## *The Science and Logic of William Paley's Moral Philosophy*

CAN WANG

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ABSTRACT

William Paley's *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* is one of the most influential modern works of theological utilitarianism. His views on moral philosophy, evidentialism and natural theology were required reading in English universities up until the 1850s. It is the purpose of this thesis to argue that Paley believed his moral philosophy to be a science that operated according to logical principles. Chapter 1 outlines the intellectual environment, religious context and secondary literature about Paley's moral philosophy. Chapter 2 avers that Paley used Scripture and personal experience as evidence for providing a rational basis for moral knowledge. Focusing on the notion of moral law, Chapter 3 discusses the innovative principles of happiness and expediency through which Paley created a criterion of conduct that was grounded on rational evidence. Last but not least, since the *Principles* was a textbook in the Cambridge syllabus, Chapter 4, argues that Paley adopted a more accessible synthetic method of argumentation for educational purposes. The conclusion explains how the thesis's argument extends and challenges current interpretations of Paley's ideas.

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Can Wang

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Department of Philosophy

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**Table of Contents**

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Declaration:

*The material contained in the thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.*

“First accumulate a mass of Facts: and then construct a Theory.”

That, I believe, is the true Scientific Method.

—Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno*

## Chapter 1

## The Intellectual Context of William Paley

### Introduction

During the period between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, William Paley's *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* was probably the most famous and influential work about theological utilitarianism. Paley is best known as an outstanding Christian apologist, however, he was highly praised as a moralist as well in that period. After its first publication in 1785, the *Principles* almost immediately became a textbook in the Cambridge syllabus, and remained so for many years. In other words, Paley's *Principles* formed the cornerstone of the Cambridge curriculum. Twenty-one editions, including fifteen editions during Paley's lifetime demonstrate that *the Principles* not only established the author's reputation, but also was a widely-read book even after Paley's death. Historians honor this book because of its vital contribution to eighteenth-century English ethics and its possible influence on American Christianity today. As such an influential book, it is definitely worthy of further attention.

After explaining the intellectual context of Paley's moral philosophy in Chapter 1, this thesis is divided into three parts to argue that his moral philosophy was an eighteenth-century probabilistic form of science. Chapter 2 explains that Paley regarded scriptural testimony and personal experience as credible evidence in the *Principles*. According to the eighteenth-century definition of science, moral decision-making was based on the high probabilities derived from credible evidence. In other words, one of Paley's goals in the *Principles* was to address the question, what kinds of rational evidence were needed to support his theological utilitarianism.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Paley endeavored to establish the principle of expediency in the *Principles* to compensate for the deficiencies of the moral theories of his time. In the spheres of moral and natural philosophy, divinely imposed principles replaced the inherent virtues of humankind and natural things in Paley's day. If divinely authored principles of nature would replace the inner qualities of natural things, just like what Newton sought to find in his *Principia*, then divinely authored moral principles would also replace human virtues. Based on rational evidence,

Paley devoted himself to finding the principle of expediency with a serious theological consideration.

Chapter 4 expounds Paley's view on synthetic logic in the *Principles*. It should not be forgotten that his *Principles* was expanded from lecture notes at Cambridge and was applied as a university textbook. As knowledge was no longer exclusive to the realm of syllogistic demonstration, Paley felt it necessary to find another form of logic which was suitable for a more probable form of knowledge. In order to respond to those who judged that the *Principles* was just a synthesis of the researches of Paley's predecessors, this chapter avers that Paley showed an aversion to syllogism and gave praise to a synthetic pedagogics in the *Principles*.

To achieve this goal, I adopt an approach which is both textual and contextual. This thesis mainly focuses on the arguments offered in Paley's *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), but it also draws from his *A View of the Evidences on Christianity* (1794), and *Natural Theology* (1802). Paley's Cambridge years as an undergraduate and as a lecturer played a decisive role in the formation of Paley's his thinking of moral and religious issues. This experience offered Paley access to the major ethical, political and metaphysical learning circles in his time. Additionally, he formed his method and style of argumentation and pedagogics which he later developed and used in his works including the *Principles*. Last but not least, during his Cambridge years, Paley's mind became more and more complete and mature than the thoughts of his youth in the North Country.[1] It is worth noting that, in spite of the fact that moral and political philosophy were often combined in Paley's day, it does not lie within the scope of this thesis to treat his views on politics except as they affect his ethics. For this reason, this thesis leaves it to future historians to discuss Paley's views on the large-scale changes occurring in social, economic, or political arenas. This thesis links Paley's arguments about moral science with the special Cambridge intellectual context which developed his thoughts and which then contributed to his theological utilitarianism throughout his career. Above all, this thesis follows a contextual and textual method to mainly focus on Paley's *Principles* along with other early modern thinkers' works.

As every chapter of this thesis unfolds, it will become more apparent that Paley employed a body of standard eighteenth-century moral philosophical knowledge that was the combination

[1] D. L. LeMahieu, *The Mind of William Paley* (London: The University of Nebraska, 1976), 20.

of the principle of expediency with the teachings of Scripture. From a modern perspective, Paley's moral philosophy looks like a mixture of the physical science, ethical edification, and theological piety about a benevolent Creator. This mixed product was the natural outcome of the presumed unity of knowledge based on the only omnipotent God. As a result, Paley investigated evidence continually, tended to build on a general principle which could be applied widely, and aspired to establish a system of moral knowledge which could be the most probable one. Upon the whole, Paley's *Principles* deserves to be discussed as a noteworthy representative of eighteenth-century ethics.

