Author of nature productive of good of various kinds,) we believe that they might with safety *exclude* him. We believe, for instance, that examples of fortitude do no less good *to society,* by raising its tone and its character, than is done by direct exertions of benevolence. We believe that a Regulus may be no less useful than an Aristides. We should value the crown of Christian martyrdom at much less than we do, if we did not rate its influence on the public mind very high. Nor is it to be said

that in such cases it is the display, rather than the possession, of the moral qualities which gives them their value. For in morals it is truth which tells, and there is nothing else which ever does tell for good, in the long run. The real quality must often subsist in obscurity, if it is ever to be brought forward usefully into the broad day of human observation; and we believe that there is no man who suffers in secret from any moral privation, or self-control, who may not justly console himself with the satisfaction that he is, *as a citizen*, of a no less useful class in society, than they whose courage or patience, or whose triumphs, are renowned throughout the whole world, and who are regarded as models of heroism and imitation. If he himself be not known, yet it is known that such men are: if there were none such, it would be surmised that all self-control is only for show; and if this were to be believed, the show itself, together with the substance, would very soon cease to exist.

We therefore have not the least objection to take the greatest good of society, the agent excluded, as an accurate *measure* by which all rules of morals may be safely defined: and we have already said that we account it also as being in itself one of the noblest of all the *ends* to which human efforts can be directed.

The next inquiry is, whether this end not only

thus *measures*, or coincides with, but also *includes*, or contains, the whole of our duties; as for example, whether it be the only ultimate end which we need, or ought, to propose to ourselves, in the case of the virtues of fortitude, patience, and piety; or whether their subserviency to this end constitutes the whole moral value of these virtues? But this, it is plain, cannot be. One end, assuredly, of fortitude is to deliver the mind of the agent from unfounded terrors. The good of other men is one consequence of his being delivered from them. But still his own good is an essential part of the business. It is the same with regard to patience;—it is the same with regard to piety. None of us will hold that, because it is highly useful to society that men should be grateful to God for his goodness, therefore the gratitude to God which the religious man feels to be his duty, must be comprised *in* his duties to society. But neither here, again, do we apprehend that the utilitarian opposes us. We believe, as we have already said, that he includes the good of the individual agent with the good of society: and if, in doing this, he gives, as he consistently may, due place to the *moral*[1], as well as to every other good, both of the agent himself, and of the society of which he forms a part, we really see not any essential defect in

[1] See Mr. Whewell's Preface to Sir James Mackintosh's Dissertation.

his theory. If we make our catalogue of utilities so extensive as to comprehend everything which can be either in the highest or lowest sense good, good morally or physically, both to the agent himself, and to that large family of the human race of which he forms a part, and even to all sentient beings, we cannot possibly have any moral object which is not thus included in utility. And yet the word utility, although we confess it to be merely the word, has with it to us, and, as it appears, had also to Mr. Bentham himself[1], as a word meant to comprehend the whole moral end and object of man, a degree of distastefulness. It is a word which has often been used as rather in conflict with duty, than as its rule or criterion, and of which the use tends to substitute a low and imperfect in the place of the large and just view of the moral end and object of life, and especially to keep out of sight the prominent importance of all conduct as it affects the agent. In morals the agent is certainly something much more than one of the mere units of which society is composed, and which, as such only, is scarcely worth being counted. For these reasons we would have preferred, if it were possible, to keep these two things, the good of society, and our own good; our duties to society, and our duties to ourselves, and to God; as separate

[1] See Mr. Whewell's Preface to Sir James Mackintosh's Dissertation, pp. 19, 20.

heads of duty, instead of uniting them in one. It is certain, however, that people must and will theorize on, and build systems of morals: and all theorizing, and all system-making, is liable to be perverted, by imperfect artists, into the neglect or contempt, under some wrong bias, of the right means, or into some pursuit of a part only of the right end, or of a wrong end instead of the right. We do not allege, therefore, these our dislikes of the word utility as bars to our taking the rule of utility, explained as we have explained it, for the criterion of morals, but only as arguments for the great necessity of the cautions required in taking it. And the necessity of such cautions the utilitarians admit.

