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ORDINARY MEETING, APRIL 20, 1868.

THE REV. WALTER MITCHELL, M.A., VICE-PRESIDENT,
IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The Rev. C. A. Row then read the following paper :—

*ON SOME OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES
CONTAINED IN MR. BUCKLE'S "HISTORY OF
CIVILIZATION" IN REFERENCE TO THE LAWS
OF THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOP-
MENTS OF MAN. By the Rev. C. A. Row, M.A., M.V.I.*

THE wide extent of the religious, moral, and philosophical subjects which the work of the late Mr. Buckle embraces, and some of which I am about to submit to your consideration, compels me to use the utmost possible brevity in my mode of treatment. I trust that my desire to be brief will not render my observations obscure, or cause me to do injustice to the author; or, what is even more important, to the great moral, religious, and philosophical interests connected with this subject. Mr. Buckle's work is professedly a history of civilization. The plan is formed on a gigantic scale. Owing to the premature death of its author it will remain a fragment. That fragment, however, consists of not less than 1,600 pages, and this forms little more than an introduction to his vast original design. It contains the philosophic principles on which the great work was intended to have been based. Few books which I have read raise questions which more deeply affect the dearest interests of mankind, or the whole range of Philosophy which is connected with religion and morality.

Mr. Buckle belonged to that school of thought which has been designated by the term Positive. In his work, the system of the Positive Philosophy is applied to the elucidation of history. The chief principles he has laid down in the opening portion of it. It is hardly too much to say that, if his views are right, the position occupied by those who have dealt with the great subjects connected with mental philosophy,

ethics and religion, has been incorrectly chosen, and that the great teachers of mankind have based their systems on mistaken principles. To this the Divine Author of Christianity itself forms no exception.

I find two obstacles in the way of treating this subject in a satisfactory manner. First, the mode in which many profound truths are blended with fatal errors; secondly, the length of Mr. Buckle's paragraphs, which renders it difficult to do him justice by quoting his exact words. Still, however, I do not think it fair to represent his opinions in my own language. I feel, therefore, bound to set forth a few of his most salient points in the exact words in which he has written them. To others I must content myself with a general allusion.

Before I proceed to illustrate his opinions by quotations, I shall only state that Mr. Buckle's theories, in the broad mode in which they are stated, seem to me inconsistent with any intelligible view of human responsibility; that they are founded on mistaken views of the character of religion, both natural and revealed; that Christianity receives but scant justice at his hands; and that many of his profoundest views of history (and I am far from wishing to dispute that his work contains many very profound ones, and exhibits in a striking point of view many great truths) are damaged by being deeply coloured with a philosophy respecting the truth of which we must at least say, Not yet proven. It is not for me to say to what extent Mr. Buckle was a theist; but the impression left on my mind by the perusal of his work is, if his philosophy is true, that the position of man in the world is such that it reflects credit neither on the wisdom nor the goodness of an intelligent Creator.

Mr. Buckle's general principle in dealing with history may be stated thus. The free will of man has exercised no appreciable influence on human affairs. In a word, we are devoid of all trustworthy evidence that it exists. As in the physical universe a certain amount of calculable force has determined its present condition, and if we could determine the amount of all past and future forces, we could determine all its past and future states; so the past, the present, and the future conditions of man are the result of those moral forces which we designate motives, and which act by a law no less invariable, and one entirely independent of any supposed control exerted over them by the human will.

Mr. Buckle lays down that the doctrines of Predestination and Free-will are alike fallacies. I shall not dispute that they are fallacious enough in the manner in which they have been frequently handled. But his doctrines go far beyond this,

and seem to me inconsistent with any practical belief in our responsibility. Let us hear him :—

“The doctrine of free-will (says he) rests on the metaphysical view of the supremacy of human consciousness. Each man, it is alleged, feels and knows that he is a free agent, nor can any subtleties of argument do away with our consciousness of possessing a free will. Now, the existence of this supreme jurisdiction, which is thus to set at defiance all the ordinary modes of reasoning, involves two assumptions, of which the first, though possibly true, has never been proved, and the other is unquestionably false. These assumptions are that there is an independent faculty called consciousness, and that the dictates of that faculty are infallible.”

Mr. Buckle makes some remarks on the uncertainty of our possession of such a faculty. He then resumes :—

“We may in the second place reply, even if consciousness is a faculty, we have the testimony of all history to prove its extreme fallibility. All the great stages through which the progress of the civilization [I presume that the word here means improvement] of the human race has successively passed, have been characterized by certain mental peculiarities or convictions which have left their impress on the religion, the philosophy, and the morals of the age. Each of these convictions has been to one period a matter of faith, to another of derision, and each of them has in its own epoch been as intimately bound up with the minds of men, as is that opinion which we now term freedom of the will,” &c. (p. 12.)

I find a difficulty in conceiving how a man of Mr. Buckle’s reasoning powers could have written this passage. If I had time, I should demur to nearly every expression in it.

First, I apprehend that in any strict meaning of language it is incorrect to designate consciousness a faculty. It possesses nothing by which those states of the mind which we call faculties are distinguished. It has no function. Conscience is correctly called a faculty ; but conscience and consciousness are two things entirely distinct. Every faculty must have a function. Conscience has a function. It determines right from wrong. But consciousness is simply the reflex action of the mind on itself. There is first the mental state of perception ; then the consciousness of that perception ; and lastly, the concentration of the mind on that consciousness centring in our own individuality.

I have often read of the supreme jurisdiction of conscience. It is so laid down by Butler. But in what sense consciousness can possess a supreme jurisdiction I am altogether at a loss to conceive. Between the nature of jurisdiction and the phenomena of consciousness there are no two points in common.

It involves an unspeakable confusion of thought to speak

of all consciousness as infallibly true. If such an assumption has been made, I agree with Mr. Buckle that it is utterly contradicted by facts. But to say that all consciousness is infallibly true is to confound between our consciousness of a perception, or a subject of thought, and the truth or falsehood of the perception or the thought—*i.e.*, between consciousness and the object of consciousness. A man is conscious of whatever is passing in his own mind, whether it be true or false. Of this consciousness, and of its presence in the mind, he is infallibly certain. The thought, feeling, or conception is there, and he is conscious of its presence. This is true even of the dreams of a madman. He is infallibly certain that they are in his mind, though they are the delusions of a diseased brain. But this certainty has nothing to do with the object matter of the consciousness.

It is difficult to attribute to a man of Mr. Buckle's mental powers the mistake of having confounded between the truth of our consciousness itself, and the object of our consciousness. But the language of the passage is hardly consistent with any other supposition; and it is absolutely necessary that he should have done so if his reasoning is to have any reality against the doctrine of free-will.

When we say that we have a direct consciousness of freedom, we testify to the truth, not of a theory but of a fact. It is a matter of direct internal perception, of which I have a certainty closely approximating to that which I have of my own existence. It is closely connected with my perception of my self-conscious I, or of my personality. Every time I contemplate myself *in action*, I become sensible of volition.

Let us analyze its nature. I am infallibly certain that my coming here this evening was an act absolutely voluntary. Each stage of the process was subject to the control of my rational will. That will was acted on by motives. On these motives I exerted choice. With respect to each of them it was my purely voluntary act whether I would yield to it or not. At every period of the process, my action was purely voluntary. When I had come half or three-quarters of the distance, I am certain that I could have turned back; and my doing so, or not, depended on an act of my will. My will was acted on by motives; but it was in the power of my rational choice to contemplate one and to exclude another. I could not have prevented myself from coming, without substituting some motive in the place of those by which my will has been influenced; but I am certain that it was a matter of my own voluntary choice whether I would or would not be here to-night. At this moment I am absolutely certain

that it is a matter depending on my will whether I will or will not throw down this paper and read not another word.

There is nothing of which I can be equally certain as of this. It possesses a similar certainty to that which I possess of my own existence. I am more certain of it than I am that the chairman is at this moment sitting in the chair. I have the testimony of my consciousness that I have a perception in my mind that he is doing so; and of this I am infallibly certain. But there may be a doubt whether this consciousness is the correct representation of an external fact. But the consciousness of my own freedom represents nothing external to the mind. There is nothing objective in it; and consequently no room for doubt whether it conveys a true representation of an external reality. It is the direct consciousness of an internal perception which I positively feel, and of that I am certain. I am not conscious whether any other man has freedom. My belief that he has is either inferential, or is founded on testimony. But to the certainty of my freedom, consciousness affords similar evidence to that which it does for the existence of my own personality. No evidence of any truth can possibly be stronger. To reject it is to rush into worse than Pyrrhonism. It is also indelibly impressed in the structure of language. It is impossible to contemplate myself in action without becoming conscious of the presence of a rational will, which is influenced by, but is not the slave of, the motives which act on it. It seems, therefore, scarcely credible that a writer of Mr. Buckle's powers should have confounded our rational self-conscious perception of freedom, which is indissolubly united with the perception of self as the independent centre of voluntary action, with the consciousness of any delusion which may enter into a diseased mind, and have put them on a par as an evidence of truth. But, if he is to be believed, the evidence supplied by consciousness to the truth of my voluntary agency is no stronger than that which foolish men and women have for the belief that it is unlucky for thirteen to sit down to a dinner-party, or for any other folly; for he places our belief in our freedom on a level with those "convictions which have left their impress on the religion, the philosophy, and the morals of the age. Each of these opinions," says he, "has been at one time a matter of faith, and at another of derision; and each of them has in its own epoch been as intimately bound up in the minds of men as is that opinion which men term freedom of the will." I need say no more.

The philosophy of Mr. Buckle's work is vitiated by the rottenness of his first principles. We shall see that it is inconsistent with any rational belief in human responsibility.

The moral character of an action is entirely dependent on its voluntariness. A voluntary action is one of which the power to do or forbear is in ourselves. Aristotle has taught us, more than two thousand years ago, that an action which is not voluntary is incapable of either praise or blame; that no action can be either virtuous or vicious, unless it is accompanied with a feeling that it is a voluntary act; and that the principle of the action must be within our own power. An action not within our own power is no more virtuous or vicious than the act of a machine. The philosopher has proved that to render an action virtuous or vicious, the following conditions are requisite. It must be voluntary; it must be within our own control; and, besides this, it must be the subject of rational choice, which he designates by the Greek term *προαίρεσις*.

The whole of his masterly analysis of the relation which the voluntary principle bears to virtuous action, and its culmination in the mental act of rational or moral choice, is contained in the third book of the Nicomachean Ethics. To abridge it is hardly possible, and to refute it hopeless; but to transcribe it in intelligible English would exceed the limits of this paper.

Under what circumstances do we hold men responsible for their actions? What is the nature of that feeling which we designate a sense of guilt? I answer, that both are inseparably united with the perception that the action has been voluntary. Once convince us that a man was not a free agent, and we cease to hold him accountable. If motive exerts a necessary influence on the mind—if the will is powerless to resist the influence of impulse, we cease to be responsible for what we do. It may have been a man's misfortune to have done us an injury; but when we clearly perceive that he was not a free agent, we are as incapable of holding him responsible as the stone which we kick against, and which hurts our foot. In the same manner a sense of guilt, self-condemnation, or repentance, can only be felt for an action which we feel to have been within our own power to do or to abstain from. We may be very sorry that we have been made the unwitting agents in an act the consequences of which are pernicious. But for the act itself we can feel neither a sense of guilt, repentance, nor remorse. It was our misfortune, not our sin, to have committed it. A sense of freedom, therefore, is bound up with the moral character of our actions; and where there is no freedom, there can be no morality.

It is on these accounts that all Pantheistic religions are destructive of a sense of sin. Where actions are not voluntary, sin is not possible.