**1. Paley's Intellectual Context**

My understanding of Paley's intellectual context is mainly influenced by Barbara J. Shapiro's *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England*.[2] For scholars who live today, "science" and "morality" fall into two distinct domains. The former refers to the disciplined inquiry into the nature and operations of the physical world while the latter is about the goals and values of human existence. Science is linked with disparate disciplines and institutions, specific professions and personnel who are called scientists.[3] However, these understandings are relatively recent conceptions, developed after the professionalization of science in the nineteenth century, which had no coherent counterpart in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Science used to be conceived of a body of knowledge. The Latin term *scientia* was used to refer to a body of demonstrative knowledge.[4] Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston define the medieval Latin *scientia* and its cognate modern English science as "any rigorous and certain body of knowledge that could be organized (in precept though not always in practice) in the form of syllogistic demonstrations from self-evident premises".[5] Science was always related to "certainty", "demonstration" and

[2] Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[3] "Introduction: The Age of the New", in *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume III: Early Modern Science*, eds. K. Park and L. Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2-3. For a good general account of the modern category and change of science, see Peter Harrison, "Professing Science", in *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2015), Chapter 6, 159-182: "Modern science, then, emerges from a threefold process: first, a new identity—the scientist—is forged for its practitioners; second, it is claimed that the sciences share a distinctive method, one that excludes reference to religious and moral considerations; and, third, following on from this, the character of this new science is consolidated by drawing sharp boundaries and positing the existence of contrast cases—science and pseudo-science, science and technology, science and the humanities and, most important for our purposes, science and religion".

[4] Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 20.

[5] *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 3 (2006), 3.

"syllogism". Knowledge was both distinct from and better than opinion which was related to "probability", "evidence", "induction". The first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1771) testifies that "science, in philosophy, denotes any doctrine, deduced from self-evident and certain principles, by a regular demonstration".[6] It can be seen that this division had lasted at least until the end of the eighteenth century.

However, Shapiro's book avers that this centuries-old division of knowledge and opinion had eroded since the seventeenth century.[7] Knowledge was not merely reserved for the demonstrative products of syllogistic logic. There was another form of knowledge relating to a reasonable calculation of the high probabilities based on credible evidence.[8] The reshaping of science prompted English speaking intellectuals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to rethink the nature of knowledge. In his recent book, *Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment*, Niall O'Flaherty explains that "moral philosophy was similarly conceived of, in the majority of cases, as a scientific (i.e. evidence-based) enterprise serving theological purpose".[9] This explanation reveals that science was still used to refer to systematic knowledge in the eighteenth century while the ancient division of demonstrative knowledge and probable opinion gradually faded. The understanding of knowledge during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not only considered as the form of a deductive structure derived from unquestionable premises, but also as highly probable knowledge beyond reasonable doubt. In this connection, I must firstly state that when I use words "science" and "scientific" in this thesis, I do not confine it to a narrow category of professional science.

Since knowledge had been released from the realm of logical demonstration, it began to take on empirical and practical meaning.[10] Stephen Gaukroger points out that there was an emergence of human science from the eighteenth to the middle of nineteenth centuries, which was a novel programme relating to human understanding and actions based on scientific principles.[11] Although "the Sciences of man will not admit of the same accuracy which several

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[6] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Edinburgh 1771), 3 vols., s. v. "Science" (III. 570a).
[7] Shapiro (1983), 3.
[8] Shapiro (1983), Introduction.
[9] Niall O'Flaherty, *Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment: The Moral and Political Thought of William Paley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 8.
[10] Shapiro (1983), 19.
[11] Stephen Gaukroger, *The Nature and the Human: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1739-1841* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.

parts of natural philosophy are found susceptible of", David Hume's desire to be "the Newton of the moral Sciences" embodies a huge number of eighteenth-century intellectuals' search for a viable science of human.[12] That is to say, the eighteenth-century definition of science implies a tendency to build on a set of general principles as standards of human conduct. Just as stated in his letter to Richard Bentley, Isaac Newton's *Principia* (1687) kept "an eye on such principles as might work with considering men, for the belief of a Deity".[13] Moralists applied themselves to the exploration of a systematic knowledge of moral philosophy grounded on reasonable evidence and general principles in Paley's day. In other words, the question turns to what kinds of evidence would be necessary to yield moral principles, and to what degree such principles would be credible, and how a reasonable person would be convinced. Thus, the *Principles* serves as the perfect case to research the subject of the early modern rethinking of science. It is the purpose of this thesis to argue that Paley's moral philosophy was a science which put forward general principles of happiness and expediency based on rational scriptural and experiential evidence by synthetic logic.

As almost all of Paley's works were developed from his lectures given at Cambridge, it is worth discussing how his works were shaped by the intellectual atmosphere there. D. L. LeMahieu summarizes two characteristics of philosophy of "Paley and his school". One was the "unity of design". This implied a theological argument that the universe revealed itself to be the work of one only omniscient God. The other was theological utilitarianism.[14] As O'Flaherty has shown, theological utilitarianism was the mainstream of moral philosophy at eighteenth-century Cambridge advocated by John Gay and Edmund Law in the early eighteenth century. It boomed under Abraham Tucker in the mid-eighteenth century, and peaked in the later part of the century.[15] For most educated people, the nature and operations of the physical universe and the moral values and goals of human existence were seen as overlapping.

The notion of the "argument from design" provided a vital unifying theme for natural and moral philosophy from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth.

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[12] David Hume, *An Abstract of A Treatise of Human Nature*, A 1, SBN 645-6, < https://davidhume.org/texts/a/>. Richard Olson's "The Human Sciences", *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume IV: Eighteenth-Century Science*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 436-462.

