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THE END OF THE FREE-WILL  
CONTROVERSY.

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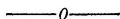
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# THE END OF THE FREE-WILL CONTROVERSY.



## GENERAL REMARKS.

THE difficulty experienced by philosophers in reference to the two opposite ideas which have been the subjects of the Free-will Controversy, has arisen from the fact that both are partly true and partly false, and that the advocates of each idea have imagined and have endeavoured to prove that their idea is wholly true, and that the idea which they have opposed, is wholly false. And this difference of opinion has arisen from the defective state of mental science, and from the consequent inability of either party to trace and explain the mental process, or the series of mental facts, by which both truths are made evident—a process inscrutable to those who cannot trace it, but very obvious to those who are able to do so. It was by being enabled to trace distinctly the facts of this mental process, after obtaining correct and clear ideas respecting them, that the solution of this great controversy was obtained. While men continued to think and speak of mental facts in the absurd manner in which philosophers have hitherto thought and spoken of them; thinking and speaking of faculties, and even of thoughts and feelings, as entities and agents; and of mental facts in which there is no action, as acts, and even, in many cases, as acts of these imaginary entities, it was utterly impossible that

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they should trace the mental processes which must be known before the truths involved in the Free-Will Controversy can be clearly ascertained, or that they should understand even the most simple mental operations.

### THE TWO OPPOSITE IDEAS.

There is a truth of very great importance in the idea of Free-will. And there is another truth, of very great importance, in the idea of Philosophical Necessity. But in each idea there is an error which is extremely injurious. And the erroneous part of each idea is the denial of the truth which is asserted in the other. There is, therefore, in each idea, an affirmative part which is true, and a negative part which is erroneous; and as long as philosophers contended for or against the truth of either idea, they were, of course, defeated, for neither idea could be established or refuted without refuting a truth. To establish the idea of Free-will, and to refute the idea of Philosophical Necessity, the truth asserted in the idea of Philosophical Necessity must be refuted. And to establish the idea of Philosophical Necessity, and to refute the idea of Free-will, the truth asserted in the idea of Free-will must be refuted. But no truth can be refuted. And therefore the advocates and the opponents of each opinion have—

“Found no end in wand’ring mazes lost.”

And many have imagined that there is no end to be found, or that the solution of the mystery, if there be any solution of it, is beyond human comprehension. And it is so while men do not know the facts of the subject. But when the facts are known it is found to be extremely simple. It is merely to put together the two truths, and by doing so, to put away the two negations. Each idea has been, as it were, an entanglement of threads of white and threads of black. But to each party in the controversy, its own entanglement

has seemed to be entirely white, while that of its opponents has appeared to be entirely black.

Each party could see error, but neither could see truth in its opponent's opinion. And most injurious effects have been produced, and effects which will be in the highest degree beneficial, and which have been earnestly desired, have been prevented and made impossible, in man's social feelings and conduct, and in the formation of his character, and through this in human affairs generally, by these confused and erroneous ideas in reference to two most important truths. But the consideration of this part of the subject must be deferred until the two truths have been explained.

THE TWO TRUTHS.

The Free-will party has imagined that man is himself the primary cause of his determinations. But he is not. The necessarian, or, to use the more recently adopted designation, the "Determinist" party, has imagined that man is not a cause at all of his determinations, or, in other words, that he is not an agent in the forming of them. But he is. He is a cause, he does act mentally, in the forming of his determinations. But he is not the primary cause of them; for his agency in the forming of them is dependent upon conditions or causation. These, then, are our two truths—

*First.* That man is an agent in the forming of his determinations, and that he has a power of self-control.

*Second.* That his agency in the forming of his determinations, or in the exercise of his power of self-control, is dependent upon conditions or causation.

But as the second truth includes the first, and as the first is denied by the necessarians, it is not this truth, it is the general truth, "that man is in all respects dependent upon causation," which the necessarians have maintained.

## THE FACTS OF THE SUBJECT.

To ascertain the facts in which the two truths are immediately manifested it was necessary to trace the mental operation by which we form determinations. And to be able to trace this mental operation it was necessary to have correct and clear ideas of the mental facts which occur in it. These truths therefore could not be clearly known while the ideas of men in reference to these mental facts were confused and erroneous. If those who believed that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations could have pointed out the manner of his agency in forming them to those who denied that he is so, if, in other words, they could have pointed out the facts of the mental process by which he forms them, they would have established the true part of their idea. And the other party would then have had no difficulty in pointing out that man's agency in the forming of his determinations is dependent upon conditions, by tracing cause and effect through the successive mental facts which occur in that process. And thus the two truths would have been made evident. And then it would not have been difficult to find that they are perfectly consistent with each other. And instead of the want of knowledge and the confused and erroneous ideas which have existed upon this subject, and the highly injurious effects which have been consequent upon them, men would have had enlightenment and clear and correct ideas in reference to these highly important truths, and would have obtained the highly beneficial effects, in the formation of character and in human affairs generally, which will result from the application of these ideas in the regulation of their social feelings and conduct—effects which they can only vaguely conceive and cannot appreciate while they retain the erroneous ideas and the ill-regulated social feelings which they must have while they do not understand this subject. Perhaps the simplest way to point out the facts by

which the truth that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations is demonstrated, will be to describe the process by which definite and correct ideas of these facts were obtained.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.