Taking then, as we do, with the aforesaid cautions, this criterion, in what way, we have next to ask, have we to apply these cautions—how best can we gain our great end without transgressing them?

The answer to this question can be this only: that all those *rules* of morals to which the conscience responds, and which we allow to be laid down, or defined, by the criterion, in the large sense already stated, of their utility, are always, and in all instances, to be accounted as sacred, and the breach of them never tolerated under any temptation. Exceptions, in some sense, to these rules there are, as in the case of *saying that which is not* (for we cannot properly call this a lie) to a man who is

insane. The laws themselves also vary with circumstances, and may be either enlarged or restrained by improved methods either of analysis or of observation. But in themselves they are sacred, and every exception to them is to be considered as arising out of the moral laws themselves of the universe, with no more of license than we suppose to exist in those aberrations of the fixed stars, which, aberrations as they are, are yet subordinate to its physical laws. Paley has spoken of instances in which the particular consequence may outweigh the general consequence, and may therefore be preferred. But to bring in any case a preferring of the particular consequence within the range of the moral criterion, it must be a part of the moral law itself to make that case an exception. It cannot be either right or safe to make an exception to any law which we recognize, if either the conscience revolts from the act, or unless we are honestly satisfied that the exception is actually provided for, or made for us, not by our own inclinations, but by the natural operation of the general law to which we are subject. Saying this, we admit that that law may be the law of utility: but this we do say, with an emphasis which we can see nothing to induce us to qualify, and from which we cannot recede. If an example be wanted of our reason for this emphasis, we have, we think, a very considerable one in a work now before us.

Sir James Mackintosh had quoted with approbation, and assuredly without much apprehension of any dissent, the saying of Andrew Marvel, "that though he would die to serve his country, he would not do a base thing to save it." Yet from this principle thus quoted, Mr. Mill[1], a writer of the greatest acuteness, and remarkably long-sighted in his deductions, and who has in another place very well and rightly observed that no exception is ever to be allowed to one rule of morality, which is not made by another rule of morality, pointedly differs. "Would Andrew not have *lied*," he says, "to save all this evil?"[2] He then goes on to argue that, as lying is tolerated in a spy in war, and in some other instances, so it may become even a duty, with any such end in view as the saving a country. But this conclusion is evidently unsound. Falsehood, if it is to be so called, is tolerated in a spy; is tolerated, as we have already observed, in any attempt to pacify the insane; is tolerated, *perhaps*, in the "homine misso peregre ad mentiendum," only because these are cases reserved by common consent and understanding, (whether rightly so reserved or not we do not inquire,) out of the common rule. In these cases there is, therefore, no lying. A real lie, we are here

[1] If, as we believe we may assume, Mr. Mill be the author of an 8vo volume intitled "A Fragment on Mackintosh," published in 1835.

[2] Fragment on Mackintosh, p. 268.

intitled to say a base lie, there is no end which can justify. No true good of all human society can in the long run be promoted by it. No prudent Utilitarian would justify a lie in a Carthaginian, which, though it might have saved Carthage from its subjugation to Rome, would yet have made a gap in those moral distinctions by which the general intercourse of nations is fenced off from the mere law of the strongest. But even if this were not so, yet no even moderately and subordinately great and good object, can ever be *calculated on* as to be obtained by a lie.—The history of pious frauds might prove this, we should think, abundantly. In that darkness, as to specific consequences, in which we are all of us placed, *no* vice of the means can ever be presumed to be covered or compensated by the good of the end. No lie, in particular, can ever be productive of good on the whole, unless altogether taken, by some circumstance of exception, out of what a logician would call the category of lying. The tone of character gained for the agent, and gained for society, by nobly telling the truth, will *always* be far more valuable than any partial good which can be gained by the lie; and we believe also that in some of the excepted cases it would be wise to withdraw the exception, and to make our code itself more rigid, than, as commonly expounded by moralists, it is at present.