[13] Isaac Newton to Richard Bentley, 10 December 1692, *The Work of Richard Bentley D.D*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 3 vols. (London, 1838), vol. 3, 203.

[14] LeMahieu (1976), 15.

[15] O'Flaherty (2019), 2.

Natural theology provided a strong religious significance by exhibiting the mind of God and his Creation.[16] In the celebrated General Scholium appended to the 1715 edition of Newton's *Principia,* he declared that "this most elegant system of the sun, planets, and comets could not have arisen without the design and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being."[17] For Newton, God "is certainly part of natural philosophy".[18] The precise revolutions of celestial bodies and intricate mechanisms of plant and animal anatomy were increasingly regarded as evidence of divine contrivance.

The eighteenth-century Cambridge curriculum that adopted Newtonian natural philosophy reflected that this unity of theological and physical truths went up to an institutional level.[19] During Paley's academic career, scholastic philosophy was disappearing from the Cambridge curriculum and was gradually replacing by the theories of Newton, Rene Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Joseph Butler, and John Locke. In *Advice to a Young Student with a Method of Study for the Four First Years* (1740), Daniel Waterland advised the first-year students to study Newtonian elementary arithmetic and geometry with the supplement of the works of Samuel Clarke, John Keill and William Whiston, and further to study Newton's *Opticks* in their fourth year.[20]

Like the Cambridge syllabus, the works of Locke and Butler, Clarke's Boyle Lectures (1704–1705), John Wilkins's *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* (1675), George Cheyne's *Philosophical Principles of Religion* (1715), and Robert Jenkin's *Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion* (1700) were read at Oxford throughout the eighteenth century as well.[21] Just as Peter Harrison concludes, there was a common intellectual context until the mid-nineteenth century, which was "the idea of contrivance or design, along with the concept of divinely imposed and universal laws of nature".[22] Newtonian natural philosophy begun to gain a foothold and came to dominate the curriculum since the late seventeenth century.

On the other hand, Christianity was thought of as the supplement of natural theology in

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16 Harrison (2015), 148-149.
17 Isaac Newton, *The Principia*, trans. I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 940.
18 Newton (1999), 943.
19 O'Flaherty (2019), 7.
20 Daniel Waterland, *Advice to A Young Student with A Method of Study for the Four First Years* (Cambridge, 1740), 18, 27.
21 Harrison (2015), 149-150.
22 Harrison (2015), 149-153.

this period. Locke's rejection of the notion of innate ideas and emphasis on the importance of experience and reason were congenial to many of the Cambridge latitudinarians who were the proponents of rational religion with a concern for morality and ethics, and offered a critical contribution to the formation of Paley's thoughts about morality and religion. For the second-year students at Cambridge, Waterland highlighted Locke's *An Essay on the Human Understanding* (1689).[23] Under the influence of Lockean epistemology, Cambridge latitudinarians sought to provide the rational foundations of Christianity on the premise of the limitations of reason. They considered scriptural and experiential evidence as reliable sources of knowledge, and thus they were comfortable with a probable level of this kind of knowledge.

Such attitudes manifest that, for Cambridge latitudinarians, knowledge reasoned from God's contrivances and revealed religion were seen as reciprocally reinforcing in the same theological framework.[24] For example, although Edmund Law denied that Christianity was universally necessary, his desire to reconcile Christianity to scientific views led him to adopt the evidence of miracles, which was characteristic of Paley's school.[25] Natural theology provided reasonable criteria for judging the credibility of scriptural declarations while revealed religion was seen as a tool of revealing divine operations in the light of nature. Above all, Cambridge latitudinarians saw natural theology as being in harmony with revealed religion.[26]

**2. Paley's Intellectual Orientation**

Paley was deeply influenced by Newtonian natural philosophy and Lockean epistemology at Cambridge. As LeMahieu points out, Paley's Cambridge years had a profound or even decisive influence on his mind to build up a systematic philosophy.[27] Paley was born at Peterborough in Yorkshire July of 1743. Before entering Cambridge, he was educated under his father, William Paley who was known as a classical school-master. At the age of fifteen, Paley was admitted to Christ's College at Cambridge where he demonstrated his talent in mathematics as an undergraduate, and

[23] Waterland (1740), 22.
[24] O'Flaherty (2019), 7.
[25] Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place, 1876), vol. 1, 407.
[26] O'Flaherty (2019), 13.
[27] LeMahieu (1976), 20.

then lectured classes of moral philosophy and theology.[28] Because Paley was good at mathematics, he was excused from attending Anthony Shepherd's lectures on algebra, geometry and natural philosophy. At the same time, Paley attended William Backhouse's lectures on logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy.[29] As to the Cambridge curriculum, M. L. Clarke points out that subjects at Cambridge mainly followed the theories of the Newtonian and Lockean, and concentrated on mathematics, natural philosophy, metaphysics and moral philosophy.[30]

Paley's close acquaintance with Cambridge latitudinarians involved himself in the reform of both the university and the Church, which played a critical role in the formation of his thoughts about morality and religion. The current ideological trend at Cambridge was increasingly concerned with the reliability of transcendental doctrines of revealed theology.[31] The master of Peterhouse, Edmund Law was one of the prime advocates of the reform to relieve the clergy from mandatory subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles in the university.[32] Later in life, Paley was lavish in his praise for Law's efforts to render religion more rational and credible in the dedicatory preface to the *Principles*.[33]