I was converted while a young man from the common belief in the idea of free will to belief in the idea of philosophical necessity—to the belief that man's determinations are the effects of causes, and that he is not an agent in the forming of them, that they are always produced by the strongest motive, and that our motives and their relative strength are produced by internal and external conditions ; by our character (our ideas and habits of feeling) and our constitutional state, *internal* conditions ; and by the persons and things by whom and by which we are influenced at the time of their formation, *external* conditions. I was enabled to see that the idea that man is the primary cause of his determinations is opposed to the idea of the government of all things by Supreme Power and according to unchanging Laws, or to the fact or truth that there is always a Cause for whatever occurs. For to be the cause of our determinations is to be a personal agent in the forming of them ; and we cannot be agents, in any way, independently of Causation or Law. But, having no distinct knowledge of any such agency, I was led to think that the fact that man's determinations are always in agreement with the strongest motive, is proof that he is not an agent in the forming of them ; believing, as stated above, that our motives and their relative strength are dependent upon internal and external conditions, and not upon any agency of ours in forming them. And the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations seemed to me to be involved in the assertion of their dependence upon causes. If the facts of the subject could then have been pointed out I

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should have seen the error of these ideas, and should not have remained for more than twenty years in ignorance of a truth which man must know before he can be enlightened upon subjects of the highest importance, and instead of being caused to endeavour to lead others into the same error, I should have endeavoured to make known the truth. And the thought and perseverance which have been required to arrive at the knowledge of this subject would have been given to the advancement of the beneficial results to which this knowledge will lead. But all has been Cause and Effect. And a great result has been obtained. And the good work may now be carried on which could not advance until this preparation for it had been made.

I held this opinion, as stated, for more than twenty years, and frequently advocated it in speaking and in writing. But although I never met with any one who could disprove it, either in conversation or in print, I often felt disappointed by finding myself unsuccessful in my endeavours to convince others of the truth of it. It was said by believers in the free-will idea, that they were conscious of a "nisus," or effort, that is, of mental *action*, or agency, in the forming of their determinations. But I could never obtain any explanation of this mental action. And I could not convince my opponents that nothing of the kind occurs. At length I began to examine what it could be which caused them to have this idea of nisus or effort in the forming of their determinations.

### THE WILL-TO-ACT.

I first asked myself: "What do we do when we will?" But I found, by observing what occurs mentally when we will, that to will is not to *do* a mental act, but it is to *have* a will to do an act. We have a will to do an act; and what we *do* is the act which we have a will to do. The will-to-act is the immediate



mental antecedent of the act. It is an error, therefore, to imagine that a determination, or a will-to-act, is a mental act, or as it is commonly called, an "*Act of Will.*" These are *facts*, ascertained by observing our mental experiences.

2. I next asked myself, "What is this mental fact, this will-to-act?" I found by observing, again, what occurs within us when we have a will, that to have a will to do an act we must have an *idea* of the act. But I found that an idea of an act is not a will to do it. We may think of an act without having a will to do it. Still the thought is there. But in the will-to-act we must have something more. What is this? It must be *emotion*. As when, for instance, we have a *wish*, we must have an idea of that which we desire combined with the emotion of desire; so when we have a *will* to do an act, we have an idea of the act combined with the emotional part of the will-to-act. And as a will to do an act is a *decisive impulse* to do it—an impulse which is immediately followed by the act—we may call this emotion "impulsive." A will to do an act, then, is composed of an idea of the act combined with impulsive emotion, and with sufficient of this emotion to be decisive. These, again, are *facts*. And they had not previously been pointed out—so far as my knowledge of writings upon the subject extends. And they could not be pointed out by any one who imagined that a will-to-act is a mental act.

I substitute the words to "determine," and a "determination," for to "will," and a "will-to-act," because to "determine" is to *do* a complex mental *act*, to *form* a determination; and to "will" is to *have* a will-to-act—a complex mental *affection*; and in order to mark this distinction, and to avoid the erroneous use of the verb "to will" in the active sense. But a will-to-act in the strict sense of the term—a decisive impulse to do an act—is immediately followed by the contemplated act; and a determination has reference to a contemplated act to be done at a future time—it is a

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decision or resolution to do an act when the time for having the decisive impulse arrives. I say, a "will-to-act," instead of a "will," to mark the distinction between the mental *fact*—a will-to-act—and the mental *faculty*, a *power* of will; that is, a power to *form* a will-to-act; an important distinction, which is frequently overlooked, or not marked, when the same word is used in both senses. To understand this subject, and to convey our ideas correctly to others, it is necessary (1) to *have* correct ideas, and (2) to express them with precision. While the ideas of men in reference to "the will," have been confused and erroneous, the terms which they have employed to express them have necessarily been the same.

### MAN'S AGENCY IN THE FORMING OF HIS WILL-TO-ACT.

3. So far I had not found any mental *action*—for we do not *do* our thoughts or our emotions. Where, then, is mental action to be found? Do we *act* mentally when we attend, observe, consider, reason, &c.? Evidently we do. But *how* do we act, or *what* do we *do* mentally, when we attend, for instance? When we attend to an idea we must have the idea. And in attending to it we must *do* something. What is it that we do? We *keep up* the idea. As to look at an outward object is to have a perception of sight and to keep it up, so to attend to an idea is to have this idea and to keep it up. This is evident when we observe what occurs within us when we attend to an idea. What psychologists have called the "act of attention," therefore, is not purely a mental act. It is an active mental operation, composed of mental affections and mental acts. This is another *fact*, not described, so far as my knowledge extends, by any writer on mental science.

4. But how does this apply to the forming of the will-to-act? When we have two opposing motives, say a motive of inclination and a motive of duty or prudence, and when, after some hesitation, the motive of

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duty prevails, and a will to act in accordance with this motive is formed, have we been entirely passive during the period of hesitation—has the predominance of the good motive been produced “without any effort of ours,” or “for us, and not by us”? Or has it been produced by means of mental action? And, if it has been produced by means of mental action, *how* has it been so produced? That we may be able to trace the mental facts which occur in such a case we must substitute for the indefinite term “motive”, and for the vague ideas which are associated with it, another term, with ideas which are definite and correct attached to it. When we are said to have two opposing motives, we have in fact two opposing indecisive impulses. And each indecisive impulse is composed of the same elementary mental facts as those of which a will (a decisive impulse) to act is composed—of thought and impulsive emotion. The difference between these impulses and a will-to-act, is, that they have in them less of the impulsive emotion than there is in the decisive impulse. An indecisive impulse is an impulse which is not sufficiently strong to be the immediate antecedent of the contemplated act. A decisive impulse *is* sufficiently strong, and is inevitably followed by the act, when the power to do the act exists, and when the exertion of this power is not prevented by some external impediment—as when two wrestlers are struggling with each other.

