

the social system? In severe science a *reductio ad absurdum* drives us at once from a false position. But in moral and political reasoning, a man must be a pitiful advocate whose breast is not hardened against such a weapon, and who, in defending his theory, is not ready to bear up against its most preposterous consequences.

False opinions on moral questions are then not mere idle aberrations of the mind: for they produce a direct, and sometimes, an overwhelming influence on the practical judgments of mankind—on all the maxims of society by which men are generally governed. Not, however, to dwell on the strange errors in modern moral speculations, we may, I think, conclude that utilitarian philosophy, wherever it is received and acknowledged, will teach man to think lightly of the fences the God of nature has thrown around him, and so prepare him for violent and ill-timed inroads on the social system, and for the perpetration of daring crimes.

To return once more to the questions with which I started; I think that to reject the moral sense is to destroy the foundation of all moral philosophy—that the rule of expediency, as stated by Paley, is based in false reasoning on the attributes of God—that the rule itself is ill-suited to the capacity of man—that it is opposed to the true spirit of the Christian religion—and that, however honestly it may be accepted, it tends inevitably to lower the standard of what is right and good. Lastly, we may, I think, assert, both on reason and experience, that wherever the utilitarian system (avowedly based on a rejection of the moral feelings, and an abrogation of the law of conscience) is generally accepted, made the subject of *à priori* reasoning,