No doubt sensitive to this reform, Paley was promoted to be a lecturer by Law and gained a prestigious and influential reputation at Cambridge. On June 24th 1766, Paley was elected as a fellow at Christ's College, and in 1768 was selected with John Law, the son of Edmund Law, as an assistant to Shepard.[34] Paley lectured on metaphysics, moral philosophy and the Greek New Testament, while Law lectured on mathematics and natural philosophy.[35] William Frend, probably one of the most famous Paley's students, recalled that Paley "ragged Locke upon his left knee" in the classroom.[36] According to the recollection of G. W. Meadley, Paley's lectures revealed his concern with Lockean moral philosophy:

> *After these preliminaries Mr. Paley proceeded in the clearest manner to discuss some subject in Locke, Clarke, or Butler, or in moral philosophy, pointing out the passages which should be read for the next day's lecturer, and explaining every thing with such force and animation, that*

[28] M. L. Clarke, *Paley: Evidences of the Man* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 1-28.
[29] G. W. Meadley, *Memoirs of William Paley* (Sunderland, 1809), 8-9.
[30] Clarke (1974), 5.
[31] O'Flaherty (2019), 36.
[32] O'Flaherty (2019), 36.
[33] William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), xxxii.
[34] Meadley (1809), 29-30.
[35] Meadley (1809), 39.
[36] Clarke (1974), 15.

*the driest subjects became interesting.*[37]

Paley and John Law's mission was to take contextual method to restore the original simplicity of scriptural teachings and to uncover divine intentions through natural theology, which was consistent with each other.[38] Paley gave his lectures on metaphysics in the students' first year. He used Locke's *Essay* as a textbook, after which he proceeded to Samuel Clarke's *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (1705) and Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (1736).[39] These lectures constituted a brief sketch of his *Natural Theology*. Paley offered his lectures on ethics for the second and third years, which were later expanded and completed as his *Principles*.[40] Paley also taught all the undergraduates lectures on the Greek New Testament. His model was Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* (1705-1707).[41] These lectures on divinity were afterwards advanced in his *Evidences* and developed in his H*orae Paulinae* (1790). Besides these works, Paley adopted John Gay, Edmund Law, Abraham Tucker, David Hume and other early modern thinkers' primary materials as supplement to explain developments in the thought of theological utilitarianism. The discussion in the following chapters will reveal that Paley's moral philosophy was not merely a synthesis and collation of his predecessors.

Paley revealed his teaching method in the use of Scripture as a textbook in the *Principles*. His expressive words and phrases were not only fluent, strong and perspicuous, but also amusing and impressive.[42] In his lectures on the Greek New Testament and divinity, Paley used Scripture to explain Scripture. Paley encouraged his pupils to free themselves and to listen to God, so he just "gave them the general sense of the whole, pointed out those passages which deserved peculiar attention, and, explaining scripture by scripture, accompanied the whole with suitable moral exhortations".[43] This demonstrates that Paley and his latitudinarian contemporaries went back to the interpretation of scriptural text itself rather than the allegorical interpretation. The emphasis on the original simplicity of texts influenced Paley's concise writing style in the *Principles*, which will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

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[37] Meadley (1809), 40-41.
[38] O'Flaherty (2019), 38.
[39] Meadley (1809), 41.
[40] Meadley (1809), 42.
[41] Meadley (1809), 42.
[42] Meadley (1809), 42.
[43] Meadley (1809), 42.

Paley's social circle of Cambridge Latitudinarians was characterized by Leslie Stephen as "Paley and his school".[44] It was Edmund Law who pushed Paley to develop his lectures on ethics into a book and made it a required-reading.[45] It was the reformer Thomas Jones who put the *Principles* on university-wide exams after 1787.[46] Paley's political intentions might have disappointed the reformers because he refused to expressly declare his support for the reform of the representation of Parliament and for the abolition of subscription.[47] However, Paley's *Principles* was widely considered to be an excellent work in the sense of Cambridge latitudinarianism, which gave a strong answer to the questions of rational religion and theological utilitarianism.[48] As LeMahieu concludes, Paley's group definitely possessed an intellectual coherence and cohesion during their days together at Cambridge.[49] The main aim of the second chapter of this thesis, therefore, is to argue that Paley used natural and revealed theology as credible evidence for his theological utilitarianism.

Owing largely to the efforts of Cambridge latitudinarians, Lockean moral philosophy and Newtonian natural philosophy were an integral part of the Cambridge syllabus and correspondingly exerted a heavy influence on the institutional and intellectual context there. There was a common intellectual context in eighteenth-century Cambridge that mixed natural philosophy, moral philosophy as well as Christian theology. The presumed unity of knowledge revealed that truth was single in that time. This theory set the tone by Paley and the latitudinarians, and the influence of it continued into the eight Bridgewater Treatises during the nineteenth century.[50] William Whewell, who authored the third Bridgewater Treatise, wrote that "all truths must be consistent with all other truths, and . . . therefore the results of the geology or astronomy cannot be irreconcilable with the statements of true theology".[51] Theology provided a key and indispensable common principle for both natural and moral philosophy.

In such a unified context, the benevolence of God became the cornerstone of latitudinarian

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[44] Stephen (1876), 405.
[45] O'Flaherty (2019), 35.
[46] O'Flaherty (2019), 36.
[47] Clarke (1974), 20.
[48] O'Flaherty (2019), 36-37.
[49] LeMahieu (1976), 14.
[50] Harrison (2015), 150.
[51] William Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences: Founded upon Their History*, new ed., 2 vols. (London: John Parker, 1847), vol. 2, 571.

theology. In his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Locke argued that the only thing essential to salvation was the trust in "the goodness and the faithfulness of God".[52] Following this belief, the latitudinarians firmly believed that morality was an integral part of religion. In order to cultivate virtues, they devoted themselves "to discover the true intent of the Deity in creating Beings at all, without which we could have no understanding of how to answer the End of his Creation".[53] Since God's benignity was the first premise of Cambridge latitudinarianism, Newtonian natural philosophy that revealed the divine benevolence dominated the Cambridge syllabus in the eighteenth century.[54] The intention of the Lockeans and Cambridge latitudinarians were to find general rules in the human affairs that mirrored the achievement of the Newtonians in the natural world. It is the theme of this thesis that Paley's principle of expediency, based on divine benevolence, should be thought of as an attempt to establish the "original simplicity" of moral philosophy and "to extend the scientific revolution to the realm of ethics".[55] The principle of expediency was so central to Paley's system that I will explore it further in the third chapter of this thesis.