Now when we have resisted the temptation of an impulse of inclination, and a decisive impulse in favour of duty has been produced, what have we done? We have kept up thoughts. And the effect of keeping up a thought is, that as we keep it up it becomes more plain or clear, and the emotion connected with it is increased in strength. When, for instance, we keep up a thought which forms part of the impulse of duty, or which is favourable to this impulse, we strengthen the emotion which is connected with it. And while we keep up this thought, we keep away, more or less, the thoughts

which form part of the impulse of inclination. And by doing so we keep down or keep away, more or less, the emotion connected with these thoughts. And we thus weaken the impulse of inclination. It is evident, therefore, when we observe the mental facts which occur in us when we resist and overcome an impulse of inclination, that we first have excited in us an indecisive impulse opposed to it—say, an impulse of duty. That we then keep up thoughts by which the emotional part of this impulse is strengthened; and that by doing so we at the same time weaken the impulse of inclination. And that by continuing to do so we at last cause the impulse of duty to become decisive. And it is thus that we *form* a determination in favour of the impulse of duty and resist effectually the impulse of inclination which was opposed to it. And this is what occurs when we are said to “struggle” against a temptation and to overcome it. And it is in the mental action of *keeping up* the thoughts by which the emotional part of the good impulse is strengthened that the “*nisus*” occurs of which the believer in the common idea of free-will has been vaguely conscious—not in willing, which is *having* a will to do an act, but in *forming* our will-to-act. The effort which occurs in the act which we form a will to do, is another effort. It *follows* the decisive impulse, and cannot be that which occurs in the mental process by which this decisive impulse is formed. It is evident, therefore, beyond doubt, when we are able to trace the facts of the subject, that we *are* agents in the forming of our determinations, and that necessarians, or determinists, have been in error when they have imagined that we are not so. And we thus obtain an intelligent knowledge of this truth, and the ability to explain it to others, instead of the merely instinctive knowledge of it, without the ability to explain it, which alone we can have while we are ignorant of this mental process.

The mental acts which occur in this process are at first instinctive and involuntary, but they presently

become in a manner voluntary, when we "struggle" intentionally to overcome a temptation. But they cannot be intelligently voluntary while we do not know the nature of the mental process. They must be entirely instinctive while we are ignorant and deny that we are agents in the forming of our determinations. But by the knowledge of this mental process our power of self-control is elevated or advanced from the condition of a power which we can only exert with a vague consciousness, to that of a power which we may exert with intelligent perception of what we do in exerting it. And by this knowledge the educator will acquire a power to promote the development of this extremely important faculty in the young, which he cannot have while he is ignorant of the mental process by which we exercise self-control.

There are three stages of the growth of this power. In early childhood it does not exist—as the power to walk, or to speak, or to reason, &c, does not exist. As we advance in age it becomes developed, by exercise, as other powers are developed—"not for us and not by us." But the exercise of this power, or the agency upon which its development depends, is very much dependent upon outward influences, especially upon the character and conduct of the persons by whom the young are influenced from their birth. At length, when good habits, of thought, and feeling, and action, have been formed, there is little need for the exercise of this power, but when it is needed its influence is decisive. The determination in favour of the good impulse is then produced at once. And finally the triumph of education will take place when no bad impulse shall be excited. But to attain this result a very much better system of education will be required than any which can exist, or can be imagined, while men are ignorant of either of the two truths, and while therefore they must be ignorant of their application in the regulation of our social feelings and conduct. It is the

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necessity for the knowledge of the two truths, and of their application, as the basis upon which alone an effective system of the formation of character can be constructed, which constitutes the very great importance of the solution of the free-will controversy.

### THE CAUSES OF MAN'S AGENCY.

When we know the mental process by which we form determinations, we may easily trace cause and effect through every step of this mental operation. When we resist a temptation and overcome it, we may trace the cause of the first indecisive impulse, in character and constitutional state and in outward influences. And in like manner we may trace the cause of the second indecisive impulse; and of the keeping up of the thoughts which are kept up; and the effects of keeping them up; until we arrive at the final *effect*, in the forming of the decisive impulse which we form. But while the nature of this mental operation was unknown—and while the ideas of men in reference to mental facts were so confused and erroneous as they have been it could not be known,—these successions of cause and effect could not be traced. And as the believer in the idea of free-will could not point out or explain the agency or exercise of power which occurs in the forming of our determination, so the believer in necessity could not point out the continuance of causation in the mental process.

It has been said that all cannot properly be believed to be cause and effect, because there must have been a beginning of causation, and if all were cause and effect we could not have any cause except as an effect of antecedent causation, and a beginning of causation would therefore be impossible. But there is no more necessity, for our present purpose, to ascertain the beginning of things, than there is to discover whether the first hen came from an egg, or the first egg was laid by

a hen. As it is enough for us, in reference to this subject, to know that *now* we cannot have an egg without a hen, and we cannot have a hen without an egg ; so it is enough to know that we cannot have any event or result without a cause, and we cannot have any cause except as an effect of antecedent causes. It is only ignorant evasion of the difficulty to suppose that the man is the primary cause of his agency in the forming of his determinations, and thus to imagine that a case of first causation occurs whenever a man forms a determination, and that there is not *one* First Cause, but that there have been, and are, and will be, millions and millions of First Causes. To say that man is the cause of his agency is to say that he is an agent in the producing of it ; that is, that his agency is the cause of his agency. And in fact, his agency in the forming of his determination is in part the cause of his subsequent agency in doing what he determines to do. And after the commencement of his agency in the forming of his determination his subsequent agency in this mental process is caused in part by the agency (the mental acts) which preceded it. But for the beginning of this agency there must be a cause. And this cause is not his agency. It is in the internal and external conditions of which the beginning of this agency is the effect, the internal conditions being in part the effects of his antecedent agency in the forming of his character. The first mental act or movement of his agency in the forming of a determination is the effect of internal states of excitement which exist before, or when, this act takes place. And these are the effects of internal conditions of character and constitution, and of outward influences. The second act is the effect of the modified internal excitements which exist after the first act, and which are, in part, the effects of the first act. And so on. And the decisive impulse, and the bodily act which follows it, are the effects of the internal states of excitement which exist when it is produced.

