

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CONDITIONED:
COMPRISING SOME REMARKS ON SIR
WILLIAM HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY,
AND ON MR. J.S. MILL'S EXAMINATION
OF THAT PHILOSOPHY**

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The philosophy of the conditioned: comprising some remarks on Sir William Hamilton's philosophy, and on Mr. J.S. Mill's examination of that philosophy by H. L. Mansel

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Reprinted, with Additions, from "The Contemporary Hebrews."

P R E F A C E.

THE circumstance that the following remarks were originally published as an anonymous article in a Review, will best explain the style in which they are written. Absence from England prevented me from becoming acquainted with Mr. Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* till some time after its publication; and when I was requested to undertake the task of reviewing it, I was still ignorant of its contents. On proceeding to fulfil my engagement, I soon

discovered, not only that the character of the book was very different from what the author's reputation had led me to expect, but also that my task would be one, not merely of criticism, but, in some degree, of self-defence. The remarks on myself, coming from a writer of Mr. Mill's ability and reputation, were such as I could not pass over without notice; while, at the same time, I felt that my principal duty in this instance was the defence of one who was no longer living to defend himself. Under these circumstances, the best course appeared to be, to devote the greater portion of my article to an exposition and vindication of Sir W. Hamilton's teaching; and, in the additional remarks which it was necessary to make on the more personal part of the controversy, to speak of myself in the third person, as

I should have spoken of any other writer. The form thus adopted has been retained in the present republication, though the article now appears with the name of its author.

My original intention of writing a review of the entire book was necessarily abandoned as soon as I became acquainted with its contents. To have done justice to the whole subject, or to Mr. Mill's treatment of it, would have required a volume nearly as large as his own. I therefore determined to confine myself to the *Philosophy of the Conditioned*, both as the most original and important portion of Sir W. Hamilton's teaching, and as that which occupies the first place in Mr. Mill's *Examination*.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CONDITIONED.

THE reader of Plato's *Republic* will readily recall to mind that wonderful passage at the end of the sixth book, in which the philosopher, under the image of geometrical lines, exhibits the various relations of the intelligible to the sensible world; especially his lofty aspirations with regard to "that second segment of the intelligible world, which reason of itself grasps by the power of dialectic, employing hypotheses, not as principles, but as veritable

hypotheses, that is to say, as steps and starting-points, in order that it may ascend *as far as the unconditioned* (*μέχρι τοῦ ἀνπροθέτου*), to the first principle of the universe, and having grasped this, may then lay hold of the principles next adjacent to it, and so go down to the end, using no sensible aids whatever, but employing abstract forms throughout, and terminating in forms."

This quotation is important for our present purpose in two ways. In the first place, it may serve, at the outset of our remarks, to propitiate those plain-spoken English critics who look upon new terms in philosophy with the same suspicion with which Jack Cade regarded "a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear," by showing that the head and front of our offending, "the Uncondi-