Paley was concerned with utilitarianism when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge. In 1765, Paley won the Members' Prize, which was open to senior bachelors for a Latin prose composition. The subject proposed was *Utrum civitati perniciosior sit Epicuri an Zenonis philosophia* (*a comparison between the stoic and Epicurean philosophy, with respect to the influence of each on the morals of a people*) in which he championed the Epicureans against the Stoics.[56] For Paley, the doctrines of Epicurus were favourable to moderated and rational pleasures while the strict asceticism of Zeno was inconsistent with human nature.[57] However, it was not Paley's intention to support the doctrines of any side. He explained in one of his notes that "the intent of this inquiry is not so much to defend the principles of either sect, as to prove the insufficiency of both. For neither the welfare of the public is promoted, nor the happiness of the

[52] John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures* (London, 1695), 249.
[53] Edmund Law, Translator's Preface to *An Essay on the Origin of Evil* by William King, the 4th edition corrected by Edmund Law (London, 1758), vii.
[54] A. M. C. Waterman, *Revolution, Economics and Religion: Christian Political Economy, 1798–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 88. O'Flaherty (2019), 36.
[55] O'Flaherty (2019), 40.
[56] Meadley (1809), 24-25.
[57] Meadley (1809), 25-26.

individual secured by either".[58] Paley's prize essay showed his focus on some moral issues about the principles of happiness and utilitarianism which he afterwards expounded in his *Principles*.[59]

Utilitarianism prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to the *Principles*, two other utilitarian books were written at approximately the same time: Jeremy Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), and William Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793).[60] Besides them, the most prominent works of eighteenth-century theological utilitarianism were John Gay's "Preliminary Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principle of Virtue and Morality" (1731), John Brown's *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), Edmund Law's *Essay on the Origin of Evil* (1731), a translation of Archbishop William King's *De Origine Mali* (1702), Abraham Tucker's T*he Light of Nature Pursued* (1768-1777). Concentrated publications on the subject of utilitarianism showed that utilitarianism was another striking feature of the time.

Fred Rosen questions the contribution of Paley's *Principles* to utilitarianism, since utilitarian thought in the realms of morality and politics had already been well-established prior to Paley's *Principles*.[61] Rosen uses Ernest Barker's statement to express his own opinion that Paley was viewed as a codifier because of Paley's skill of the combination and reconciliation of moral and theological doctrines in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into his own system.[62] Firstly, Rosen points out that Paley constructed an epistemological base of his utilitarian theory largely inherited from Locke.[63] Rosen quotes from James Crimmins and Isabel Rivers to highlight the importance of Locke's *Essay* on utilitarianism, including Locke's rational reliance on Scripture, his rejection of the Shaftesburian theory of innate moral sense, and his emphasis on happiness as the general standard of virtue.[64] Just as Crimmins notices, Rosen points out that the most outstanding utilitarians, including Paley, were very much influenced by Locke.[65]

Rosen also states that the utilitarian aspect of Paley's moral and political philosophy was

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[58] William Paley, *The Works of William Paley, D. D: An Account of Life and Writings of W. Paley*, ed. Edmund Paley, 7vols. (London, 1825), vol. 1, 50, 53.
[59] Clarke (1974), 10; LeMahieu (1976), 10.
[60] Frederick Rosen, *Classical Utilitarianism from Hume to Mill* (The Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 146.
[61] Rosen (2005), 131.
[62] Ernest Barker, *Traditions of Civility: Eight Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 193.
[63] Rosen (2005), 132.
[64] James Crimmins, *Utilitarianism and Religion* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998), 9; Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780, Vol II, Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 332-333.
[65] Crimmins (1998), 7.

linked with Hume.[66] Rosen uses Rivers' words to show that Paley, just like Hume, gave utility a more foundational role and made utility almost the only rule of virtue in his ethics: "the method of coming at the will of God by the light of nature is to enquire into the tendency of actions to promote or diminish that happiness, i.e. their Utility. This was the keystone of Paley's argument. Ironically, as his critics were to point out, this aspect of his theory linked him with Hume."[67] Rosen concludes that "the importance of utility in moral and political thought had already been well-established prior to Paley".[68] For Rosen, the reason why Paley seemed so important is that Paley was the prime target of attacks from Evangelicals from the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. Thus Rosen claims that Paley's contribution to utilitarian theory has been exaggerated.