## GENERAL PROOFS OF THE TWO TRUTHS.

Two truths which have been very puzzling to philosophers, although they have been known instinctively by every one, are thus made so plain that they may be known intelligently by all who are able to trace the simplest mental facts. And they may be taken by mankind in general as decisively ascertained. In future generations they will be clearly known by every one. The instinctive knowledge of both these truths is indicated by terms which have been adopted instinctively by mankind in general, and which are in common use by both parties in the free will controversy. Persons who deny that we are agents in the forming of our determinations speak of "electing" to do so and so; "determining" to perform an act; "forming" a wish; "making" a choice; "resisting" a temptation; &c; asserting by the use of these terms that we are agents in the forming of our determinations, and confounding them with the terms to "prefer," to "will," to "desire," &c., which indicate to *have* a preference, a will-to-act, a desire, etc. And persons who imagine that we are the primary causes of our determinations speak of the influences by which we are caused to determine as we do; and ask *why* we have determined as we have, that is to say, by what internal or external cause or circumstance we have been influenced to form the determination which we have formed. And they employ means to cause others to determine as they wish. They do so whenever they request, or advise, or exhort, or in any way endeavour to persuade others to do or not to do an act of any kind. For their request or advice, &c., is a cause or circumstance to influence the individual to determine to act or to refrain from action as they desire. It has been remarked that no one can be a consistent fatalist. And in like manner no one can be a consistent believer in the common idea of free-will, or in the idea of



philosophical necessity. Both parties know instinctively and state in words, and apply in practice instinctively, in a lame manner, the truth which they deny in theory. But what has been needed is that *both* truths should be known intelligently, and that their application should be known, and that they should be intelligently applied in the regulation of our social feelings and conduct and in the formation of character. And this could not be while men's knowledge of them was so imperfect that the two opposite opinions, or either of them, could be maintained.

CONFUSED IDEAS IN REFERENCE TO THE TWO TRUTHS.

I have met with persons who had assented to the idea of philosophical necessity, who, when the facts of the mental process by which we form determinations were pointed out to them, have said that they never denied that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations, and who have been surprised when passages have been shown to them in the writings of Hobbes, Edwards, Priestley, Mill, Spencer, and others, in which it is distinctly denied. One of these persons had evidently forgotten what he thought before; for the denial had been made and repeated in his own writings as distinctly and forcibly as it could be made. How far there was the same forgetfulness or confusion of thought in others, of whose ideas upon this point there was no written or printed record, cannot be ascertained. But the fact is interesting, as indicating the readiness of believers in the idea of philosophical necessity to accept the true part of the idea of free-will, when it is plainly pointed out and is separated from the denial of man's dependence upon causation. And I have met with the same readiness in believers in the idea of free will, to accept the true part of the idea of philosophical necessity, when it is plainly pointed out and is separated from the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations.

Some necessarians have said, when they could no longer deny man's agency in the forming of his determinations, that this point is unimportant, if the truth that his agency in forming them is dependent upon causation is admitted. But it cannot be unimportant, or of little importance, whether we are right or wrong in our opinion in reference to a truth of very great importance—whether we believe and understand, or are ignorant and deny, or only know instinctively, that we have a power of self-control. And in reference to the application of the true part of the necessarian idea we shall see that it is extremely important.

The analysis of the mental process by which we form determinations is not necessary to convince the believer in the common idea of free-will that we are agents in the forming of our determinations. But it *is* necessary to refute those who maintain that we are *not* agents in the forming of our determinations. And it is necessary to enable those who believe that we are so to understand what they believe upon this point, and to be able to make this truth evident, and to explain it, to others, who question the correctness of the belief. We have ample proof in the experience of the past that those who have believed this truth have not been able to make it evident to those who have denied it.

It is argued in opposition to the idea that our agency in the forming of our determinations is dependent upon causation, that "if we admit that there is always a cause for our determining as we determine, we must admit that we can never help determining and acting as we do, and the admission that we are agents in the forming of our determinations is therefore unimportant." But when we form a good determination, instead of a bad one which we were tempted to form, we do "help" the forming of the bad determination. And it is this which we are required to "help," and not the forming of the good one which we form. The person who excuses his wrong-doing by saying that he "could not

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help it," asserts, in other words, that he has no power of self-control—a state of mental impotence of which no one would wish to be accused. And as the development of this power by education is of very great importance, the knowledge of the fact that there is such a power in man to be exercised and developed cannot be unimportant, or of little importance. The "determinist" negation is quite correct when applied to the miserable man of whom it may be said with truth, when he does a foolish or an unworthy act, that he "cannot help it." But it is nonsense when applied to the man who can and does help the doing of such acts. For to help doing them is to form a determination not to do them. It is to the credit of a man to say that he cannot help determining and acting wisely and honourably, or that he has no need to exert his power of self-control in the forming of the determination to do so, and that he could not form a determination to act foolishly or unworthily. But to say of any one that he "cannot help" determining and acting foolishly or meanly, and that he cannot even acquire the power to "help" doing so, is to assert that he is morally insane or imbecile. And who would try, or how could any one consistently try, to resist a temptation of any kind, or to correct any bad habit, if he were convinced that he is not an agent in the forming of his determinations and therefore he cannot "help" yielding to temptation, and that he cannot acquire the power to help doing so? But even those who deny that we are agents in the forming of our determinations, do try to resist temptations, and do resist them successfully. They exert instinctively the power of which in theory they deny the existence. But they cannot exert it intelligently while they deny its existence, or while, in other words, they imagine that man's determinations are formed "for him and not by him."