But, important as the subject is, I must pass onwards. At page 17 Mr. Buckle observes :—

“The only positions which, at this stage of the inquiry, I shall expect the believer in the possibility of the philosophy of history to concede are the following : that when we perform an action, we perform it in consequence of some motive or motives ; that these motives are the results of some antecedents ; and if we were acquainted with the whole of the antecedents, and with all the laws of their movements, we should with unerring certainty predict the whole of their immediate results. If, for example, I am intimately acquainted with the character of any person, I can frequently tell how he will act under any given circumstances. Should I fail in my prediction, I must ascribe my error, not to any arbitrary or capricious freedom of the will ; . . . but I must be content to suppose, either that I had been misinformed as to some of the circumstances, or else that I had not sufficiently studied the ordinary operations of his mind. If, however, I was capable of correct reasoning ; and if, at the same time, I had a correct knowledge both of his disposition and of the events by which he was surrounded, I should be able to foresee the line of conduct which, in consequence of these events, he would adopt.”

I am far from being sure whether the knowledge which Mr. Buckle postulates in this passage as necessary for the completeness of philosophical history is not the special privilege of Omniscience, and cannot be possessed by any finite being. But, long as my quotation is, we must hear him to the end :—

“Respecting the metaphysical dogma of free-will, and the theological dogma of predetermined events,* we are driven to the conclusion that the actions of men, being determined solely by their antecedents, must have a character of uniformity—that is to say, must, under precisely the same circumstances, always issue in precisely the same results. And as all antecedents are either in the mind or out of it, we see clearly that all the variations in the results—in other words, all the changes of which history is full ; all the vicissitudes of the human race ; their progress or their decay, their happiness or their misery—must be part of a double action ; an action of external phenomena on the mind, and another action of the mind on the phenomena.”

I have made this long quotation for the purpose of preventing the possibility of misrepresenting the views of Mr. Buckle. To do him justice, he has fearlessly carried his

* It should be observed that under the term Predestination, Mr. Buckle, and writers of kindred schools of thought, include what we mean by the ordinary providential action of Almighty God.

principles out to their utmost possible limits. At page 20 he says :—

“The actions of men are, by an easy and obvious division, separated into two classes—the virtuous and the vicious ; and as these classes are relative, and when put together complete the total of our moral conduct, it follows that whatever increases the one will, in a relative point of view, diminish the other ; so that if we can at any period detect a uniformity in the vices of a people, there must be a corresponding regularity in their virtues ; or if we could prove a regularity in their virtues, we should necessarily infer an equal regularity in their vices—the two sets of actions being, according to the terms of the division, merely supplementary to each other. Or, to express the proposition in another way, it is evident that if it can be demonstrated that the bad actions of men vary in obedience to the changes in the surrounding society, we shall be obliged to infer that their good actions, which are, as it were, the residue of their bad ones, vary in the same manner ; and we shall be forced to a further conclusion, that both variations are the results of large and general causes which, working together on the aggregate of society, must produce certain consequences without regard to the volition of those particular men of whom society is composed.”

I am not prepared to deny that there is a considerable amount of truth in several of these statements ; but the mixture of error deprives them of much of their value. The truth which they contain was much better expressed by another philosophical historian, who wrote nearly 400 years before the Christian era. I need not say that the historian to whom I allude is the great historian Thucydides. He was content to write a philosophical history without the ambitious attempt to force all things divine and human into conformity with an *à priori* theory and the principles of the Positive philosophy. The Greek tells us that he wrote his history in the full belief that like causes would for the most part produce like results ; but, notwithstanding this, he was a foolish believer in the freedom of human actions. Mr. Buckle, however, could not be satisfied unless he attempted to reduce the whole moral and spiritual worlds to a sequence as invariable and necessary as the connection between cause and effect ; or, to use the more approved phraseology of the Positive philosophy, between antecedent and consequent in the material universe. It seems never to have occurred to him that, to enable him to have the smallest chance of attaining such a view of human things, a greater aid must be invoked than the science of statistics, on which he mainly relies. As I have already hinted, it will be necessary for him to invest himself with the attribute of Omniscience, for nothing short of it can take a comprehensive

view of all the antecedents and all the consequents of human actions.

I entirely agree with Mr. Buckle in a certain portion of his position. The incorrectness of his principles arises rather from a *suppressio veri* than a *suggestio falsi*. Doubtless all human actions are the result of motives, and these motives of other antecedents; and it is quite true that these motives or antecedents exercise a powerful influence in producing a modified uniformity of result. But they act neither necessarily nor invariably, but for the most part, and subject to a vast complication of conditions of various degrees of contingency, and are liable to be modified within certain limits by that power which, despite of Mr. Buckle, we designate individuality or will.

One fallacy has crept into Mr. Buckle's reasoning, through the confusion which he has introduced between motives and antecedents. These, at any rate in the latter part of the quotation, he has identified together. The terms antecedent and consequent are dangerous terms to apply to the operations of the mind, because they introduce a confusion between the causes and effects, the antecedents and consequents of nature, and the various influences which act on the mind. All motives are antecedents, but all antecedents are not motives. This, Mr. Buckle seems to have overlooked, and by doing so he has assumed the very point which he was required to prove. Among the antecedents of human actions, the rational will and the individuality occupy a very important place. According to our view of the case, they are as much antecedents as any motives, or the antecedents of those motives. The failure to perceive this has vitiated the whole of Mr. Buckle's reasoning, and led him to assume the point which he has undertaken to demonstrate, viz., the nullity of the influence of free-will in the affairs of men.

Mr. Buckle also errs when he refers all motives to a common quantitative standard, and omits to discriminate between different classes of motives which differ in character from each other, and are incapable of being reduced to a common quantitative measure. Another fallacy is found in his quiet assumption that the action of the will is nearly, if not quite, synonymous with the action of chance; and that to assert that human affairs are influenced by the one is much the same thing as to proclaim them under the dominion of the other. Between the action of the rational will in man, and that of the principle which we designate chance, I cannot see the smallest necessary connection.

The imperfection of human language and the want of

distinct terms to designate distinct ideas is the fruitful source of endless confusion of thought. Nowhere is there equal danger of this confusion as in the philosophy of mind, owing to the fact that nearly every term which we are compelled to use in treating it, in its primary sense, is applicable to the world of matter. The plain fact is, a moral cause—or, as Mr. Buckle loves to call it, an antecedent—differs wholly from a physical one even in its conception. In speaking of ourselves as causes, we mean a wholly different thing from what we mean when we use the same term in relation to physical causation. The one always involves the idea of freedom and self-origination, which the other excludes. When I say that I am the cause of my actions, I mean a wholly different thing than when I say that a steam-engine is the cause of its results. The one may be a set of antecedents and consequents; but to express the phenomena of the other by a similar term is to invite confusion of thought.

No less clear is the distinction between motive and force; though, owing to the imperfection of language, we are constantly speaking of the force of motives. To suppose that when we are speaking of the force of a steam-engine and when we are speaking of the force of a motive, we are speaking of things specifically the same, is the greatest of fallacies; yet into fallacies of a similar kind there is no little danger of falling. All physical forces may be expressed by a common measure of quantity; motives or moral forces cannot. Physical forces compel; motives act on the rational will in a manner differing wholly from the idea of compulsion. They vary both in intensity and in character.

I fully agree with Mr. Buckle, that motive of some kind is an antecedent of all human action. But it is not the only antecedent. To act without motive is impossible. Motives also are of the utmost variety in kind. One class is related to the lower portions of human nature; another to our rationality; another to the highest portions of our spiritual being. It is untrue to say that their power to command is a mere question of greater or less intensity. One of the higher motives is capable of influencing the mind against the much greater intensity of a lower one. For example, a man may be impelled by a strong desire for sensual indulgence, which, if allowed to be deeply meditated on, would propel him into intemperance. The higher will connected with the reason restrains it. The will presents a motive of a wholly different character to the contemplation of the mind. The voice of what we designate conscience makes itself audible, and the temptation is overcome. These latter influences differ from

the former, not only in intensity or force, but in their entire conception and *modus operandi*. To confound them together under the common terms antecedent and consequent must lead to a false philosophy.

Mr. Buckle's original fallacy of ignoring the effects of human freedom is the foundation of all the great blemishes by which his work is disfigured, and it is impossible to say that they are either few or small. I have already shown the connection of the will with our self-conscious personality, and that with our higher reason. I shall designate their union in all their complicated action by the term the rational will. The force of this principle in our struggle with the inferior portions of our nature has been recognized by every good and holy man in every age; nay, by all men in all ages. Its existence has deeply impressed itself on the structure of language. The desperate struggles of the one with the other have been most graphically described by St. Paul in Romans vii. That description has found a response in every human soul which has deeply meditated on it.

The action of the rational will in neutralizing a lower motive through the influence of a higher one, is exerted in every instance where we triumph over a powerful temptation. Without it our triumph over temptation would be impossible. Its influence is the source of all rational self-denial. Inferior animals exercise a species of self-denial, but this originates in the superior power of one instinct compared with another. The maternal love of a hen, for instance, overcomes her desire for food. But quite different is the self-denial of man, exercised under the influence of conscience, culminating as it has in the surrender of his life under a sense of the duty which he owes to his Maker. But if I understand Mr. Buckle's theory aright, self-denial must with him be an unmeaning term; for if all motives possess a common quantitative measure, and dominate in proportion to their intensity, and the action of the rational will counts for nothing, self-denial, after all, must be only one act of self-gratification triumphing over another.

The whole of this question has been discussed by Aristotle in the seventh book of his *Ethics*, which I am inclined to think is the greatest book in that great work. Its analysis is masterly. It has its imperfections, doubtless, which philosophers with the New Testament in their hands ought to have supplied long ere this; but I am acquainted with no work where this has been accomplished. As an analysis of some of the profoundest depths of human nature, written by a heathen, it strikes the mind with amazement. It is impossible for me to transfer even an abridgment of its contents to this

paper. I can only refer to it as containing an ample refutation of some of Mr. Buckle's fallacies, composed by a heathen philosopher more than two thousand years before they were written.

Mr. Buckle has broadly stated his opinion, which he says he has arrived at after the most careful study of ancient authors, that Christianity has added nothing to our knowledge of morals. If this be the case, I have already pointed out where the principles on which his moral philosophy is based can be confuted by a heathen writer. But the assertion I can hardly treat with patience, as I am precluded from giving it a direct refutation by the necessary limits of my paper. As it is an assertion which is continually recurring, and is frequently put forward as if it were an indisputable truth, if I am not guilty of presumption I will state where I have recently grappled with the entire question, and, as I think, thoroughly refuted it. The whole subject is dealt with in the fifth chapter of *The Jesus of the Evangelists*, entitled the Moral Teaching of our Lord. It consists of thirty-three pages, and cannot be reduced in length.

I must beg pardon for slightly diverging from my subject. Mr. Buckle would perhaps say that I am impelled by one of his antecedents to do so, and that it is a case of the necessary action of all-powerful motive. The impulse is, I own, a strong one, but I feel assured that it is under the control of my rational will. In connection with the subject of Morality and Christianity, at p. 164, Mr. Buckle has made the following most marvellous statement. In the text he is denying the influence of moral motives and moral instincts on civilization. He asserts that little or no progress has been made in our knowledge of the principles of morality and motivity for thousands of years. When they were first discovered, with singular facility, he forgets to tell us; for surely there must have been some period when they were first brought to light, since man emerged from a condition of utterly savage darkness. He adds, "Not one jot or one tittle has been added to them by all the sermons, homilies, and text-books which moralists and theologians have been able to produce."

This is a strong statement, but the one in the note to which I allude is far stronger; and it is most inexplicable how a man of Mr. Buckle's compass of mind could have brought himself deliberately to assert it. It is as follows—"That the system of morals propounded in the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously enunciated; and that some of the most beautiful passages in the apostolic writings are quotations from Pagan writers, is well known to every scholar."

