

in moral science may be wholly unseen, while the Ethics connected with that object may not be wholly unfelt. The certainty of an actual God binds over to certain distinct and most undoubted proprieties. But so also may the imagination of a possible God—in which case, the very idea of a God, even in its most hypothetical form, might lay a responsibility, even upon atheists.

10. Here then is one palpable use for the distinction between the ethics and the objects of Theology, or between the Deontology and Ontology of it. We may have a moral nature for the one, even when in circumstances of utter blindness to the other. The mere conception of the objects is enough to set the ethics agoing. Though in the dark as to the question whether a God exists, yet on the bare imagination of a God, we are not at all in the dark as to the question of the gratitude and the obedience which are due to Him. There is a moral light in the midst of intellectual darkness—an ethics that waits only for the presentation of the objects. The very idea of a God, even in its most hypothetical form, will bring along with it an instant sense and recognition of the moralities and duties that would be owing to Him. Should an actual God be revealed, we clearly feel that there is a something which we ought to be and to do in regard to Him. But more than this; should a possible God be imagined, there is a something not only which we feel that we ought, but a something which we actually ought to do or to be, in consequence of our being visited by such an imagination. The thought of a God not only suggests what would be our in-