But again it is said that "if the course of events is determined by a Power which governs man in all that

he does, or by Causation, it is not man who decides what shall be done, in any case, but that every event which occurs, including every determination and act of every individual, is decided by this power." But this is nothing more than saying that there is in the universe a Supreme Power, and that all things are overruled by this Power, according to unchanging laws. And man's agency in the forming of his determinations, and his possession of a power of self-control, are no more inconsistent with the dependence of this agency upon Causation, or with the government of all things by Supreme Power, according to unchanging Laws, than his agency in the forming of anything else which he forms, or his power to form or produce any other result, is inconsistent with his dependence upon Causation or Supreme Power. And, in fact, dependence upon Causation is necessary for self-control. For the power to determine this way or that independently of Causation, or without a cause or reason for determining as we do, would not be a power of self-control. It would be an attribute of insanity, or of an impossible state of things worse than insanity. For even the movements of an insane person, though not the results of self-control, do not occur without a cause. If a man makes a piece of mechanism, there is a cause for his making it, and it was to be that he should make it; but nevertheless he does make it. There is no inconsistency between the fact that he makes it and the fact that he is caused to make it, and that it was to be that he should make it. And, in like manner, when a man forms a determination, there is a cause for his forming it, and it was to be that he should form it. And it is nonsense to argue from this that he does not form it, and that he has no power of self-control. It only follows that he cannot form a determination, or do anything else, independently of Causation, or of the Power by which all things are over-ruled.

But again it may be said that if every event which

happens was to happen, no event which occurs could have been prevented, and no event which does not occur could have been made to occur, and man must be powerless in reference to the course of events. This is the fatalist theory. But in the first place we know that the conclusion, that man is powerless in reference to the course of events, is not in agreement with *facts*. He is continually causing events to happen which he wishes to occur, and preventing events, or rather imaginary events, which he wishes not to happen. And the fact that there is always a Cause for his doing what he does, and that it was to be that he should do it, does not alter this, or deprive him of power to do what he does. And secondly the logic is defective. It is not the event which happens which was the object of man's preventive efforts, when these efforts have been successful; it is the imaginary event which does not happen, and which he prevents. And to argue that he cannot cause an event to occur which he does not cause to occur, is merely to argue that he cannot at the same time cause an event to happen and cause it not to happen, or not cause it to happen; or that he cannot at the same time do an act and not do it. Say to a man *before* he has done some act of no great importance—"you cannot help doing that act"—and he may show you by not doing the act that he *can* help doing it. But your assertion would be a new element of causation, added to those which existed before. Say to him *after* he has done the act, that he could not help doing it, because there was a sufficient cause for his doing it, and it was to be that he should do it; and in this sense you are right. Because in this you merely *assert* his dependence upon *Causation*. You were wrong in the first case because you *denied* his *Power* to do what he *had* power to do. If in the second case you had told him before he did the act that he could not help doing it, he might have helped doing it. But again, your assertion would have been a new element

of causation. And other new antecedents would have been required to produce your assertion, different from those which existed. And those would have required new antecedents to produce them. And so on *ad infinitum*. To "help" doing an act, or to resist a temptation, is not to form a determination or to exert our *power* of self-control without a Cause. It is *not* to break through "the everlasting to be"—theologically, the "divine plan." But it *is* to exert our Power of self-control. And this fact, the exercise of self-control, is not altered by the other fact that there was a sufficient Cause for it, and that it "was to be." When a man finds that he has determined and acted unwisely, and asserts that he would act differently in the same circumstances upon another occasion, he does not see that the circumstances never can be the same—that his experience of the effects of acting as he did would be a new circumstance, a new element of causation—upon another occasion.

This "can't help it," or fatalist, fallacy arises from confounding the *assertion* of man's dependence upon Causation with the *denial* of his Power, and the *assertion* of his Power with the *denial* of his dependence upon Causation. There are acts which we have power to do, and events which we have power to prevent, or which we *can* "help," and there are acts which we have not power to do, and events which we have not power to prevent, or which we "can't help." In this statement we assert or deny our *power*. But no event can ever occur, and no act can be done, independently of Causation—our Power being of necessity subordinate to the Supreme Power of the Universe. But to confound the assertion of this limitation of our power—inevitable in the nature of things—with the denial of power which is made in the assertion that we "can't help it," is to allow ourselves to be misled by a logical fallacy into a conclusion which is opposed to most obvious facts. To say of an event which we have allowed to occur that we could not help it, is to say that it is one of the class

of events over which we have no Power, or to *deny* our Power in reference to it. To say of an act which we have done that there was a Cause for our doing it, and that it "was to be" that we should do it, is merely to *assert* the truth that we are subject to causation. To assert that man is the primary cause of his determinations, or, in other words, to deny that he is dependent upon Causation in the forming of them, is to deny the supremacy, and, in denying that, to deny the existence, of the Supreme Power of the Universe. Freedom in the sense of independence of causation, cannot exist, in the nature of things. Freedom in the sense of having power to control our wrong impulses—moral freedom—*can* exist, and *does* exist, more or less, in all who are not insane or imbecile.

There are cases in which it is difficult to trace the cause of our determining as we do. In fact the believer in the common idea of free-will, imagining that man is himself the primary cause of his determinations, cannot even try intelligently to trace the cause of his determining as he does. But in most cases we may trace the cause, and may find the reply to the question "*why* did you determine as you did?" And in many cases even the believer in the idea of free-will is able to trace it, and does trace it—thus showing his instinctive knowledge of the truth which in theory he denies. But it is a mistake to say, as Mr Mill says in his logic, that our determination "comes to us from external causes, or not at all." And indeed Mr Mill himself speaks of other causes. (See the chapter on "Liberty and Necessity" "in his work on "Logic.") Although our determination is always in part dependent upon external causes, it is often much more dependent upon internal causes. A wise man and a silly man will determine and act very differently in similar external conditions. And of course the difference is owing to (internal) differences of character. And if in any case in which our choice is unimportant we are unable to trace the cause of our determining as we have determined, we may safely infer

that there was some cause, because we know from experience that in all cases of importance there is a cause.