Subject to all these cautions, we admit, as

before, that the utility of the moral qualities, or of moral actions, may, and must, and ought to be, their moral criterion. But we say also that that portion of their utility which consists in their tendency to the formation of moral character in the agent's mind, is sometimes a less equivocal, always an equally accurate, and also generically a more comprehensive measure and principle of their moral nature or value, than their tendency to the good of society, the agent excluded. Both principles, as we have already said, concur, both coincide. But it is sometimes plainer that the preference of the moral end to the selfish end is for our own true happiness or permanent good, than it is to discern how much the rest of the world is to get or to lose by conduct by which we ourselves are chiefly and most directly affected. The point in almost all such cases is, to convince *ourselves* that the noble and self-denying part is the part *for us;* the part which, however minute the moral good which we seek to obtain, however great the physical privations which we encounter in seeking it, is always *best* for us. We appeal on this head once more[1] to the ancients. Surely it was not for nothing that the Pythagoreans and Stoics, that Plato and the Platonists, held that the mind is the man, and that the end and object of moral philo-

[1] See p. 13.

sophy is to defæcate, or cleanse, from the stains by which the mind itself is affected. Plotinus (we here take what he says from Macrobius[1]) places a very extensive and liberal utilitarianism as only the lowest of the four degrees of perfection—the political, the purgative, the purified, and the exemplary, which the truly moral mind may both strive and hope to attain. And though there is an error (and this very philosophy leads to it) in attempting to sublimate too highly; or though virtue itself will commonly be lost, if we attempt an actually *destructive distillation* of all its vehicles; there is rather an excess of right than a positive wrong in the so doing. The Platonists were wrong, or rather were unphilosophical, in their notions of the enmity between matter and mind; at least, as respects the human mind, they did not sufficiently or rightly consider, how far a material vehicle is necessary, or necessary in the state of being in which we are now placed, to all its operations. But if, in the place of their doctrine of emancipating the mind from matter, we put, what was also in great measure their own meaning, its moral purification from the grosser

[1] In Somnium Scip. I. viii. Aquinas has embodied much of this remarkable passage in the Summa, prima secundæ, lxi. 5. We also observe that it is referred to with just approbation by Bishop Jebb, in the valuable correspondence with Mr. Knox, of Dublin, lately published.

desires, we shall possess a theory of morals, not repugnant, as far as we can see, to the creed of any enlightened Utilitarian, but which his creed is wanting if it do not include, and which always ought to occupy in it a prominent place.

Thus much as to the elements and progress of moral sentiment, and of that moral education, which is open to almost all men of observation and reasoning under almost all circumstances of human existence.

It now remains to be observed that, though the moral character may thus be nursed up, and indeed to a high degree of goodness, without touching on other principles than those enumerated; though we have no moral faculty but what these principles may serve to bring out to a certain degree;—can have no moral education but what they may serve to commence;—it does not, and cannot hence follow, that there may not exist other principles also which may serve to carry that education on to a higher perfection. If there be any such principles so available, no less attention may be due to them, than if they were parts of the moral essence itself. A *sine qua non* is not of the less importance to our attaining an end, because it may not be actually a part of the end itself. If, therefore, there exist either emotions, or opinions, which, though not actually of a moral nature *per se*, yet combine with morals naturally, easily, and usefully,

or conduce to perfect our moral education; it may not be less certain, or less a moral principle, that those emotions ought to be cultivated, those opinions attended to, or regarded, than that the virtues themselves with which those emotions and opinions combine, or to which they conduce, ought to be practised. To speak first in regard to the *emotions*. Gratitude, though in part a most sacred duty, is, in part, we suppose, a mere impulse. And yet it must often be a duty to cherish the impulse itself. The parental affection is, we suppose, instinctive, and therefore in itself not a virtue; but still, if it dispose men to greater exertions of virtue than they would make without it, to more self-denial, more restraint on the temper, or a more laborious devotion to the moral good of the child, its effect is the same. The conjugal and filial affections may also be no less strong, no less heroic, patient, disinterested. In all these cases it must be as much our duty to take the means as to study the end.