Now, with respect to the first portion of Mr. Buckle's assertion, after the reference which I have made I shall content myself with saying that, to a great extent, it is not true; and that the little truth which it contains is so put as greatly to misrepresent the fact. But with respect to the second portion, that "some of the most beautiful passages in the apostolic writings are quotations from Pagan writers, is well known to every scholar,"—if my rational will did not exert a powerfully controlling influence, I should be impelled to use hard language. I shall only say that it is positively untrue, and that he ought to have known that it was so; or if he did not know it, it is only consistent with the fact that he had never read the New Testament through, or had forgotten its contents. Perhaps I may be allowed to put in a charitable supposition, that he has confounded the numerous quotations of the Old Testament found in the pages of the New with supposed quotations from Pagan writers. What is the fact? There are only two quotations from Pagan writers in the whole New Testament, both made by the Apostle Paul, the one of which is the well-known passage in his speech at Athens, quoted from the poet Aratus, "We are also his offspring;" and the other is the passage in the Epistle to Titus, the quotation from Epimenides, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." I do not discern that either of these passages has any pre-eminent beauty beyond the other numerous beautiful passages contained in the Apostle's writings. The latter, which simply asserts that the national character of the Cretans united some of the cruel qualities of the brute with the cunning and truthlessness of the Greek, is certainly not conspicuous for its beauty, although it is doubtless a plain statement of an unpleasant fact.

I am not ignorant that some attempts have been made to show that St. Paul had read Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. As to whether he had done so or not, I wish to express no opinion. But the evidence which can be gathered from his writings that he had, is at best extremely small, and the whole is a matter of conjecture. As for the other writings of the New Testament, they do not present a trace that their authors had ever read a Pagan writer of any kind, with perhaps the single exception of St. Luke. Even here the indications are most indistinct and uncertain. There is not the smallest indication that a single saying of Christ which he reports was derived from such a source. If there are any other assertions in Mr. Buckle's work made with equal recklessness, it deprives him of all authority as a correct reporter of facts.

Assertions like those of Mr. Buckle are somewhat similar to

a case which has occurred within the last few months. I need hardly say that I allude to the article in the *Quarterly Review* of October last, entitled "The Talmud." The views of this writer respecting the morality of the New Testament are only a little less fallacious than those of Mr. Buckle. At one thing I am astonished, viz., the facility with which such assertions are swallowed, not only by the public, but by those who ought to know better. Perhaps it is to be attributed to an ever-increasing desire for the new and the sensational.

I must mention one point for the purpose of proving the entire fallacy of the assertion that the teaching of our Lord contains nothing new in connection with morality. The great doctrine of faith, as taught by Christ and enlarged on by the apostles, is absolutely new. It is remarkable how much its importance has been overlooked as bearing on the whole question of moral philosophy and motivity. Our Lord uniformly employs this principle as the great motive power by which He uniformly acted on the spiritual and moral worlds by which the amelioration of man from a state of degradation is alone rendered possible. Previously to the enunciation of the great doctrine of faith by our Lord, it had been unthought of by poet, priest, or philosopher. Our Lord announced it as the great motive principle, powerful to act on man's spiritual and moral being. Philosophers know nothing of it. Aristotle himself expressly asserts that the intellect is no motive principle in man. But faith is an intellectual act, closely connected with man's spiritual and moral nature. The motive character of faith forms the foundation on which our Lord's spiritual and moral temple is erected, of which His glorious personality, as exhibited by faith and to faith, is the chief corner-stone. Our Lord proclaimed faith as the one great means of man's regeneration and improvement; and since He has proclaimed it, it has exerted a spiritual and moral power on man, compared with which all the motives with which the philosophers were acquainted are utterly insignificant. It is high time that a true moral philosophy should be created, which recognizes this and other great truths of which the Gospel of Christ was the first exponent.

But I must return from this digression. I am a firm believer that the reign of law dominates in the realms of mind, and that the moral, religious, and intellectual condition of the individual grows out of, and is largely determined by, the moral, religious, and intellectual atmosphere in the midst of which he lives. The genius or the powers of the individual can only raise him above this to a certain point of elevation, and that not a very lofty one. The law of our progressive improvement is a very slow one; and it is lamentable to be

obliged to admit the presence of another law more rapid in its operation—that of retrogressive degeneration. If improvements in the condition of human society ever take place at a more accelerated ratio, they can only be effected by external influences. These also are deeply modified by the condition of the moral, religious, and intellectual atmosphere in the midst of which they exist. It is necessary thus to refer to my own views to prevent the possibility of misapprehension, or the supposition that I am impugning Mr. Buckle where I am not. My own opinions as to the operation of these laws I have briefly stated elsewhere.* What I am contending against is the unnecessary matter which Mr. Buckle imports into what I believe to be a statement of a great truth, and his embodying it in propositions of unnecessary universality.

This arises from his theory of antecedents and consequents, his denial of freewill, and his attempt to establish a philosophy of man as necessary as are the conditions of his physical being. In some respects there is a similarity between the results of his philosophic principles and those of Mr. Carlyle, widely as they differ in other respects. I am the last person to speak disrespectfully of some of the works of the latter writer, especially of the *History of the French Revolution*, from which I have derived the greatest instruction. But, while acknowledging the good, I am deeply sensible of the errors of both writers. One principle underlies both minds in common—the principle of the inevitable action of force. With them the individual is nothing; the mass and the inevitable current of events are everything. Others, on the contrary, commit the error of assigning everything to individual agency, and little to the great moral, religious, and intellectual forces. One of the great errors of both writers is that they concur in representing human things as moving by the force of inevitable destiny, and that whatever has perished, has perished because it deserved to perish. Mr. Carlyle assigns great weight to the occasional advent of a great man, when nature vouchsafes to send us one. In other respects, individuality is by both writers reduced nearly to zero. Of course I do not mistake Mr. Carlyle for a Positive philosopher. For the philosophical aspect of that system he would feel unbounded scorn.

Three chief powers control the affairs of men, and make them what they are. First, the influences which act on the masses; secondly, the action of individuality; thirdly, the orderings of the providences of God. If we overlook either of these influences, the result will be a false philosophy.

I cannot avoid putting one or two questions, which I appre-

* I have discussed this subject in the sixth chapter of *The Jesus of the Evangelists*, as far as is necessary for the purposes of my argument.

hend must be answered in favour of the influence of individuality and of Divine Providence. What effect would have been produced on the world's history if Pausanias, instead of assassinating Philip, had, by mistake, assassinated Alexander? Mistakes of this kind have been sometimes committed. What effect would have been produced on the development of the Greek mind, and by consequence on the whole course of modern civilization, if some stray missile had killed Themistocles at Artemisium? The battle of Salamis would never have been fought, Greece would have been conquered by the Persians, and the whole course of civilization changed. What effect would have been produced on the modern world if the coachman of Napoleon the First had not been somewhat the worse for liquor, and, instead of driving his master furiously to the theatre, had driven at a more moderate pace? In that case the explosion of the infernal machine would have taken place, not when the emperor was at a safe distance, but when he was within a few yards of it, and the course of modern history would have been different. Or, to take a more solemn subject, what would have been the effect on the whole course of European civilization (I speak in a human point of view) if the Apostle Paul had never set foot in Europe? Would the course of human affairs have been the same if either of these events had happened differently? If so, the providences of God and the individuality of man are appreciable factors in the sum total of the affairs of men; and if we ignore their influence, a philosophical view of history is impossible. I do not wish to deny that the influences to which both these writers appeal are very weighty ones, but I except against the assumption that they are almighty, as wholly unphilosophical.

The principles laid down by Mr. Buckle often warrant far more universal and necessary conclusions than he feels it convenient to draw from them. In the passage which I have quoted, he tells us that "if we knew the whole of the antecedents and consequents, we could, with unerring certainty, predict the whole of their immediate results." This is a necessary conclusion from his premises. But a little further on he is content with a more humble result. "If," says he, "I am intimately acquainted with the character of a person, I can frequently tell how he will act under any given circumstances." This latter assertion is unquestionably true. But the premises required, not that he should frequently tell, but that he should always tell unerringly. We come back to the old and well-established position of moral truth—a truth which, at any rate, is as old as Aristotle—and not to the new light of the Positive philosophy, that universal moral proposi-

tions differ from those in necessary matter, the one being true always and under all circumstances; the other, only for the most part. That the angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles is a proposition invariably true under all circumstances. That motives will produce similar results under similar circumstances is true for the most part only. In other words, it is subject to the laws regulating moral cause and effect, and not to the antecedents and consequents of the material world.

Mr. Buckle calls the belief in free-will a dogma. I cannot understand how it can be correctly designated a dogma. The belief in a predetermined order of events, unless we arrive at it by a course of induction, which is impossible, is a dogma. But my belief in my own freedom is no more a dogma than my belief in the existence of light, or that I am now reading and not speaking. To place both under the same category is illogical.

The previous remarks almost render it unnecessary that I should make any further observations on Mr. Buckle's theories respecting the virtuous and vicious actions of mankind. If his premises are granted, each advancing stage follows as a necessary consequence. I am far from wishing to contradict the position that the great mass of mankind are affected, for weal or for woe, by the moral, religious, and intellectual atmosphere in which they have been born, and in the midst of which they have been educated. The influence exerted by it over our whole being is immense. The man who is born a Bengalee, for the most part gets engrafted into his moral nature the vices of that character; and, if I may be allowed to humour our self-love, a man who is born an Englishman acquires the magnificent virtues of our race. But this is a moral truth only, not a universal or inevitable one. In the words of Aristotle, it is true *ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ*, and no more. We know, to our own cost, that there are multitudes in this metropolis who are slenderly endowed with English virtues, and are following a lamentable and consistent law of degradation.

But it is no inevitable consequence arising from the laws of the moral world, that every individual of these degraded classes must follow this course of degradation. No doubt the aggregate of society follows certain general laws; but I must protest against the assertion that "this is without any regard to the volition of those particular men of whom society is composed." How Mr. Buckle could have overlooked the fallacy of his reasoning is inconceivable; for it is evident that the aggregate results produced on society must include all the

individual influences, the motives, and the action of the rational will. The law in conformity with which society has developed itself, must include the action both of motives and of volition. The law of development is nothing but a generalized statement of the complicated action of these conjoint but wholly distinct powers. The mode in which Mr. Buckle places it is as destructive of the principles of morality and responsibility as the theories of the mad doctors.

I must now briefly allude to the manner in which Mr. Buckle endeavours to confirm his theories by the aid of the science of statistics.

Here, again, let it be clearly understood that I am not going to utter one word for the purpose of lessening our estimate of that science. Statistics are of the greatest value when they correctly exhibit the results of well-arranged facts, and when they are kept in their proper place and in due subordination. What I protest against is the growing tendency with writers of a certain class to represent them as the only road to the temple of Truth; or, to use the language of Isaiah, to make of them a god and worship them; to make them into a graven image, and to bow down thereto. The way to the temple of Truth is so arduous that we want to have the aid of every possible help to conduct us thither.

Mr. Buckle tells us that we are taught by the science of statistics that the number of murders which take place in any particular country is pretty much the same year by year, in proportion to the population. This may be true, and yet prove nothing for Mr. Buckle. On his principles it ought to be, not pretty much the same, but always and invariably the same; otherwise, the antecedents act only for the most part. But Mr. Buckle's theory is, that they act necessarily and independently of the will of the individual. It is singular that a man of such acuteness should have overlooked the fact that the statistics are the combined result of what he designates the antecedents, and of the will itself, and do not represent the results of the independent action of either one of them:—

“So uniform (says Mr. Buckle) is the production of crime, that it is more certain in its results than the progress of physical disease and death. Thus, for instance, the number of persons accused of crime in France between 1826 and 1846 was by a singular coincidence about equal to the male deaths which took place in Paris during the same period, the difference being that the fluctuations in the amount of crime were actually smaller than the fluctuations in the mortality; while a similar regularity was observed in each separate offence, all of which obeyed the same law of uniform and periodical repetition.”