We have thus seen that the arguments, or the logical processes, by which men have been led to imagine that our two truths are inconsistent with each other, are deceptive; and that each truth is admitted, and to some extent applied, instinctively, even by those who deny it. But to know a truth distinctly or intelligently, and to be able to explain it, is very different from merely knowing it instinctively and being unable to explain it—the only knowledge of either truth which the parties who believe it can have while they are unable to point out the facts by which it is made evident. And the intelligent application of the two truths is very different, as we shall see, from the vague instinctive application of them which alone can be made while the truths are not distinctly known, and from the imperfect and distorted application which alone can be made when the assertion of one of them is combined with the denial of the other.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THIS ANALYSIS.

The discovery of the analysis of the mental process by which we form determinations is therefore of the highest importance. For by ascertaining this analysis we acquire the distinct knowledge of the two truths, which must be known distinctly, and must be combined with each other, in order that the foundation may be laid of the only system of education by which the character of man can be well-formed. And it is only by means of this system of education, and by the intelligent application of both these truths in the regulation of our social feelings and conduct, or by the character (or the ideas and habits of feeling) which this education and application will enable man to acquire, that a well ordered and happy state of society can be realised. All systems of educational or social reform,



therefore, which are not based upon the distinct knowledge and the practical application of our two truths, must fail to produce satisfactory results.

THE APPLICATION OF THE TWO TRUTHS.

It has already been stated that effects which are extremely injurious in the formation of character, and through this in human affairs generally, are produced by the denial of man's dependence upon Causation, in the common idea of free-will, and by the want of knowledge which is the cause of this denial; and that effects which will be in the highest degree beneficial will be produced by the distinct knowledge of this truth, and of its application, and by the application of it. But the beneficial effects can only be very imperfectly obtained while the assertion of this truth is combined with the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations, and while therefore the injurious effects of this denial must be experienced. A very injurious exaggeration of the inferences which follow from each truth is produced when the denial of either of them is combined with the assertion of the other, or when the assertion of either truth is not combined with the assertion of the other. From the truth that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations, and that he has a power of self-control, it follows that he is a morally responsible being. But when this truth is combined with the denial of the truth that man's agency in the exercise of his power is dependent upon Causation, or is not combined with the distinct knowledge of this truth, the idea of man's moral responsibility is very injuriously exaggerated; and anger, unkindness, and vindictiveness, are excited and justified. But when the truth that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations is combined with the truth that his agency in the forming of them is dependent upon conditions or causes, our idea

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of his moral responsibility is very beneficially qualified. And instead of the excitement and justification of anger, unkindness, and vindictiveness, consequent upon the exaggerated idea of man's moral responsibility, we are caused, by the thought of the circumstances by which what is displeasing to us in others has been produced, when we *keep up* this thought, and apply it in the regulation of our social feelings and conduct, to be considerate and kind, and our ideas of what is just to them are very beneficially modified. In the former case we are led to imagine that it is right that we should be unkind, and, in many cases, that we should act with great unkindness, to those who displease us ; or to think it kind to be unkind. In the latter case we know that, however we may with justice blame and attribute demerit, and however, in the present state of society, we may find it necessary to punish, it is not just to be unkind ; because the object of our displeasure must have been very injuriously influenced in his education and by present circumstances. And we shall discover that when society shall be sufficiently enlightened, by the knowledge of this subject, and shall be guided in its proceedings by enlightened benevolence, the *causes* will be removed by which what is injurious in man is produced, and the *effects* will of course be prevented, and the necessity for punishments will then be removed. And we shall discover that punishments, although they are indispensable in the present state of society, and are therefore permissible, are not *just*, and are in many respects very injurious in their effects upon the character of those who punish and of those who are punished. They violate justice and kindness for the sake of expediency or utility, or from necessity, created by the present unwisely constituted state of society. But the beginning of the evil is in the want of knowledge and the erroneous ideas by which the necessity for punishments, and the spirit of unkindness, are produced.

If with the idea that man is in all respects dependent upon causation we combine the denial of his agency in the forming of his determinations, we take away the basis of the idea of his moral responsibility. And although in the truth which we assert we have the justification of considerate and kind feelings for all, it is the consideration and kindness which are due to the insane which are justified, it is not the considerate and kind feelings due to a rational being, whose character has been injuriously formed by means of injurious influences, and who may still be enabled to acquire an effective power of self-control if beneficially influenced to a sufficient extent.

CONFUSED IDEAS IN REFERENCE TO REPONSIBILITY.

Some necessarians, or determinists, have endeavoured to reconcile the idea of man's moral responsibility with their denial of his agency in the forming of his determinations. But to do so they have confounded the responsibility which consists in being liable to experience the consequences of our acts, which is *legal* or *practical* responsibility, with that which is consequent upon our ability to exercise self-control, which is *moral* responsibility. It must be evident upon a little consideration that the responsibility which depends upon the possession of the power of self-control cannot be supposed to exist when the existence of the power upon which it depends is denied. In this endeavour they confound the fact that punishment is often indispensable, in the present state of things, and is legal, and is "justified" *in this sense*, and that we must experience the consequences of our acts, that we are *practically* and *legally* responsible; which is dependent upon the truth that man is dependent upon causation; with the fact that we may be blamed, or are culpable, when we omit to exercise our power of self-control according to the dictates of duty, when no insuperable obstacle prevents our doing so; which is *moral*