And so also no less, if not more, as to *opinions*. We do not see any process by which our moral nature *can* reach its perfection, without the opinion, that is, the belief, of a future state. For though the mere desire of our own happiness, whether present or future, is not virtue[1], but only

[1] Shaftesbury, *passim*. But see also, the Inquiry into Virtue, as quoted before. Charact. vol. ii. p. 60, 63.

an impulse inalienable from our nature, which probably the good and the bad share alike, yet every thing, which gives to the future that predominance over the present, which the belief of a future existence naturally gives, is a moral benefit to us. A contemplation so vast and expanding, and which clears away so many difficulties as to the moral government of that great Being, whom it is so much of our moral character to love and revere, gives to our own moral nature itself a fund both of nutrition and discipline, of which we cannot afford to be destitute. It is nothing to the purpose that there may have been some philosophers to whom all these things have been doubtful, or to whom futurity has been altogether under a veil, who have yet reached high degrees of moral elevation, or dignity. Nor is it more to the purpose, that there are many Christians, on whom the doctrine itself is practically thrown away. The question is whether this doctrine be not, naturally, and in itself, a moral food for the mind; whether it have not a clear *tendency* to make us better men than we should be without it? There can be no doubt but that we may answer this question affirmatively. And we may add, that it is a doctrine which makes us better, not only as giving us more power over ourselves, and nobler emotions, but also as raising the tone of all our efforts as they affect society, and of the reaction of all those

efforts on our own minds. Without at all assuming the *truth* of Christianity, or of any one of its threatenings or promises, yet what *moral* excellence is or can be greater, than that of the character of all those sincere Christians, who seek the religious or moral good of their neighbours through their own painful and religious exertions, and this in the hope of promoting, as far as human aid can promote, their immortal happiness? That there *is* a high moral excellence in doing this, sceptics cannot, and indeed do not, deny. Why else have some of them wished that they had never doubted, but that they see and acknowledge it so to be? What other principle could have given to Rousseau's picture of his Savoyard curate so powerful an influence, not on his sympathies only, but also on our own? How greatly might not the belief itself of a future state have improved the moral expression of the mind of HUME in the closing period of his life? We quote Hume in particular, because Sir James Mackintosh has printed in the Appendix to his ethical treatise a letter concerning Mr. Hume's deportment during his last illness,—a letter evidently intended to sustain the common, and to a certain degree the just, estimation of the moral beauty of his philosophical character. We are no detractors from his merits. If ever any mind was over-sceptical in its very birth and essence, and through no fault of its

own, his was that mind. His ingenuity, his refinement, and the perfect equipoise in which he held almost every thing, are great apologies to us for what we deem to have been his *defects*, we will not call them by a harder name, in the higher virtues of character. But at the same time, if we were called on to bring forward, instead of an example of the moral perfection to which the philosophical character may reach without religion, an example to the contrary, or an example of the defect and poverty of an irreligious man's moral feelings at the most awful crisis of our being of which we are cognizant, we believe that we should bring forward this letter itself. The impression which it makes on us is nothing better than that of its disclosing to us an *affectation* of levity, or a desire to *play* the philosopher, at a time which cannot but be a serious time to every man; and this coupled, perhaps, with an uneasy inclination to shut out reflections, which every truly good and cheerful man, Christian or not, must, at such a period, be at least willing to indulge. To compare such a latter end as this with the accounts transmitted to us of the familiarities of Sir Thomas More before his execution, or of the dying beds of Hooker, or Herbert, is what no tolerable judge of moral character can, as we think, ever attempt.

Before we conclude, we will retrace briefly what

we have said. We have shown, in the first place, that conscience is always the *principle,* at the same time admitting that utility, with the qualifications we have made, may be always the *test* of morality. We have shown that, notwithstanding this admission, the obligation of conscience is not resolvable into utility; a point surely clear, if it remain even in those cases in which, from the imperfection of our moral education, or our deficiencies in either theoretical or practical knowledge, the obligatory principle is sometimes found to dictate one thing, while the testing principle, to those who pursue it further, or more accurately, dictates another.