Mr. Buckle observes in a note that "this is even true, notwithstanding the occurrence of a revolution which convulsed society, and brought in a new dynasty." The net result is that, according to Mr. Buckle's philosophy, the laws which regulate the moral world are more uniform in their operation than those which govern the physical universe.

Unfortunately, I have not the means of examining into these very curious statistics. I am compelled, therefore, to assume that they are both correct, and correctly stated. But for the previous reason, that all statistics must represent the complex results of the conjoint action of the rational will, and of the motives which act on that will, I must demur to the conclusion which Mr. Buckle would draw from the alleged uniformity. In good truth, if his theory is correct, it will be the duty of her Majesty's Government to introduce a reform bill of a wholly different kind from any legislation which has yet been attempted in the history of man, and, by negotiation, to try to persuade all foreign Governments to imitate their example. This reform bill must enact, that all such expressions as virtue, vice, duty, obligation, right, &c. &c.—in a word, the whole class of similar forms of conception which the stupidity of man has so deeply impressed on human speech—be removed out of the English language with all convenient speed. As the French revolutionists in their day substituted a new calendar in place of the old and effete Christian one, so human language will have to undergo a purgation from such unmeaning terms, in conformity with the new gospel according to statistics and the principles of the Positive philosophy, the proclamation of which is to herald in the true Millennium. The necessity of doing so will certainly arise if man's moral and spiritual nature is bound by laws more invariable in their results than those which regulate his physical being.

It is certainly difficult to conceive of any cause which can connect the number of male deaths in Paris with the number of crimes committed throughout France; and I apprehend, if such an invariable ratio exists, it must involve a problem infinitely more complicated than the solution of that which tests the endurance of the powers of the greatest mathematicians; viz., the determination of the conjoint influence of a number of variables, varying as each other. If this law of variation exists in *rerum naturâ*, we cannot help being struck by the remarkable fact that, according to these statistics, it is not the number of actual crimes committed in France which vary in a direct ratio to the number of the male deaths in Paris, but that it is the number of persons "who are accused of the crime," of whom a certain proportion are doubtless innocent. The

real proportion, therefore, exists between the number of the male deaths in Paris and the tendencies of the French police and others to accuse people of crime—unless they are possessed in France of the most desirable secret of knowing how to avoid accusing any one but the guilty party. If Mr. Buckle is right, the tendency in France to accuse people of crime follows a law as invariable as that which regulates the physical causes of death; and also, a similar ratio exists in the tendency to accuse others of each separate offence. I can only say that this is marvellous if true, and that he who can believe it need not sneer at the credulity of one who can believe a miracle.

Mr. Buckle next adduces the uniformity which prevails in the number of suicides in proportion to the population of a country as another convincing proof of the soundness of his principles, and in the name of it we are invited to renounce our belief in our free agency. His words are worthy of quotation—"Among public and recognized crimes, there are none so dependent on the individual as suicide." I presume that by the evils dependent on the individual, he can only mean dependent on the action of the will of the individual. But this is made plain by what he says a little further on—"Men," says he, "are not goaded to commit suicide by companions, nor are they interfered with by any external association which might hamper what is termed the freedom of the will."

The answer to Mr. Buckle is a simple one, and I am utterly at a loss to conceive how it could have escaped his observation. The facts are exactly the contrary to what he conceives them to be. He says, "Among public and recognized crimes, there are none so dependent on the individual as suicide." The verdict of every jury tells us that there are none so little dependent on the individual or under the control of his will. Suicide in the vast majority of cases is a consequence of mental derangement, and in such cases the rational will is deposed from its supremacy, and allows impulse to reign supreme. Whatever theory we may hold respecting madness or its causes, it is not unfrequently the result of disease in the brain, which can be actually detected. Suicide, therefore, belongs to the order of physical phenomena, and not of moral ones.

Mr. Buckle seems to have fallen into the inconceivable mistake of having confounded will with impulse.

I concede to him the fact that men are not usually goaded to commit suicide by companions—*i.e.*, they are seldom directly tempted by them to do so. But what has this to do with the matter? Are no actions voluntary which we are tempted to do at the suggestion of others? But Mr. Buckle's assertion

is only true in a very limited sense. Although our companions seldom tell us to go and hang ourselves, yet, notwithstanding this, men are often goaded by their companions to commit suicide; as, for example, a wife by a drunken husband, and *vice versâ*. "Nor," says he, "are they interfered with by any external association which might hamper what is termed the freedom of the will." I reply, are not men driven to commit suicide under the overwhelming influences of misfortune, despair, and the breaking-down of their mental constitution? Of all the acts of man, none are so entirely beyond the control of his will; and to quote the uniformity of suicide as shown by statistics as a proof that the will is powerless of all influence in human affairs, is exactly one of those things of which a schoolboy would exclaim, "That is good!"

One more proof on which Mr. Buckle relies to support his theory that the influence of the will in human affairs is a vanishing quantity, is the uniformity of moral law as proved by the statistics of marriage. I am sorry to tell every lady and gentleman present that his individual will never has nor ever will exert any real influence in this matter; but that we have been and ever will be determined by a succession of hard antecedents and consequents, over which we can exert no control. This is certainly a glorious gospel to have proclaimed in our ears in these latter days. But what is this all-constraining influence, in the name of which we are invited to believe that in this especially delicate matter we have no free agency? I am afraid that you will think that I have misrepresented Mr. Buckle, and I will therefore quote his own words—"It is now known that marriages bear a fixed and definite relation to the price of corn; and in England the experience of a century has proved that, instead of having any connection with personal feelings, marriages are simply regulated by the average earnings of the great mass of the people; so that this immense social and religious institution is not only swayed but is completely controlled by the price of food and the rate of wages."

Ladies and gentlemen, the gospel according to statistics and the Positive philosophy, if it is rightly interpreted by Mr. Buckle, is truly to you a gospel of good news; but I suspect, after all, that the evidences on which it rests are not so strong as to deprive us of all belief in the four Evangelists. You who wish to procure wives or husbands need not for the future trouble yourselves about any endowments, mental or bodily. The whole matter is regulated for you by causes over which you can exert no control. You are absolved from all attempts to please. You need not consider suitableness of

character or agreement in your tastes. All those influences on which we were foolish enough to imagine that our happiness depended have vanished under the new dispensation. Nay, even sentimentality and caprice must count as nothing in this most momentous affair of life for ever and a day. We have no will about the matter, either rational or otherwise; and in thinking that we ever had, we have been under the fondest of delusions. Mr. Buckle informs us that, under this new dispensation, "this great social and religious institution is not only swayed but is completely controlled by the price of food and the rate of wages," and that "the experience of a century in England proves that marriages have no connection with personal feelings." No sensible man will entertain a doubt that the number of marriages in any particular year is affected by the general prosperity of the country; but one would have thought that the giving utterance to such a paradox as that "marriages have no connection with our personal feelings, and that this great social and religious institution is not only swayed but is completely controlled by the price of food and wages," would have caused any man to pause and question the truth both of his principles and conclusions. If such has been Mr. Buckle's experience in the matter, I can only say that it flatly contradicts my own; and as long as my powers of memory continue unimpaired, I shall reject the conclusion which Mr. Buckle draws from his statistics. I must again take refuge behind my former objection, that the statistics include the action of our individual wills, our likes and our dislikes, our sentimentalities and our fancies; and they will only avail to prove Mr. Buckle's point when he has succeeded in eliminating every one of these out of the problem; and when he has got rid of all these variables, his statistics will assume a different character, and we shall be able to go on in years to come as we have in those which are past. It is more than any one of us can believe, that we are bound by as iron a law in the matter of marriage as nature is by the doctrine of the parallelogram of forces; and that neither free will nor caprice exerts any influence over this great social and religious institution.

In a similar manner we are informed that the numbers of the letters lost in the post-office bear nearly the same ratio, year by year, to the numbers of the population. What this has to do with proving the powerlessness of individual influence on the great total of human affairs I cannot tell. It very seldom happens that any of us drop a letter into the post-office with a bank-note in it without a direction, or putting our own name and address, deliberately and of set purpose. When

we drop one in inadvertently, a powerful action of our individuality usually takes place as soon as we have discovered it, and we do not quietly resign ourselves to the necessary action of a set of antecedents. One thing, however, Mr. Buckle consistently persists in forgetting—that to give his arguments the smallest efficacy to prove his conclusions, the ratios must not be nearly similar, but invariably the same. At any rate I must put in a claim on behalf of free-will for the difference.

But Mr. Buckle by no means confines himself to the use of statistics. He considers that man's physical position in this or that particular country exerts a nearly inevitable influence in determining his condition for weal or woe, and that the individuality, or what we call the will, of man is powerless to resist the external influences in the midst of which he is placed. He has endeavoured to prove this by a large induction; but it should be observed that, like multitudes of persons who are blinded by theory, whether theologians or philosophers, he has forgotten to take account of those which make against him.

Mr. Buckle is of opinion that man's local position has exerted an overwhelming influence over his early civilization, and that it has made him what he is. If we knew the precise nature of the one, we could invariably determine that of the other. He has nowhere defined the term civilization; but it is evident that he includes under it, not only what we commonly mean by it, but the whole of man's intellectual, moral, and religious developments, which I shall designate by one single word, his idealization. Mr. Buckle has explained, at great length, his views of the influence exerted on civilization by the natural products of the soil, the heat of the climate, and the physical phenomena to which each particular country is subject. These influences impress themselves on the character of the inhabitants with a force which no act of their individuality is able to control. Each great race of the ancient world was made by them what it was. The climate has determined the kind of food, and the latter has left an indelible impression on the national character.

The early civilizations originated in regions whence food was easily attainable. In proportion to the ease with which it could be procured, has been the rapid development of the particular form of its civilization, and its subsequently stunted growth. Exuberant fertility of the soil has been far from a blessing to man. To causes of this description he traces the civilization of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, India, Mexico, and Peru. But he forgets that, in accordance with his theories,

these causes ought not only to exert a general operation, but to produce an absolute uniformity of result, not only in their great outlines, but in the minutest details. In proportion as the supply of food is large, and attained by a small amount of labour, in the opinion of Mr. Buckle, national degradation is the inevitable consequence. He introduces the state of Ireland in the days of plentiful potatoes as a striking illustration. It seems, however, never to have occurred to him that some of the great peculiarities of the Irish race, which still exist with no inconsiderable force, were certainly as ancient as the days of Cæsar, and how much higher is their antiquity we have no certain testimony of history to determine. It is impossible, therefore, to account for these peculiar traits either from the influence of potatoes or that of the Roman Catholic religion, whatever both these causes may have done to aggravate them in the case of the Irish people. Perhaps, however, Mr. Buckle will say that the Caucasian race was cursed with a superabundant supply of food before they left their original abode in Asia. But as there is no evidence of this as an historical fact, this would be to prove one theory to be correct by inventing another. If that were conceded as legitimate, Mr. Buckle would have to show why these causes have not produced similar results on the German race.

Mr. Buckle ascribes the moral and political evils of India to the ease of the production of rice and raki: those of Egypt to the date. They stand to one another in the relation of cause and effect. "In India," says he, "abject, eternal slavery was the natural state of the great body of the people. It was the state to which they were doomed by physical laws utterly impossible to resist. The energy of those laws is in truth so invariable, that whenever they have come into play they have kept the productive classes in perpetual subjection" (p. 73).

Mr. Buckle, however, admits that the case of Brazil is against him, and numerous other examples which would greatly modify his theory he passes over in silence. Brazil, notwithstanding its apparent advantages, has always remained uncivilized. His explanation is curious. It may be a piece of very fine writing, but, to my mind, it entirely misses the mark. "Amidst the pomp and splendour of nature," says he, "no place is left for man; he is reduced to insignificance by the majesty by which he is surrounded" (p. 95). I reply, Brazil is an immense country. Is everything in it majestic? Is it all pomp and splendour? At least some portions of it exactly fulfil Mr. Buckle's conditions for the presence of an early civilization.