responsibility, and is dependent upon the truth that we have a Power of self-control, and which could not exist if we had no such power ; but which must be qualified, as stated, by the knowledge that our agency in the exercise of our power of self-control is dependent upon Causation. We have a remarkable example of this endeavour to substitute man's practical for his moral responsibility, and of the confusion of ideas upon this subject which is produced by the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations, in the chapter of Mr Mill's "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy" in which responsibility is considered. "Responsibility means punishment," Mr Mill says. But it "means punishment" in two senses. It "means punishment" as deserved ; which it could not be, as we have seen, if Mr Mill were right in his denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations—*moral* responsibility. And it "means punishment" as expedient or useful, in harmony with man's dependence upon causation, a kind of responsibility which could not exist if the negative part of the idea of free-will were correct—*practical* responsibility. And Mr Mill confounds the second kind of responsibility with the first. In the chapter referred to, and in the chapter on "Liberty and Necessity" in Mr Mill's work on "Logic," there are many examples of the use of terms which are not admissible on the supposition that man is not an agent in the forming of his determinations, or which involve the admission, and indicate the instinctive knowledge, of the truth which Mr Mill denies. And those chapters are extremely interesting studies for those to whom both our truths are known. But they are very unsatisfactory and very misleading to those who are in search of the truth upon these points, and the more so on account of the influence of the writer with many thoughtful persons. But this influence, so far as it is injurious, will pass away, with the progress of knowledge, leaving only

that which is beneficial—which is of great value. And when both our truths are known men will no longer think or write inconsistently or injuriously upon this great subject.

IMPORTANCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE APPLICATION  
OF THE TWO TRUTHS.

The influence of the intelligent application of the two truths, as described above, in the regulation of man's social feelings and conduct, and in the formation of his character, will be of the highest importance—of importance which, to many, will be incredible and inconceivable until the results can be seen in practical realisation. By this application man's benevolent feelings will be enlightened and developed, instead of being to a great extent stultified and repressed, as they have been, by the idea in which man's dependence upon Causation is denied, or while men, although they have known man's dependence upon Causation, have not understood the application of this truth; or have not applied it. And the ignorant feelings of unkindness which have been excited and developed in men by the exaggerated idea of man's moral responsibility, and by the erroneous ideas and the want of knowledge from which this exaggerated idea has proceeded, will be repressed, or will not be produced, instead of being continually excited, as they have hitherto been. Man will, thus, become intelligently benevolent, or kindly disposed towards his fellow-men, instead of being caused, as hitherto, to become ignorantly unkind, to a great extent—a most important moral effect. And, knowing and distinctly perceiving man's dependence upon Causation, he will be enabled to trace intelligently the causes by which evil effects in man's feelings and conduct and in the formation of his character have been produced, and those from which good effects in these respects will proceed, and thus to realise a most

important intellectual result. He will thus be enabled to ascertain the causes and the processes of Causation by which selfishness, untruthfulness, injustice, unkindness in every form (including religious intolerance and persecution), vice and crime of every description, poverty and the fear of poverty, murders, wars (or wholesale murders), injurious surroundings of every kind, and all the miseries which have resulted from this combination of satanic influences have been produced. And he will find that they have all followed, as naturally caused effects, from the want of distinct knowledge of the two truths, and of their application, and from the erroneous ideas which have been consequent upon this want of knowledge, and from the unintelligent or instinctive application of these erroneous ideas, in the mis-regulation of man's social feelings and conduct. And, on the other hand, he will find that a series of causes and effects the reverse of this will follow from the distinct knowledge and the intelligent application of our two truths. Benevolence will take the place of selfishness, and men will become disposed to be truthful and just. And they will learn what will be just, and will become disposed to fulfil the requirements of justice, to the utmost, in the spirit of enlightened good-will to all, or with the earnest and intelligent desire that the happiness of every individual should be promoted to the utmost possible extent, by the right formation of character and by favourable outward influences. And they will find that in adopting the practical measures which are necessary to promote the highest happiness of all, men will promote their own highest interests or happiness in the most effectual manner, while they fulfil their most sacred social duties, which have hitherto been so wofully disregarded and violated and to a great extent misunderstood. And they will form new social arrangements, in harmony with this new character, which will be most beneficial for all; instead of the old social arrangements, in harmony with the defectively formed character hitherto universal, which

are extremely injurious to all—not only to those who are the most injured by them in their character and surroundings, but also to those whose selfish interests and tastes they are intended to promote and gratify. For all are deeply injured in character and in surroundings by the present system. It is a deep injury to be surrounded by such characters as are formed in consequence of the ideas and the system which now exists, instead of being surrounded by the characters of true enlightenment and enlightened goodness which men will be caused and enabled to acquire in a well-ordered state of society. And it is a deep injury to be caused to acquire some variety of the general character of the present system, instead of being caused and enabled to acquire the character of the system of true enlightenment and enlightened goodness. And the material surroundings of even the highest classes—their mansions, and palaces, and the pleasure-grounds and parks attached to them, are in many respects very inferior combinations of circumstances, when compared with the domestic and social arrangements, and their surroundings, which will be formed when the scientific knowledge and the manual and mechanical powers of society shall be applied under the guidance of enlightened benevolence. And the employments and amusements of the wealthy are inevitably, in the present state of things, to a great extent useless and unsatisfactory.

The tree of evil will thus be caused to die away, from its roots, and will disappear entirely, in due time; and the tree of good will be planted in the place of it. And men will live in the midst of scenery beautified by its presence, in an atmosphere of goodness, in the light of intelligence, and in the midst of abundance of all things necessary for their rational happiness. And poverty will be known no more. For it is only as the effect of selfishness, and unkindness, and disunion, and gross injustice between man and man, and of the want

of knowledge and the erroneous ideas by which this irrational state of things is produced, that poverty and the fear of it can exist, in a world overflowing as this is with the material means for the production of every kind of wealth which man can reasonably desire. And when the various employments which are necessary for the satisfaction of man's wants, and of his reasonable desires, shall be regulated by enlightened benevolence, they will all be made attractive, as well as highly effective; and the duties of life will be fulfilled with willingness and pleasure. For the object of them all will be to promote human happiness; not the selfish mercenary object of gaining a wage, or a fee, by doing something which we would not do if we were not paid for doing it. It is thus, and only thus, that men will learn how to fulfil, and will be enabled and caused to fulfil, their social duties, according to the great rule that we should "do to others in all things, as we would have others do to us," and that they can realise the happiness which is only to be realised by doing so. And, before they could enter upon this course, it was necessary, as we have seen, that the two truths which have been the subjects of the free-will controversy, and their application, should be distinctly known.