Among our *qualifications* also, if they are to be so called, of the principle of utility, we have shown that the duty of piety to God, and the ennobling contemplations and hopes of a future state of existence, are among the best and most useful constituents of a truly moral structure of mind, and are even essential to its highest perfection. That every duty is a *moral* duty is indeed a proposition absolutely identical; and that a man who has no hopes which do not terminate on earth, can be expected to equal, in patience, and fortitude, and magnanimity, in all moral efforts for the good either of himself or of others, or in moral submission to, and veneration for, the Supreme Author of all, a man whose aspirations after all these

virtues are invigorated by the belief, that if nurtured into existence here, they will grow into a more enduring nature hereafter, is to us a proposition scarcely less plain than that identical one. And to all this we think that all men, whether Christians, as we have said, or not Christians, who have been trained to reflect in the least degree on their duties, must agree. Of any specific influence on morals which Christians, as Christians, may derive from or ought to seek in Christianity, we have as yet forborne to speak.

We have now then to ask, in conclusion, (and we should leave an essential part of the subject untouched if we did not ask,) whether, if it be, as it has been seen to be, thus the office of morals to include what we call natural religion in its scope, it must not be equally its office to include Christianity also? All duty is moral. If conscience be in its nature an inquiring faculty, it cannot but be a part of our duty to inquire into the claims of a religion which has so powerful a hold on the world around us, on the learned, the wise, and the good, which is bound up with so many of our institutions, and the very purport of which is to strengthen, to improve, to sublime, the *ipsissima moralia* of our nature itself. And it also appears to us no less certain, that if we are so led, or led in any way, to the belief of Christianity, the Christian doctrines must and do, in their ob-

vious tendency, conduce to the purport so designed; and even that our moral nature *cannot* be so highly perfectioned without them as with them. The revelation made to us of God's personal care and superintendance, and of our redemption by Christ, and of Christ's doctrine and perfect example, are means of helping us forward, which all who use them rightly must find to be to their moral advantage, and to which heathens and unbelievers cannot and do not possess any equivalent. This, we think, is a truth quite undeniable, and a truth certainly unaffected by our ready admission that there are some who travel on a worse road with so much more vigour than most Christians use on their better road, as to make up for more than the difference.—Even also if there were no difference, yet if God has directed us in the one road, we cannot morally, or have not a moral right to choose another. If, indeed, any other road could be proved to be better in itself than that which has been marked out by Christ, a very strong presumption would arise that Christ's road is not God's. But if the revelation be admitted as divine, no truly pious or moral mind *can* reject or despise it, or feel itself at liberty to choose another way of its own. Religion, consequently, in all its bearings, not only in teaching us the belief in God, which is *one* enlargement of our moral vision and powers, but

also in teaching us the doctrine of a future state, which is *another* enlargement of them; and not only in teaching us this doctrine, but also in teaching us those our *relations* to God which we find in Scripture, and in the Christian Scriptures especially; is a topic which the moralist cannot consistently exclude from any system of morality which he may devise. All this is religion, if it be but all true; and religion is as much a part of morality, as morality is—and except by the blindly superstitious, and madly enthusiastic, is always taught to be—of religion[1].

This exposition of his system we can moreover discern no reason why the Utilitarian should be indisposed to admit. Whoever does admit it, combines, we think, every essential principle which bears on the subject. He admits, first, the supremacy of conscience as the one indispensable element of morality; and secondly, he deduces the principles by which the conscience ought to be guided from the truths of religion, and elevates them by its hopes, and its doctrines, no less than

[1] Some will here say that, if morals may be considered as *a part* of religion, religion cannot be considered as *a part* of morals, and so *vice versâ*. But the case is, that though the science of morals, if taken without reference to religion, is comparatively barren, it yet *may be* taken or regarded as terminating in some lower end, as in the *hŏnestum* or in social utility. To that end, so considered, religion is only means, and a part, though a most valuable part of the means, not the whole.

by the rule of those visible consequences which terminate in the physical and terrestrial well-being of mankind. All these principles together, and nothing short of these, include *all* good, whether of our own, or of others, to which we can operate. These, therefore, and nothing short of these, contain the whole science of morals, which no partial view of it, nor any which severs any one class of duties, be they what they may, from the rest, ever can do.

THE END.

G. Woodfall, Printer, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.