O'Flaherty, however, argues that although the tradition of utilitarian thought was pre-established before Paley, "the tradition reached its apogee in 1785 with the publication of William Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785)".[69] O'Flaherty holds that although Rosen notes the Cambridge educational career of the most prominent utilitarians in the eighteenth century, he ignores that the tradition of theological utilitarianism took root at Cambridge where Paley's influence was indeed profound. The fact that the *Principles* was widely read at Cambridge, the East India College, and the United States reveals that the impact of the *Principles* was universally acknowledged in that period. Compared to the poor sales volume of Bentham's *Introduction*, the continuously printed editions of the *Principles* and its abridgements until the 1860s reveal that Paley was viewed as the main representative of theological utilitarian theory.[70] Furthermore, O'Flaherty feels that the impact of the *Principles* on moral, political and juristical culture was not only within Britain but also in the United States in the Antebellum Period. Above all, O'Flaherty just agrees with Jerome B. Schneewind that "utilitarianism first became widely known in England through the work of William Paley".[71]

**3. Paley's Religious Context**

The remarkable contribution of the *Principles* was Paley's crucial systemisation of general

[66] Rosen (2005), 132.
[67] Rivers (2000), 338-339.
[68] Rosen (2005), 131.
[69] O'Flaherty (2019), 2.
[70] O'Flaherty (2019), 4.
[71] Jerome. B. Schneewind, *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 122.

rules. Paley combined the principle of happiness, namely, all human actions were motivated by the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, with a concern for rewards and punishments in the afterlife. On this basis, he put forward the principle of expediency which provided a scientific standard of ethical issues. Paley's books were delicately knitted and woven. Firstly, the *Principles* set out a theory of theological utilitarianism. And then, the *Evidences* offered a range of standard eighteenth-century external evidence as the form of miracles and prophecy for Christianity. Finally, *Natural Theology* presaged the famous "argument from design" and presented internal evidence from natural world. The evidence from natural and revealed religion pointed to the same direction that God wills and wishes human happiness that was the foundation of the principle of expediency. Paley's three main works indicates the common theme of the eighteenth-century philosophy, just as his own words that he articulated in his *Natural Theology*: "Of the 'unity of the Deity' the proof is, the uniformity of plan observable in the universe. The universe itself is a system; each part either depending on other parts, or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance".[72]

Paley's contribution to theological utilitarianism was not only to render safe and reliable criteria for moral quandaries by the introduction of general rules, but also to present ideological grounds for social, political and economic issues by the promotion of the utilitarian principle to the practical level which, though, are not the main points of this thesis. As O'Flaherty mentions, Paley set up a system of moral philosophy by the synthesis of an earlier tradition of theological utilitarianism, but for this reason, the *Principles* as a systematic synthesizer of the researches of his predecessors is a perfect case study of eighteenth-century British moral philosophy.[73] In addition to agreement on O'Flaherty's view, the fourth chapter of this thesis will put forward an entirely new perspective that Paley used synthetic argumentation for his teaching purpose since it should be forgotten that the *Principles* appeared as a textbook at Cambridge.

Cambridge utilitarians were criticized for reducing religion to its moral core, which was no exception for Paley.[74] Paley's utilitarian ethics had many critics, even at the same time of its boom. His utilitarianism was not compatible with the atmosphere at Oxford where High Church theology

[72] William Paley, *Natural Theology: or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearance of Nature*, eds. Matthew. D. Eddy and David Knight (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), 234.
[73] O'Flaherty (2019), 2, 24.
[74] O'Flaherty (2019), 11.

had a dominant position.[75] Evangelical critics argued that social customs and institutions in Paley's moral philosophy had a direct influence on the cultivation of moral obligation rather than the will of God since the latter one was only a disguise of Paley's moral philosophy.[76] Thomas Gisborne attacked the *Principles* for putting expediency above the authority of Scripture; while the Cambridge High Churchman Edward Pearson worried that the calculation of the consequences of human conduct seemed very unmoral, which was opposed to the teaching of Scripture.[77] William Wilberforce also felt that Paley had neglected "that attribute . . . on which so much stress is laid in Scripture – I mean His holiness and justice". Utility, according to Wilberforce, was simply "too low a standard of moral right and wrong".[78] Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge argued that Paley knew little of revelation and only saw natural religion.[79] And Ernest Albee held that Paley's moral system demonstrated "a lack of spirituality".[80] As Coleridge summarized, "assume the existence of God,—and then the harmony and fitness of the physical creation may be shown to correspond with and support such an assumption;—but to set about proving the existence of God by such means is a mere circle, a delusion".[81] These critics centered on the gateway of Paley's moral philosophy to a Godless moral system.

Although, as Clarke summarizes, "Paley's moral teaching might well be criticized as too much based on the values of this world", a number of twentieth-century interpretations challenged the earlier scholarly consensus by rediscovering the theological agenda of Paley's moral philosophy.[82] LeMahieu examines the links between Paley and his evangelical and High-Church detractor, Bishop Butler, and points out that "both wished to restore revelation to morals; both viewed the afterlife as the telic goal of secular living; … and both conceived of religion in highly practical term".[83] LeMahieu's work also draws readers' attention to Paley's sermons which

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[75] Paley (2006), xxviii.
[76] O'Flaherty (2019), 4.
[77] Thomas Gisborne, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy Investigated, and Briefly Applied to the Constitution of Civil Society; Together with Remarks on the Principle Assumed by Mr. Paley as the Basis of All Moral Conclusions, and Other Positions of the Same Author* (London, 1789). Edward Pearson, *Remarks on the Theory of Morals in Which Is Contained an Examination of the Theoretical Part of Dr Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Ipswich, 1800). See O'Flaherty (2019), 19.
[78] William Wilberforce to Ralph Creyke, 8 January 1803, *The Correspondence of William Wilberforce*, eds. Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, 2 vols. (London, 1840), vol. 1, 252. See O'Flaherty (2019), 19.
[79] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, ed. H. St J. Hart (London: Black, 1956), 79.
[80] Ernest Albee, *A History of English Utilitarianism* (London,1902), 174.
[81] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Writings Volume 4: On Religion and Psychology*, ed. John Beer (Palgrave, 2002), 109.
[82] Clarke (1974), 60.
[83] LeMahieu (1976), 129.