#### THE CAUSES OF EVIL AND OF GOOD TO MAN.

The discovery of the process of Causation by which our social evils have been produced, and of that by which they will be remedied, was opened to the world by a necessarian. It could never have been ascertained by a believer in the idea in which man's dependence upon Causation in the forming of his determinations is denied. But when first made it was too incomplete for general practical application, and too incomplete to be explained, and to be received as real by the public in general. And it was caused to be so by the negation which in the necessarian idea is combined



with the truth upon which depends the knowledge of the causes by which man is influenced in his determinations and conduct, and therefore in his agency in producing evil or good results in his social affairs. If man were himself the primary or independent cause of his determinations, then, as our social evils depend upon his conduct, and his conduct upon his determinations, he would be the primary or independent cause of our social evils, and it would be useless to look in any other direction for the cause of them. And it would be folly to expect that he could be influenced for good or evil by causes of any kind. But as his agency in the forming of his determinations is dependent upon Causation, it might be hoped that the causes of evil and of good, in his feelings and conduct, and in the formation of his character, and through these in his social affairs generally, may be ascertained, and that the causes of good may be substituted for the causes of evil. It is quite certain that until now these causes have not been<sup>1</sup> known, even to the believers in the truth upon which the knowledge of them depends. But while in ascertaining the application of the truth upon which the knowledge of these causes depends, the truth which should be combined with it, and applied with it, remained unknown, and was denied, and the denial of this truth was combined with the assertion of the other, the new knowledge was vitiated at its source. The belief of the truth which was denied, which is highly important as a cause of good, was supposed to be a cause of evil; and the denial of this truth, which is a powerful cause of evil, was supposed to be a powerful cause of good. The discoverer, to a great extent, of the causes of evil and of good to man, the late Mr Owen of New Lanark, maintained that man's character, and his opinions, and his determinations, are formed "for him, and not by him." And he, therefore, logically, and with characteristic moral courage, and

with the best intentions, but with intellectual blindness and want of judgment, upon this point, consequent upon this erroneous idea, or rather upon the want of knowledge by which alone this idea is permitted to exist, maintained that man is not a morally responsible being, that he cannot have merit or demerit, or deserve praise or blame, in the true sense of those terms. Punishments and rewards he ascertained to be extremely injurious, or powerful causes of evil, in many respects, although indispensable while men are so unwisely educated and placed as they have hitherto been. It was by the application of the truth that man is dependent upon Causation that he was enabled to make this invaluable discovery, so far as he made it. It was, as stated, by the denial of the truth that man is an agent in the forming of his determinations, &c., and by the false inferences which follow from this denial, that the discovery was made so incomplete, and was so far falsified, that he could not explain it, and it could not be practically applied on an extended scale. It was by the application of the truth that man is dependent upon Causation—by applying it in the regulation of his social feelings and conduct, while he was yet a boy, that he was enabled to acquire the character of enlightened benevolence, so far as, with his partially erroneous ideas, he could acquire it. And, having done so, it was by the application of this truth, to some extent, under the guidance of his enlightened benevolence, in a great educational experiment, during the first quarter of the present century, that results were obtained in an adult population of from two to three thousand of the working classes, and in many hundreds of children, which excited the admiration and astonishment of thousands of visitors, of all classes, from the highest to the lowest. And he thus verified practically his great discovery, so far as his views were correct. But owing to the erroneous part of his

fundamental idea, all his endeavours to explain his discovery were in vain. He did not even succeed in enabling his disciples to understand the change of character which he contemplated, and the means to effect it, and the importance of it, so far as to know that it is only by the character which will result from the application of the truth that man is dependent upon Causation—it is only from the intelligent application of this truth in the regulation of their social feelings and conduct, and in the formation of their character, and in human affairs generally—that men can be enabled to realise a well-ordered and happy state of society. But of course he could not know that his own views were so far erroneous, in consequence of a fundamental mistake, that no one could obtain correct ideas from any explanations which he could give. But all other systems of social reform—all the ideas and plans to which the name Communism or Socialism are given, and all other schemes of reform—are still more defective fundamentally. They are altogether defective fundamentally. They do not contain any indications of the knowledge by means of which alone the character can be formed which is indispensable for the construction of a well-ordered and happy state of society. On the contrary they all exhibit the want of this knowledge, and contain conspicuous evidence, to those who understand the subject, of having emanated from characters in which the knowledge and the enlightened benevolence did not exist by which alone men can be enabled to devise and construct a well-ordered state of society, and can be enabled to co-operate intelligently for the most effectual promotion of the happiness of all. And although in Mr Owen's ideas there is much to be corrected, which follows from the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations, and which is very injuriously misleading, and which must be corrected before the true parts of his ideas can be

understood, and accepted, and practically applied by society, we have in the true parts of them the inspirations of the spirit of enlightened benevolence, so far as this spirit could be obtained by the application of the truth that man is dependent upon Causation, while this truth was combined with the denial of man's agency in the forming of his determinations, and with the consequent denial of his power of self-control and of his moral responsibility. But neither the man nor the system has been understood. And he did not understand either himself or his system. Neither of them could be understood while the two truths which have been the subjects of the Free-will Controversy were supposed to be inconsistent with each other, and while, therefore, they could not be applied together in the regulation of man's social feelings, &c. I will endeavour to explain this subject in another pamphlet. But it will be well to observe in concluding, that the statements which have been made in reference to the effect of the application of the two truths, in the reformation of the adult character, in those who are sufficiently pre-disposed to acquire the new character, and in reference to the education of the young which will result from this application, are not speculative. They have been practically verified so far that they cannot be disbelieved by any one who is acquainted with the facts of the subject.