In a similar manner he traces the peculiar aspects of European civilization to the absence of these conditions. Its colder climate and uncongenial soil have created the individual character which distinguishes the European from the Asiatic races, effected the dispersion of wealth, and generated the feeling of personal freedom.

But there is another power to which Mr. Buckle ascribes a potent influence in the creation of the ideas of religion and morality—the aspects of external nature. He divides them into two divisions: those which excite the imagination, and those which affect the intellect. To the former, which he considers the potent influence, he ascribes the creation of the great national religions. On this subject Mr. Buckle has a very striking passage, which I cannot forbear quoting:—

“Man (says he), contrasting himself with the force and dignity of nature, becomes painfully sensible of his own insignificance. A sense of inferiority steals over him. From every quarter innumerable obstacles hem him in and limit his individual will. His mind, appalled by the indefinite and the undefinable, hardly cares to scrutinize the details of which such imposing grandeur consists. On the other hand, where the works of nature are small and feeble, man regains his confidence,” &c. &c. (p. 109).

Mr. Buckle is here theorizing, instead of making careful inductions of facts, and erecting on them only such theories as the facts will bear. He wants to account for the existence of the peculiar form of Asiatic, and, above all, Hindoo idealization. I do not wish to dispute with him that some of the things to which he attributes it have exerted a powerful influence, but to say that they are an account of the whole of the matter is to assume what he ought to prove. There is one country of which he conveniently omits all mention—Judæa, and the peculiar aspects of its civilization.

I ask, does not nature exist on a scale of extraordinary grandeur in other regions besides those whose peculiar civilization he is labouring to account for? Is she not vast in Alpine regions? Where does she exhibit herself with equal grandeur as in America? Is she not grand in Egypt, Assyria, or Babylonia? Yet she has not swallowed up man nor his individuality.

In such causes, according to Mr. Buckle's theories, the great national idealizations in religion and morality have originated. The distinctions between the religious aspects of Greece and India are enormous, and it was necessary that the difference between their physical aspects should be represented as equally wide to enable him to account for them. He therefore paints in very graphic language the terrific aspect

of nature in hot climates, and her milder ones in more temperate regions. He asserts that the effect of earthquakes, hurricanes, pestilences, tempests—the products of hot climates—exert a most disastrous influence on man's moral and spiritual being. One would be almost tempted to think, from his descriptions, that men in oriental countries saw nothing besides them. He even endeavours to trace the superstitious character of Spain and Italy, compared with that of other European countries, to these and similar causes.

I do not dispute the influence of many of these phenomena when they are confined within moderate limits, on the moral and religious character of mankind; but Mr. Buckle, when he mounts a horse, is not satisfied till he has ridden him to death. With him the laws of the moral and spiritual worlds cannot be laid down too universally or too invariably. He attributes the whole of the peculiarities of Indian civilization, including its religion, the peculiar forms of its poetry, its want of all genuine science, and its superstitions, to such influences as earthquakes, hurricanes, tempests, diseases—in a word, to all the terrific aspects of nature, forgetting all the while that there are other countries which are vastly more subject to these influences than India, where the character of the civilization has assumed a very different form. He then contrasts with all these terrors the more favourable position of Europe, and especially of Greece, and endeavours to account for the different aspects of their civilization in conformity with these conditions.

To one passage I must draw your attention as a remarkable specimen of Mr. Buckle's mode of reasoning, and I therefore quote a portion of it:—

“In Greece (says he) the aspects of nature are so entirely different that the conditions of existence are changed. Greece, like India, forms a peninsula; but while in the Indian country everything is grand and terrible, in the European country everything is small and feeble. The whole of Greece occupies a space somewhat less than the kingdom of Portugal, i.e. about a fortieth part of what we now call Hindustan, and dangers of all kinds are less numerous than in the tropical civilizations. The climate was more healthy, earthquakes were less frequent, hurricanes were less disastrous, wild beasts and noxious animals less abundant. The highest mountains of Greece are less than a third of the Himalayas, so that they nowhere reach the regions of perpetual snow.”

Out of these and similar influences Mr. Buckle deduces the differences of the Indian and Greek religions; the monstrosity of the one, and the human character of the other.

This is a singular instance of exaggeration; and of putting *non causa pro causa*. I have no wish to deny that a powerful

influence is exerted on man's religious ideas by the aspects of external nature. On the contrary, I firmly believe that they have contributed greatly to their modification. But this is not enough for Mr. Buckle. They must create them.

I was not aware that everything in India was so great and terrible; nor, although Greece is a small country, that the whole aspects of nature in it were feeble. Earthquakes were certainly not unusual in Greece; I should have thought far more frequent than in India. India is a very large country compared with Greece; but, owing to the difficulties of locomotion, I do not see how its vastness could have been deeply impressed on the minds of its inhabitants. Compared with its size, Greece is certainly a vastly more mountainous country than India. Dangers of all kinds were in the early ages abundant enough in Greece. Its mythic personages are described as the destroyers of wild beasts and noxious animals. The Himalayas are doubtless three times as lofty as the Greek mountains; but as they are situated in the north of India, and the great bulk of her population has always inhabited the great plains of her rivers, it is very unfortunate for Mr. Buckle's theory that they have been invisible to nine-tenths of her population. Mr. Buckle invents a theory, and then the facts to support it. Mountainous scenery must have been a subject of contemplation to a large proportion of the Grecian race; and if the contemplation of it has had any influence on the relative dimensions of gods in Greece and India, those of the former country ought to have been of far more gigantic proportions than those of the latter. But the contrary is the fact. If volcanic phenomena have exerted a potent influence on religion, Italy is certainly a far more volcanic country than India, far more subject to earthquakes, and the religious development ought to vary in proportion. What shall we say of some regions of South America, where these phenomena are of constant occurrence?

The whole of Mr. Buckle's errors are owing to his having started with a theory, to which it was necessary that the facts should be made to square. If true, it would save us from the trouble of a vast amount of painful investigation. Such theorizing is an original sin of the human mind. It is no peculiarity of any one class of thinkers. It behoves theologians watchfully and prayerfully to guard against it, no less than philosophers and men of science. It is not only mischievous in its false assumptions, but it poisons what is true in their respective systems.

I can hardly resist the temptation to enter on another most important portion of Mr. Buckle's philosophy of history—the relationship in which the development of man's intellect and

rational powers stands to his moral and spiritual being; but the length to which this paper has already gone prevents me from even scratching the surface of the rich mine of matter contained in these volumes on this subject. I will, therefore, only notice one most serious conclusion which Mr. Buckle thinks that he can deduce from the philosophic study of history in connection with it.

Mr. Buckle assigns the whole of man's improvement in civilization to one single power—the development of his intellectual faculties. I am far from wishing to dispute with him the mighty influence for good which the intellectual development of man has exerted. But Mr. Buckle will have it to be the only influence. In trying to establish this, he is induced to depreciate the influences which have been exerted by religion and morality; and, to make his position good, he is compelled to misrepresent Christianity itself. It is impossible to read this portion of his work and not to feel that Mr. Buckle has not hesitated to carry out his principles to those consequences. A one-sided theory has led him to mis-state facts.

Mr. Buckle's errors originate in his love for enormous generalizations, and his wish to trace everything to the influence of a single principle. Many of his propositions would be true enough if he would only state them with a large amount of qualification. But, instead of assigning a very important influence to the intellect on the development of our race, he endeavours to show that it is the only principle which has exercised an influence for good. His desire to prove this leads him habitually to depreciate the effects of the religious and moral influences which have been brought to bear on mankind. His language on these subjects is all the more dangerous, because it not unfrequently possesses a certain portion of truth. Thus, at p. 165, after having told us that intellectual acquisitions are carefully preserved in civilized countries, while the effects of good deeds speedily perish, he adds, that "although moral excellence is more amiable, and to most persons more attractive, than intellectual excellence, still it must be confessed that, looking at ulterior results, it is far less active, less permanent, and, as I shall presently prove, less productive of real good." He then adds, "These conclusions are, no doubt, very unpalatable; and what makes them peculiarly offensive is, that it is impossible to refute them." He then tells us that ignorant good men always do more evil than good; and that, whenever their intentions have been eager and the power extensive, the evil has been enormous. Still more offensively he adds, that "if you can diminish the sincerity of a man and mix up some alloy with his motives, you will diminish the evil which he works."

“If,” says he, “he is selfish as well as ignorant, it will often happen that you may play off his vice against his ignorance, and, by exciting his fears, restrain his mischief. But if he has no fear, if he is entirely unselfish, if his sole object is the good of others, if he pursues that object with disinterested zeal, then it is that you have no check upon him; you have no means of preventing the calamities which an ignorant man in an ignorant age would be sure to effect.” Mr. Buckle then at great length travels through the history of religious persecutions and other kindred subjects for the purpose of supporting these moral paradoxes, endeavouring to show that many of the vilest persecutors have been men of the purest virtue, and if they had been only less pure, they would have done far less mischief.

It would take me far more space than I can possibly give to it at the end of this paper to disengage the truth in these statements from the falsehood, and to point out the nature of the sophistries which are involved in his reasoning. To do so would render it necessary that I should investigate the first principles of the whole subject, and lay down the relation in which the intellect and the reason stand to our moral nature. One thing, however, it is obvious that Mr. Buckle habitually overlooks. Intellectual greatness or intellectual power never exists independently of a moral character of some sort. The intellectually great man must be either a morally good man or a morally bad one, or occupy an intermediate position. To distinguish between these two factors, though possible to our powers of abstraction, is not possible in fact. His view of the character of religious persecution requires great modification, and his inductions of facts are not always happy. It is perfectly true that Marcus Aurelius persecuted the Church, though certainly not under the inspiration of any great zeal for the worship of Jupiter; and that the wretched Cominodus and Elagabalus abstained from doing so. But is it a fact that all good emperors were persecutors, and that all bad emperors abstained from persecution? Nothing short of this will sustain Mr. Buckle’s position in the objectionable form in which he has placed it. I answer that Alexander Severus was nearly the best, if not the very best man who ever sat on the Imperial throne, and he tolerated Christianity. Maximin was an utterly bad man, and Galerius little better, though the latter was not destitute of some enlargement of mind, and both proscribed it. Diocletian also was not destitute of considerable mental qualifications, and he and Galerius assailed the Church with the most terrible persecution which she encountered during the continuance of the Roman Empire. Queen Mary was a moral but narrow-

mindful woman, and her case would help to support Mr. Buckle's theory; but Henry VIII. was a man of capacious intellect and far less morality, yet he was equally a persecutor with his daughter. Francis I. was both sufficiently intellectual and immoral for Mr. Buckle's purpose, but neither of these qualities saved him from the guilt of ruthless persecution.

I will place the issue of this part of the subject in one plain answer to a plain question, under the full assurance that, had Mr. Buckle been living, his answer must have been, even on his own principles, adverse to his own theory of the comparative nothingness of moral and religious influences compared with intellectual on the grand total of human affairs. The question which I am going to ask respects the great Author of Christianity himself. What has been the degree of influence which He has exerted? Has it been an intellectual or a moral and spiritual one? His great act of self-sacrificing love is beyond all question a moral and spiritual influence. Will Mr. Buckle deny that it has been a mighty one? He may say that he does not believe in it, but that does not affect the mighty power which, whether it be true or false, it has exerted. Will Mr. Buckle find any intellectual influence equally mighty as this great moral and spiritual power, which has for nearly two thousand years mightily swayed the minds of men? Mr. Buckle may tell us that moral influences speedily perish, while intellectual ones endure. Will he point out any intellectual influence which has been equally powerful and enduring as the great moral and spiritual act of the self-surrender of His life, which has been exhibited by Jesus Christ? Mr. Buckle's theory is ground to powder by the terrific pressure of the falling upon it of the Head Stone of the Corner.