embodies "the elements of devotion and seriousness which nineteenth-century critics accused their Enlightenment predecessors of lacking".[84] Similarly, Anthony Waterman has argued that Paley's use of "liturgical and mystical language" in the sermons, which revealed individual statements of intense commitment and religious seriousness.[85]

Robert Hole feels that although Paley refused to divorce utilitarian moral theory from Christianity, Paley believed that God merely enforced morality according to the calculation of the principle of utility.[86] Hole holds that Paley was a radical secularist in this respect because he wanted to abandon the theological parts of his moral theory without hesitation when they made his pragmatic and secular agenda untenable.[87] O'Flaherty disagrees with Hole on this point. Instead, O'Flaherty stresses that Paley's secular propensities were exactly an expression of pious sentiments about God, as Paley regarded the goal of human worldly welfare which was an indispensable part of the principle of expediency as the very stuff of Godliness.[88] At this point, O'Flaherty also responds to Stephen's view of Hume's influence on Paley and Paley as a lukewarm Christian and worldly philosopher.[89] For O'Flaherty, where Hume thought that religious sanctions were superfluous to morality, Paley firmly believed that moral philosophy was still deeply interwoven with theology. With the consideration of this view, O'Flaherty sticks to Paley's serious theological preference in the *Principles* and all his other works. One of the main themes of the third chapter of this thesis is to elaborate Paley's commitment to a serious theological agenda by the combination of the principle of expediency and Christian charitable impulses.

**Conclusion**

In his recent book entitled *Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment*, O'Flaherty mentions that moral philosophy was conceived of as an evidence-based science serving theological purposes in the eighteenth century.[90] A group of eighteenth-century English religious intellectuals defended

[84] LeMahieu (1976), 23.
[85] A. M. C. Waterman, *Revolution, Economics and Religion: Christian Political Economy, 1798–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 125.
[86] Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 78.
[87] Hole (1989), 81.
[88] O'Flaherty (2019), 21.
[89] O'Flaherty (2019), 20.
[90] O'Flaherty (2019), 8.

religion from the assaults of deists and sceptics, and this fact shows that theological agenda had already taken root at their thinking about the betterment of human welfare.[91] This thesis takes O'Flaherty's book one step further to investigate three aspects of eighteenth-century definition of science, namely, evidence, principle and logic of Paley's *Principles* by placing Paley's thinking about ethics in the context of theological debate.

[91] O'Flaherty (2019), 23.

## Chapter 2

## The Evidentiary Foundations of Moral Philosophy

### Introduction

This chapter argues that Paley's moral philosophy was a science because he used credible evidence in *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. The goal of science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shifted from certainty to probability, which was its most distinctive feature. The credibility of probability was in accordance with the mental assent of reasonable people by evaluating all the appropriate evidence. Thus, the new knowledge drew forth a reconsideration of probability, and a re-evaluation of Scripture and evidence from experience. It is clear that Paley attached great importance to the matter of evidence in his works, since his *Evidences* and *Natural theology* both dealt with the questions of evidence. Section 1 explains that because of the influence of skepticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Paley, following his latitudinarian predecessors, sought to discover the will of God by the sources of the declarations of Scripture and the light of nature in the *Principles*. Section 2 argues that Paley treated Scripture as testimonial evidence by listing all the biblical chapters he quoted in the *Principles*. It inevitably invites a key question: on what basis Paley would declare Scriptural doctrines as credible or rational.

Section 3 moves on to explain Paley's view on the credibility of Scripture. On the one hand, Paley acknowledged Christ and the apostles as authoritative witnesses of the miracles declared in Scripture because of their physical suffering and moral endurance. On this point, the validity of Scripture was reducible to the credibility of those who wrote Testaments. On the other hand, Paley held that the internal consistency within Scripture embodied the rationality and credibility of its contents. Paley's use of Scripture as a textbook in the field of moral education reveals that he was a strong defender of the historical authenticity of Scripture. Section 4 emphasizes another kind of evidence Paley used in the *Principles*, namely, evidence from experience. Paley belonged to the tradition that God directly revealed himself to humans. Paley's discussion about his observations of anatomy and daily experience in the *Principles*, which formed the foundation of his *Natural Theology*, should deserve to be discussed in this section. Section 5 discusses that Paley set up an

epistemic standard in the evaluation of the credibility of evidence from experience based on frequent personal observations of experience. In the *Principles*, Scripture inextricably joined with evidence from experience, and in the final analysis both were founded to be in perfect agreement.

Before starting this chapter, the problem of the references and citations in the *Principles* should be explained firstly. Paley explained why he did not refer to any other book or mention any other author except Abraham Tucker. With respect to a book about a subject that already known by most ordinary people, Paley held that the most important thing was the writer's mode of reasoning, or his judgement of probabilities rather than his use of literature.[92] Paley said that "he never forgot the use of his understanding, nor was solicitous to show what he knew more than what he thought. He never reasoned from memory or spoke from quotation."[93] Since Paley considered himself "to be something more than a mere compiler", he did not mind giving the origins of literature.[94] Based on this explanation, this chapter only discusses Scripture as key testimonial evidence and does not intend to take Paley's thinking about Greeks, Romans, Scythians, Germans, Americans and Africans which he did not give the sources of literature in the *Principles* into consideration.