One more reference, and I have finished. Mr. Buckle says at page 233 :—

“ Men of excellent intentions, and full of a fervent though mistaken zeal, have been, and still are, attempting to propagate their own religion among the inhabitants of barbarous countries. By strenuous and unremitting activity, and frequently by promises and even by actual gifts, they have in many cases persuaded savage communities to make a profession of the Christian faith. But when we compare the triumphant reports of missionaries with the evidence supplied by competent travellers, we soon find that such profession is only nominal. . . . After the careful study of history and the condition of barbarous nations, I do most confidently assert that there is no well-attested case of any people being permanently converted to Christianity, except in those very few instances where missionaries, being men of knowledge as well as men of piety, have familiarized the savage with habits of thought, and, by thus stimulating his intellect, have prepared him for the reception of

those religious principles which, without such stimulus, he would never have understood."

The fallacies in this passage are enormous. No intelligent Christian, I apprehend, ever means to gainsay the importance of a development of the intellect as a preparation for the reception of Christianity. To do so would be to treat with contempt the course of training to which the providence of God subjected the Pagan world before the Gospel of Christ appeared in the fulness of the times. In the course of Divine Providence, and under the influence of the preparation which it effected, Christianity was, in the earliest stages of its growth, preached to one of the most intelligent races of men. The importance of an intellectual preparation every intelligent Christian will fully concede to Mr. Buckle.

But what does he mean when he speaks of a barbarous country? The expression is extremely indefinite. Does he mean by the term "barbarian" a man sunk to the lowest level to which man has ever degenerated; or a race like the New Zealander, or the Polynesian, or the German barbarian, when he rushed on the Roman empire, and by the infusion of his blood regenerated its worn-out races; or the ancestors of the modern Magyar, or the Russian? Or again, what does he mean by the expression, "being permanently converted to Christianity"? In one sense of that term no nation ever has been permanently converted to Christianity—in the sense of every member of it having become perfectly obedient to the law of Christ, or perfectly comprehending the whole of its sublime teaching. I quite agree with Mr. Buckle that "the rites and forms of religion lie on the surface. It is the deeper and inward change which alone is durable." I again ask in what sense does Mr. Buckle use this term? for if he employs it in the sense of the full embodiment of the Christian law in the national life, he is only stating a truism. But, however he may have confused himself, his language conveys a very different meaning. I apprehend that he really pledges his historical knowledge to the fact that Christianity has never been permanently embraced by an uncivilized people—a people, in fact, which can be designated by the vague but popular term "barbarous," unless they have been subjected by the missionaries who have preached to them to a long course of intellectual training, and he attributes every appearance to the contrary to a species of bribery systematically pursued by zealous but mistaken men. Although Mr. Buckle's pages are encumbered with notes and with references, it is a singular fact that the page in which this charge is made is destitute of any. The whole of Mr. Buckle's mis-

statements on this point proceed from the fact that his theory compels him to ignore the moral and spiritual element in religion. I wish not to say one word in depreciation of an intellectual development as a preparation for the preaching of Christianity. I simply assert that Christianity possesses a mighty moral influence which is capable of speaking to the heart of a barbarian or a savage; and that while Christianity possesses truths suited to the loftiest intellect of man, it possesses truths so simple that none can be so easily addressed to the humblest states of the human mind, or are so calculated to exercise over it a civilizing influence. The bare reception of them at once softens the savageness of the human heart, and exalts the degraded intellectual powers. When, therefore, Mr. Buckle pledges his reputation as an historian that no barbarous nation has ever been converted to Christianity except under the conditions which he asserts, he imperils his literary reputation, and proves that he has read history with a veil of prejudice extended before his eyes, which has darkened the clear light of truth and damaged the distinctness of his intellectual vision.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure you will cordially vote our thanks to Mr. Row for his excellent paper (hear, hear); and now I shall be glad to hear any gentleman who may wish to speak upon it.

Mr. WARINGTON.—To do anything like justice to such a paper as this, and especially to take up the line of discussion which I should have liked to do, would take so long a time, and would lead to so much comment from others, that the discussion would be prolonged beyond all reasonable limits. But there are one or two points on which I must say a few words; and first with regard to that fundamental question, the freedom of the will. On that subject I should be disposed to take a view much nearer that of Mr. Buckle than that advocated by Mr. Row. I would ask this simple question: Is it a fact that my will is really free, and that I am completely master of everything I do? If that is so, it is possible for me, simply from powers innate in myself, to do everything that is right. There can be no such thing in my nature as a power for evil which I cannot overcome, if my will is paramount. If my will is absolutely free I can choose for myself every time that a question comes before me as to what I am to do. I can choose absolutely what course I will take, and thus it would be possible for me, and for every human being living, to be absolutely good and pure and holy. (No, no.) If my will is free, that must be so; it is a necessary consequence. But I know well that a negative answer must be given to that, for I am certainly not able to be absolutely good and pure and holy so long as I am left to my unaided self. The inference, then, is inevitable that my will is not absolutely free——

Captain FISHBOURNE.—It is free only to the limit of your own power.

Mr. WARINGTON.—Then it is not wholly free, for, as you admit, there is a limit. I appeal to the highest authority on the subject, and I find, in the

seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, an inspired Apostle giving, as the result of his experience, that that which he would he could not. He willed to do a thing, but he had not the power ; it was not a physical impossibility, but a moral impossibility. He willed to do a certain thing, but the law of his nature stepped in and said, " You shall not." That law was the master, and he was the slave—his will was not free ; it was fettered and bound. I stand upon that as a fact which we are bound to look clearly in the face in forming any theory as to what the will is. Now, how is this limitation of the freedom of will to be explained ? In order to explain that, it is necessary to analyze to some extent in what our will consists, and, to prevent misunderstanding, I will exclude all actions which are involuntary, or which are the result of physical compulsion, and, for the present, the influence of conscience also. What is there of will in my nature independent of the consciousness of a sense of right and wrong ? What is it, apart from conscience, that leads me to resolve upon any action ? I answer that it is my desire for something which shall be attained by that action. I see a book on that table, and I wish to open it. The only thing which impels me to open it is my desire to have it open. I can distinguish in my mind between the desire to open the book and the act of opening it, but between my desire and my will I can see no difference at all :—the one is the immediate outward manifestation of the other. But there may be something else in my mind which leads me not to open the book after all. The book belongs to somebody else, and it is a question whether I ought to open it ; whether it would be advisable as a matter of ordinary prudence that I should touch it. Another desire has now come into the field. I desire to keep on good terms, perhaps, with the owner, and I should not like him to be displeased with me for opening it ; and so, impelled by that desire, I leave it alone. But you may say I have here made choice between two desires. Nothing of the kind. I have simply two antagonistic desires, of which one is stronger than the other, and the stronger necessarily gets the best of it. The two desires struggle one against the other, and the stronger wins the day—

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—Do you mean to say that there are two distinct entities struggling against each other in your mind ?

Mr. WARINGTON.—Certainly not. There are two desires, belonging to different parts of me, but not two entities. So far as my consciousness goes I know of nothing between them, but the two desires are there struggling against each other, and I know of no third faculty holding the balance between the two, and making up its mind judicially as to which course it will adopt. Mr. Row, however, does know of the existence of a third faculty which here steps in. Now, you may complicate the matter as much as you like—you may bring into play a hundred different desires, if you please, instead of only two or three ; still I maintain that whichever happens to be the strongest among them is that which is in fact *the will*. These desires are of very various kinds, and affect various parts of my nature—

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I must say I do not understand you. You say these desires are struggling together, and affecting various parts of your nature. Are they your own desires ?

Mr. WARINGTON.—Unquestionably.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—Then, pardon me, but I do not see exactly what you are driving at.

Mr. WARINGTON.—I think the difficulty lies not so much in what I am driving at as in that against which I am driving—

Mr. REDDIE.—May I ask you a question? Would you be good enough to explain how you can at all exclude conscience from the argument?

Mr. WARINGTON.—I only exclude it for the moment. I shall come to it again presently—

Mr. REDDIE.—But the whole question really hinges upon it.

Mr. WARINGTON.—I will not omit it altogether. I think the difficulty which Dr. Irons experiences arises from this: the theory put before us speaks of desires or motives as one thing, and of the will as another thing. Now I submit that that distinction is one which you cannot possibly make—

The CHAIRMAN.—I think you have imported the word “desire” into the argument, Mr. Warington.

Mr. WARINGTON.—I am only battling against the theory that these desires or motives are separate from what I call my will; I say there is no distinction between will and motive. The will, I contend, is not a separate faculty which weighs the motives against each other, but it is the simple resultant of all the various motives working in my nature, and therefore it is simply the same as the preponderating desires or motives. I do not wish to make any distinction myself. I am merely fighting against such a distinction being made—

Rev. C. A. ROW.—I have used the term “rational will” in my paper.

Mr. WARINGTON.—Now, this is the first step in my argument—that the will is not a separate faculty, but a whole mass of desires or motives working together. I have here no power which I can, properly speaking, call free. My nature is so constituted that when certain things are presented to it, those things, inevitably, by a law of my nature, call into being certain desires, and those desires will come to all men. It is inevitable that they should. I am quite aware that they do not come equally to all men, because characters and dispositions are different. I simply deal with man as we find him. So far as the lower part of man’s nature is concerned—what we may call man’s soul in distinction to the spirit—it consists of a number of senses capable of being acted upon by external circumstances and things, and, being so acted upon, these then become desires and fight against each other, and thus produce in their action and reaction that which we call the will. We may for the purposes of illustration compare the mind of a human being to the House of Commons. You have a number of members, every one with his own wish and object to obtain, and they ultimately go to the vote, and the result is the will of the House—not a will distinct from the members who vote, but a will formed by the decision of the majority—

Rev. Mr. GREIG.—May I ask, is not that will free?

Mr. WARINGTON.—I submit that those desires are not free—they are bound in the way which Mr. Buckle has described. There is no physical compulsion of the will, but there is the compulsion of circumstances calling

up certain desires. Is there any power in my nature capable of willing and controlling them? If there is, I am free; if I can show that there is a faculty above them all in me, then I am free. Now, there is a faculty in man which claims to do it, and that faculty is conscience; but I submit that conscience has not the power to do what it thus claims. Sometimes, indeed, conscience seems to have the power, because it is able to call up and set in motion other desires of the lower man which will counterbalance those already in motion. A man desires to commit a theft, but the voice of conscience tells him that that is wrong, and stops him by calling to mind the punishment which will ensue if he carries out his desire. In that case the desire to avoid the punishment is greater than the desire to thieve. It is not that conscience alone has the power, but conscience calls up another power which really effects the work. A man drives a number of horses attached to a coach, with reins for each horse. If he had no power over the reins you would say he had no power over the horses. If he guided them merely by holding a bundle of hay before them you would not say he had much power over them, and that is very much the same sort of power that conscience has over the human soul, merely calling desires into action, but having no real power to control them. The Apostle Paul's conscience was of this kind. He desired to do that which was good, but he could not do what he wished. He was the slave of his human nature. But you will say, "Here is still a consciousness within myself that I am free, and *need* not do anything unless I like. Here is a sense of responsibility." Precisely so: this sense of responsibility is the key to the whole position. This sense of responsibility shows that there is some restrictive voice within us telling us what is right and what is wrong, and so convincing us that the reason for doing wrong is in ourselves. Man falls, and the fault is in himself, and yet he cannot help it, which shows at once the fact that conscience has not the power it ought to have. Yet still is he responsible, for it is his own nature that makes him do wrong. But our conscience, or our sense of responsibility, does not stop there. It tells us also that we might have done something different from what we did, and I conceive that that is to be explained on a far higher ground than any Buckle has thought of, or than we have heard hinted at in Mr. Row's paper. Man is conscious that there is a power within his reach that would enable his conscience to be the master, but that power does not lie in himself—it is far above him. Man is conscious of that intuitively. It is one of the instincts implanted in his nature that there is a divine power hovering about him, and which, if he grasps it, will make his conscience master of his whole nature. Then, if he grasps that spirit of God above him, he ceases to be a slave,—he is free. He is no longer a slave to sin and his own desires—he is free. In no other sense is man free. He has freedom within his grasp, he can choose it, he can stretch out the hand of faith and clasp it if he will, and so become master of himself. Man can refuse the proffered freedom if he will: he did refuse it once, and he fell; but by clasping it again he rises. And there is the responsibility. He can refuse to take that help from God which he feels so near him, and so he may allow his lower nature to be master; but on the other hand he may accept that help—

Mr. REDDIE.—Which you admit he is free to take.

Mr. WARINGTON.—Yes, which he is perfectly free to take, and therefore in that sense, and in that sense only, man is free. With Divine help he may be free in everything; without it he is free in nothing. I differ *in toto* from Buckle's conclusions on that point, although I admit a vast number of his premises, because he has ignored the essential point of man's conscience and its contact with God's spirit. St. Paul says, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this bondage?" and again, "I thank God, *through* Jesus Christ." He felt the bondage and he found the freedom. I do not therefore deny freedom to man, for I admit his full freedom in one particular, which, if only used aright, would give freedom to his whole nature in the truest and highest sense possible.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I do not intend to neglect altogether the observations of Mr. Warington, but I think it is a preliminary duty to lead back our thoughts to the paper which has been read, and which was not wholly confined to the question of the freedom of the human will. The paper deals with the philosophy of Mr. Buckle as well as with certain propositions contained in his works. All the reviews which have handled the remarkable books of Mr. Buckle have failed to notice their connection with that movement in France, and existing to a less extent in England, known as the "Positive Philosophy" movement. Mr. Buckle appears to have been an exponent of the principles of M. Auguste Comte with reference to his historical hypotheses. Man's whole history is such a concatenation of events that it could not have been other than it was, says M. Comte; and, in order to prove that, it was the intention of Mr. Buckle to construct a history of civilization on a gigantic scale; and nothing but the fact that Providence cut short Mr. Buckle's career arrested the progress of that work. But, to carry out his principles of history, he was bound to encounter the theory of human free-will. On that point Comte parted company with some of his distinguished disciples. He began his system without intending, so far as I can see, to construct a new religion—what is called "the religion of humanity." But Buckle's *History of Civilization* was to be the development of Comte's whole theory; and it was therefore necessary for him to deal with the fact that man is supposed to have a will. He, therefore, lays down this proposition, that there is no such thing as will possible, because order and law preclude the idea of that variability which is included in the idea of will. He not merely denies the freedom of the will, but he denies its existence; and not merely the existence of variability or will in man, but even in God;—and from that Comte proceeds to deny the being of a God. Mr. Buckle seems to hesitate as to accepting that conclusion, but he adopts all Comte's premises which lead up to it; and in the same way we find that many of the followers of Comte, and companions of Buckle, adopt the same class of premises, while arriving at somewhat divergent conclusions. For example, the Duke of Argyll, whom we may consider as a sort of follower of both Comte and Buckle, hesitates to adopt their conclusions; and his book on *The Reign of Law* falls very far short of the views of the more advanced

Positivists. So, again, Mr. Lewes adopts the former part of the philosophical and historical theory which Buckle was working out; but he stops abruptly, and rejects with something like scorn the theory of a religion of humanity. There is no such thing as a consistent follower of Comte; but there is a large number of quasi-philosophers who adopt those principles of Comte which cannot but lead to a denial of the existence of free will both in man and in God. Mr. Row a little offended me in his paper, by conceding rather too much to Mr. Buckle at the outset. He conceded, with a facility that gave full scope to Mr. Warrington's argument afterwards, that we really are impelled by motives, that they always go before, and are not merely our reasons, and that they have thus a distinct power as entities acting upon us. I have an objection to the use of abstract terms on such a point. We talk of memory and reflection. But my mind is no more made up of memory and reflection, than my leg is made up of walking and running. I am not something made up of memory, and of other faculties—I am a single being, a unit. What a thought is before I think it I do not know. Man is, in short, an intelligent cause of action; and it is misleading to take certain useful abstractions, which are harmless and necessary in ordinary conversation, in order to construct a philosophical theory upon them, when those abstractions will not bear critical analysis in the manner in which they are applied. Mr. Row concedes that motives act upon human beings. Now, I say I never was acted upon by a motive. All these abstractions are merely convenient terms for describing the mind of man acting in a certain direction. Mr. Row quotes from Mr. Buckle:—

“The only positions which, at this stage of the inquiry, I shall expect the believer in the possibility of the philosophy of history to concede are the following: that when we perform an action, we perform it in consequence of some motive or motives”; (what rubbish!) “that these motives are the results of some antecedents; and if we were acquainted with the whole of the antecedents, and with all the laws of their movements, we should with unerring certainty predict the whole of their immediate results. If, for example, I am intimately acquainted with the character of any person, I can frequently tell how he will act under any given circumstances.” (Here he has got a truth: common sense will speak out now and then.) “Should I fail in my prediction, I must ascribe my error, not to any arbitrary or capricious freedom of the will”; (why *capricious* freedom of the will?) . . . “but I must be content to suppose, either that I had been misinformed as to some of the circumstances, or else that I had not sufficiently studied the ordinary operations of his mind. If, however, I was capable of correct reasoning, and if, at the same time, I had a correct knowledge both of his disposition and of the events by which he was surrounded, I should be able to foresee the line of conduct which, in consequence of these events, he would adopt.”

Poor man! Yet I suppose his friends think him a sound and deep thinker! We now pass from Buckle's theory of the will, which is hopelessly encumbered with the notion that abstract ideas have a concrete existence, and so act upon the man, to Aristotle's seventh book of Ethics; and here I must thank Mr. Row very much for referring to that. I believe that book is one of the most perfect pieces of composition in the world. It has its faults; but we must bear

in mind that Aristotle was himself encumbered by the theories of his predecessors. He had not a clear field for his own philosophy, and from the very little he says in his Ethics—as to the *ἔκδοσιον*—as to the principle of will in man, we cannot suppose that he had a clear conception of the doctrine, which we as Christians hold, that man is a really responsible being, in any higher sense than that he is responsible to society. That he held that man was responsible to society, and had what we should call a political responsibility, may be gathered from the fact that he considered ethics as wholly subservient to politics. I throw this in by way of protest against making too much of the opinion of Aristotle in the matter. Mr. Row has spoken in very just terms of Buckle's proposition that Christianity has added nothing to the moral progress of mankind, or even to the ethical ideas of the world. But I think he should in justice to Buckle bear in mind that that author was cut off before he arrived in his work at a fair consideration of the moral position of the world in the first century of the Christian era. A thoughtful and careful examination of that period, terminating about the time of Philo, must, I am sure, in a writer of his fairness, have led to a favourable conclusion in his mind as to the addition which Christianity has made in this matter. We should not speak in very strong terms, therefore, of Buckle's views on that point, on which, by the way, our Positivist friends are not much agreed. No two of them have a consistent theory as to what Christianity is. They are bound to deal with it; it is a fact which cannot be set aside; and it has exerted a greater influence upon the whole progress of humanity *de facto* than any other set of opinions or principles with which the world is now acquainted. There must be some philosophy of Christianity propounded by these men sooner or later. I am most thankful that the Christian world is not shrinking from Comte and Buckle and their compeers, and I am glad that the council of this institution has thought fit to bring this subject before us in connection with this thoughtful essay of Mr. Row's. And this is not the last time we shall have to deal with it, for, undoubtedly, the Christian Church will have to grapple with the Positive philosophy. We must not suppose that this school of thought, which has been slowly growing for many years, will come to an end without a great struggle. But if all thoughtful Christians will approach it in a right spirit, and with sound reason, the result cannot be at all doubtful.

REV. J. THURCOMB.—I think the philosophy of Buckle, as propounded in his *History of Civilization*, has hardly been dealt with as fully as it might be. Mr. Buckle contends that the actions of men are not dependent upon or the product of volition, but of antecedent circumstances, and he carries out that theory, in the most exaggerated way, to the extent of saying that all the suicides committed in the world are absolute cases of necessity. He says, "Suicide is the effect of the general condition of society, and the individual felon only carries into effect what is the necessary consequence of the preceding circumstances." Words can scarcely be stronger in endeavouring to show that what we consider voluntary acts are not the result of mere volition, but of antecedent circumstances; and Buckle bases his conclusion upon metaphysics

and statistics combined. So far as the metaphysical portion of the question is concerned, he argues that like causes will always produce like effects, and that one man, under a similar condition of circumstances with another, will invariably do exactly similar things,—*ergo*, there can be no freedom of the will. Circumstances rule us, and we are bound to pursue a particular course of action, whether we will it or not, according to the state of the antecedent circumstances. But I utterly deny the abstract and moral possibility of there ever being any state of circumstances between any two men identically alike. Take even the case of two men of the same age and surrounded by corresponding external circumstances. Just as in the case of a chessboard, with its sixty-four squares, you have a wonderful number of combinations in playing the game, and the combinations would be marvellously increased if you had 664 squares instead of 64; so you have your combinations inconceivably multiplied *ad infinitum* between the two men in the grand game of life, and there never can be any state of circumstances which can perfectly assimilate them. Only look at men's faces. There are three millions in London, and yet no two of them are alike. I put the freedom of the will in this way: I take the measure of the variation which exists in reference to these faces to be a measure of the free will which each of those men holds and exercises for himself. With regard to statistics, Mr. Buckle brings forward a number of statements with reference to murders, suicides, miscarried letters, and so on, and he argues that because there are general uniform averages among them, there can be no freedom of the will. Mr. Buckle is called a deep thinker, and in many respects he is; but no man can be a really profound thinker who generalizes hastily, and I certainly hesitate to call Buckle the profound thinker that some people dub him. So far as his statistics are concerned, I have no doubt we could carry them out, not merely *usque ad nauseam*, but *usque ad absurdum*.—I utterly deny that marriages, for instance, are mere results of the price of corn and the amount of wages paid in the country; and that the will of the individual has nothing to do with it. That is a complete *non sequitur*. When I married, I am sure it was not because the country was more prosperous: it was because I became the incumbent of a church, and was able to marry. (Laughter.) But Mr. Row has scarcely done Buckle justice in one passage. He quotes from Buckle:—"These assumptions are: that there is an independent faculty called consciousness, and that the dictates of that faculty are infallible;" and Mr. Row observes, "I find a difficulty in conceiving how a man of Mr. Buckle's reasoning powers could have written this passage. I apprehend that in any strict meaning of language it is incorrect to designate consciousness a faculty." But that is the very thing that Buckle himself says. He says, "It is by no means certain that consciousness is a faculty;" and further, that "some of the ablest thinkers have been of opinion that it is a natural state or condition of the mind." Mr. Row goes on to say:—

"It involves an unspeakable confusion of thought to speak of all consciousness as infallibly true. If such an assumption has been made, I agree with Mr. Buckle that it is utterly contradicted by facts. But to say that

all consciousness is infallibly true is to confound between our consciousness of a perception, or a subject of thought, and the truth or falsehood of the perception or the thought—i. e., between consciousness and the object of consciousness."

Now, this is what Buckle himself says upon the word infallibility :—" This requires explanation. Consciousness is infallible as to the effect of its testimony, but it is fallible as to its truth." I think Mr. Row has not done complete justice to Mr. Buckle on these points, but in every other respect I highly approve of his paper.

Rev. Mr. GREIG.—I agree very much with most of Mr. Row's statements. The whole question of Positivism turns upon the question of free will. Is there a will or a personality in man? If there is, Positivism is false; if not, it is true. I should be rather inclined to oppose some of the views expressed by Mr. Warington. I think he was mistaken, for instance, as to the amount of free will for which its advocates contend. We do not contend for absolute free will, because, according to our ideas, only God can possess it. I have the will to think one thought rather than another, and to choose one course rather than another, but I have no power whatever to think or not. I must think: I have control over my thoughts, but I must think, and therefore in that respect I am not free. I am only free within certain limits; absolute freedom is what we predicate only of Almighty God. Then Mr. Warington says there is no such thing as conscience sitting in judgment in the mind—that the mind could not be separated from its desires, and made to sit in judgment over them. Now, that is a most important point, for if Mr. Warington's is the correct view, then of course Positivism is true. I was lately reading a most interesting book upon materialism, in which the author says that materialism altogether breaks down before that tremendous fact of self-consciousness or reduplication in man. We cannot account for that fact on any principle of materialism. I believe the one thing which distinguishes the mind of man from that of the inferior creation is found in that great principle of reduplication. If you grant that fact, you must instantly grant the freedom and personality of man, and if you deny it, you are brought into the Positive school of thought. Mr. Warington has given us some statements which it would be very difficult to answer. It is a curious fact that you cannot prove human freedom, because the position which you take up to prove it presupposes that you are not free. You are obliged to argue "Why do I do such and such thing?" and the very question supposes a cause for your action, which goes against the principle of free will. But I think Mr. Warington would find a difficulty in carrying out the theory he has advanced, unless he adopts the principle of personality and freedom. We are merely slaves because of the Fall. We are merely in a state of bondage, and we can only be relieved from that bondage by the introduction of a higher principle. But the very consciousness that we need that higher principle presupposes, to my mind, that freedom which Mr. Warington denies. I may perhaps be doing Mr. Warington an injustice, as I confess I was not altogether able to follow him in all his observations.

Mr. REDDIE.—I think Mr. Warington has to a great extent answered himself. When he spoke of the enlightenment of the conscience through obtaining the aid of God's spirit, and when he said that man was free to ask for that aid, and to accept it or refuse it, he was really proving that man is a free agent, which is metaphysically a more correct expression than to speak of man's free will, inasmuch as when the "will" is once determined, it is a definite thing, and there is no choice afterwards. "Free will," therefore, is not an accurate, although it may be a good colloquial phrase. We should rather predicate of man's personality and freedom, free agency. Man is free to will, but when he has once determined his will, each volition cannot be any other will than it is, though upon reflection he may change and will otherwise. Mr. Warington says that a person's conduct in exercising his will is solely dependent upon circumstances. But that is only true with great qualification. Some influence of circumstances is not denied. What Mr. Row and others who contend for free agency argue is, that man can choose one of two things, and that is what is told us in Scripture itself, the highest of all authorities. It was exactly a *crux* of that kind, arising from circumstances, which our first father Adam had placed before him; and Mr. Row very properly brings out the great importance of that which Adam failed to keep in mind when he fell from his original perfect freedom—that is, the importance of faith. It is not quite true, however, that faith was only taught by our Blessed Lord. The great revival of faith in God, no doubt, was due to Him; but it was the faith of Abraham and of Enoch, and of the patriarchs of the Old Testament who went before; and it was because Adam failed in faith in God, and believed what he ought not, that he made a wrong choice, and ate the forbidden fruit. Every circumstance under which the human will has to act turns upon some such choice as that which was made by Adam. The voice of God, even when given externally, as it was to Moses, can only operate on a human being when it touches him internally; and if man has the power by his conscience, to any extent, of knowing right from wrong, he has that very faculty within him which ought to determine his choice; and it is when he hears, or neglects to hear, that inward voice, that he becomes innocent or guilty when he acts. That is also the nature of the power given to man by the Spirit of God, and of the freedom proclaimed in the Gospel for whomsoever will receive it:—"Whosoever will, let him come"—"ask and ye shall receive." But unless Mr. Warington is prepared to assume that the heathen were totally dark in their consciences—that they did not know right from wrong at all—he must admit the existence of conscience in their case also; for it cannot be got rid of—

Mr. WARINGTON.—I was endeavouring to point out in which part of human nature it lay.

Mr. REDDIE.—But you cannot cut up your nature into parts—

Mr. WARINGTON.—I find it is divided in the New Testament.

Mr. REDDIE.—Only in a certain sense; not as used by you. Take the case Mr. Warington suggested as to opening the book, and let us suppose it to have been a forbidden book. There is a French picture now in the

printsellers' windows of a forbidden book being looked at with very great gusto by two young ladies; and every one can understand the story conveyed in the picture. But conscience must have been present in the minds of those ladies as well as curiosity; and as we listen to the voice of conscience, and determine to do what is right or wrong, so are we guilty or innocent. If St. Paul describes the natural man as in a state of darkness, the slave of ignorance and passion, he also most emphatically asks his converts, What did hinder them that they should not obey the truth? Consequently, unless you are prepared to deny the voice of conscience altogether, contrary to what St. Paul teaches,—unless you deny that even nature itself teaches us to distinguish between right and wrong,—Buckle's philosophy and Mr. Warington's principles must alike be false—

Mr. WARINGTON.—What I have said has been altogether misunderstood by Mr. Reddie. I said merely that there exists in the spirit of man that which claims to be heard in every man, I grant, but which cannot exercise its right to *control* unless it is assisted by the Spirit of God. I denied the existence of conscience in no man, nor the clear speaking of its voice. I believe there is no action in which conscience does not take some part; but, in order to clear the way for the first part of my argument, I said I would exclude the operation of conscience for a moment.

Mr. REDDIE.—Mr. Warington's explanation—which I am glad to have heard—does not seem to require me to qualify any portion of what I have said. To return to the paper before us, there are one or two passages in it, in which I think the author is scarcely consistent. For instance, he says in one place, "To act without motive is impossible;" and in the preceding page he finds fault with Mr. Buckle for overlooking the fact that, though all motives are antecedents, all antecedents are not motives. But we sometimes act merely and purely from habit, without any motive at all. Reference has been made to the faith of the Gospel; and I may here be permitted to say, that the fact of the Gospel having made man a more completely free agent than he was before, is not the only great improvement in our moral condition it introduced. The Gospel also restored hope to man, as a motive, notwithstanding sin. St. Paul describes those who were without God, and who were ignorant of His character, as living "without hope." But Christianity is precisely adapted to our moral nature. We are not bound to judge ourselves merely in the way in which the Stoic or other heathen philosophers might judge themselves—we have opportunities for repentance. A man's conscience pricks him—he has committed an evil deed, and he sees its bad effects, and regrets it and repents. For the great feature of the Gospel is not that a man shall never sin at all, but that, having sinned, he may repent and sin no more. It is in that grand hope—the hope of retrieving our errors—that the Gospel has restored the moral tone of human nature. Buckle calls belief in free will "a dogma"; and Mr. Row seems to think that a nickname. But I do not know why it should not be called a dogma: it is an established principle that is taught, and I am very glad to know that it is. But there is a loose way of speaking of dogmas, which Mr. Row appears to have fallen into, as if there were something wrong in dogmas, merely as such.

With regard to Buckle's "science of statistics," there is really no such thing as a *science* of statistics, and such a title is a misnomer altogether. And with regard to his theory that "the laws which regulate the moral world are more uniform in their operation than those which govern the physical universe," we must not forget, with respect to any number of particular events occurring within a specified time, that nine-tenths of them have been caused by individual free will, or man's free action. Mr. Buckle, in his idea that suicides are not determined by the human will, seems to forget that three-fourths of them are occasioned probably by some wrong—"the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," that Shakespeare speaks of. So that even if you deny the operation of free will in the case of the suicide himself, you cannot deny it in the case of him who causes it. Then with regard to marriages, Mr. Buckle's assertion that marriages are ruled by the price of corn is the very best proof of their depending upon human volition. What "a living" is to a clergyman, the low price of corn, or cheap food, is to the masses; and it is most desirable that the masses should always act in the prudent way that these statistics would seem to prove they generally do. I thank Mr. Row very much for bringing forward this subject, because it really is by a right understanding of these great questions of human freedom that we can understand that God is not the author of evil, which the Positive philosophy would make Him,—only that it denies His existence altogether.

Rev. Dr. IRONS.—I must beg your indulgence for a moment, while I tell you a story connected with marriage statistics. An old gentleman of eighty married a girl of seventeen, and it led to most unhappy results, and eventually to a case in the law courts. The late Judge Cresswell, who told me the story, (before whom the case was heard,) said in summing up that it too often happened that marriages contracted between January and May were most unfortunate. A day or two afterwards he received a letter from the secretary to a certain Statistical Society, asking him to furnish the society with the statistics upon which the statement was founded that marriages solemnized between the months of January and May were always so unfortunate! (Laughter.) While the learned judge was puzzled what to reply, he afterwards got another letter from the same gentleman, telling him he need not answer his inquiry, as he (the secretary) "had been given to understand that his Lordship's statement would admit of another interpretation than that which he had placed upon it." (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN.—I do not altogether agree with all that has fallen from Mr. Warington, although I go some way with him. I cannot but believe that man has a freedom of will which especially applies to moral actions, where there is any need of conscience to sit as a judge between right and wrong. So far as I can understand the argument used by Mr. Row in his paper, it is that man has as strong a proof of the freedom of his will as he has of his own existence—not of the existence of any other person, mind, but of his own existence. I want to know if I possess freedom of will. I say I do; and to put an end to it, is to deprive me of my moral faculties, and of all choice between good and evil. A Scotch anecdote which I have heard pertinently illustrates this question. A Presbyterian minister of strong Calvin-

istic views was always preaching upon predestination, and holding the view that every single action was predestined from all eternity. A maid-servant in his house broke a favourite dish of his, and she excused herself by saying, "Well, sir, it was ordained from the beginning that I should break that dish." (Laughter.) Whereupon the minister gave her a cuff on the ear, saying, "Yes, and it was also ordained that I should box your ears for your carelessness." (Laughter.) Then with regard to statistics. If men were actuated only by their motives and desires, marriage would be a constant quantity; but we find that is not so. Marriages are few when money is scarce and wages low, and they are increased when there is an increase in the means of supporting life, and a prospective family. I was once a curate in a populous district in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, and there were at the time but very few funerals in the parish, and the sexton said it was owing to the fact that trade was bad. I asked him how that could be, and he told me in reply that when trade was good there were plenty of funerals, but when trade was bad and the people were comparatively starving, there were very few, because the people had not the means for intemperance. But the statistics with regard to murder, which must also refer to other crimes as well, must be founded on mere coincidence. At one time two or three men imperilled their lives in shooting at the Queen. Now, if that had gone on a little while longer, Mr. Buckle might have got you up statistics to show that there was a certain law impelling a certain number of men in a given time to shoot at the Sovereign. But the Legislature stopped it by providing that men should not be hung for such an offence, but should be well flogged and imprisoned,—and that stopped it. Take another case. At one time the crime of wantonly destroying articles of great value in museums was very common, and a law was passed declaring that persons who offended in this respect should be well flogged. The crime was discontinued. The same thing has been observable in garrotting:—directly flogging was introduced, garrotting ceased. All this shows how absurd it is to generalize on statistics; and it also shows what a powerful influence the human will, as we understand it in common parlance, has in directing the actions of man.

Rev. C. A. Row.—In the discussion which has taken place my paper has not been seriously interfered with, and I shall say very little in reply. Mr. Warington fell into a misapprehension. I treated in my paper, not of the will *per se*, but of the rational will. I would also call Mr. Warington's attention to another thing. He quoted from the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and he should bear in mind that in that same chapter St. Paul says, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." In treating this question of the will, Mr. Warington took his own instance—the case of opening a book, which depended on the lowest motives of the human mind. I should rather have wished him to illustrate the matter by some of the higher motives of the mind. I cannot conceive how, according to his theory, any person can resist a temptation at all. (Hear, hear)

The Meeting was then adjourned.