**1. Reason and Evidence**

In this section, I explain why Paley used evidence taken from revealed and natural religion. In the eighteenth century, probability was supposed to be a reasonable guideline in the matters of human under the conditions of uncertainty.[95] Lorraine Daston holds that because of the skeptical revival since the sixteenth century, a group of philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries like John Locke and his followers, Cambridge latitudinarians, developed a new notion of rationality. On the one hand they were the advocates of sense-derived data, on the other they acknowledged the limitation of the senses and empirical investigation.[96] The interplay between sense-gained data and the weakness of the senses demonstrated that deductive and demonstrative certainty was so rare in the affairs of humankind that it was rational to solve

92 Paley (2002), xl.
93 Edinburgh Review, No. 70, cxxxi; Paley (1825), vol. 1, 172.
94 Paley (2002), xl.
95 Lorraine Daston, *Classic Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1988), xii.
96 Shapiro (1983), 22.

everyday affairs on the basis of imperfect but the most probable epistemic standards.[97]

The fallibility of sense could be remedied sometimes by testimonies. Although during that period there was a "the issue of how far Christianity could be equated with the exercise of human reason unaided by the truths of the Revelation", John Gascoigne holds that the latitudinarians still made concessions to revealed religion by the reading of Scripture without the help of clerical guidance.[98] When discussing the kinds of evidence used within the Church of England, M.L. Clarke states that revealed religion had the important functions of confirming and adding something to natural religion in the eighteenth century.[99] On account of the revival of skepticism, these philosophers were committed to applying reason to evidence for providing the most rational defences for their moral doctrines. Thus, as Peter Harrison mentions, "the dual forms of religion came an increasing emphasis upon knowledge and correct belief" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[100]

The theories of John Tillotson, John Locke and Samuel Clarke were a staple part of the Cambridge curriculum in the eighteenth century when Paley was a student there.[101] Tillotson, who was one of the most prominent of the latitudinarians and became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1691, held that Christianity must be reasonable and that there was no distinction between reason and faith. He believed that revealed religion could revive and improve the natural notions of God while divine revelation was necessarily gathered by these natural notions of religion.[102] For Tillotson, natural religion must be in harmony with the authenticity of revelation.

Locke worked out the details of Tillotson's position in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. He followed Tillotson in holding that there was no difference between faith and reason in some matters of religion. Locke wrote that:

> *Reason is natural revelation, whereby the Father of Light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of the truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties; revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and*

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97 Daston (1988), xi; Shapiro (1983), 61-62.
98 John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 115.
99 Clarke (1974), 100.
100 Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and the Religions in the English enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 19.
101 Waterland (1740), 22.
102 Gascoigne (1988), 115.

*proofs it gives that they come from God.*[103]

This paragraph indicates that natural religion was increasingly becoming a part of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Although Locke declared that natural religion so sufficiently and clearly evidenced a Deity, he still insisted on the need and importance of revelation.[104] For Locke, revealed religion as a form of original testimony given by God could remedy the deficiency of reason and natural religion: "this way of getting and improving our knowledge in substances only by experience and history, which is all that the weakness of our faculties in this state of mediocrity, which we are in this world, can attain to; makes me suspect, that natural philosophy is not capable of being made a science".[105]

Following Tillotson and Locke, Clarke extended the Cambridge latitudinarian theological theory into the eighteenth century. His disputation topic in 1709 for the Cambridge doctorate of divinity, namely, *No Article of the Christian Faith delivered in the Holy Scriptures, is Disagreeable to Right Reason* and *Without the Liberty of Humane Actions there can be no Religion*, indicates that both revealed and natural religion were the means of arriving at a knowledge of God and human moral duty.[106] Gascoigne argues that this disputation focused on the issues that how far the will of God could be discovered by the rational analysis of humankind without the help of revelation.[107] For Clarke the primary end of Christianity was to promote moral behaviour which could largely be obtained by the use of human reason.[108]

In the meantime, Clarke argued that every Christian doctrine had a direct and powerful influence on human moral manners and was thought of as an aid to moral behaviour.[109] As Gascoigne concludes, revelation could not be separated from natural theology in Clarke's scheme of theology.[110] Clarke followed the main outlines of Tillotson and Locke to maintain the need of the reconciliation of revealed and natural religion to discover the will of God and direct human moral actions. According to the emphasis of Locke and Cambridge Latitudinarians, revealed and natural religion did not stand in opposition to each other. They both provide evidence that could

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[103] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the 27th edition (London, 1836), 533.
[104] Locke (1836), 37.
[105] Locke (1836), 493.
[106] Gascoigne (1988), 117.
[107] Gascoigne (1988), 117.
[108] Gascoigne (1988), 117.
[109] Gascoigne (1988), 117.
[110] Gascoigne (1988), 118.

be used to improve human morals.

Paley belonged to this eighteenth-century tradition. In common with his Cambridge latitudinarian generation, Paley believed that morality was not a complete science in itself. He wanted to build a general system of moral philosophy on account of evidence of natural and revealed theology. In the preface of the *Principles*, he argued that "let the sanctions of Christianity never be forgotten; […]: religion will appear to be the voice of reason, and morality will be the will of God".[111] According to Paley, without human reasoning upon moral questions, any conclusion was vain; Scripture might add to and support the probability of the conclusions pursued by the light of nature.[112] As M. L. Clarke mentions, Paley believed that revealed religion could confirm natural religion and give it greater certainty.[113]

Paley's view on the kinds of evidence relevant to moral philosophy reflects the strong influence of Locke and Samuel Clarke on him. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Paley attended Mr. Backhouse's lectures in logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy at Christ's College, in which the doctrines of Locke and Clarke were principally discussed. Based on their ideas, Paley recommended two main kinds of evidence to ascertain the will of God in the *Principles*. One is Scripture and the other is nature, particularly God's design in his works.[114] Paley advised people to pursue moral questions by the light of nature firstly, and then to inquire whether anything reasoned from nature matches with Scripture.[115] For Paley, both revealed and natural religion provided evidence for his readers who demanded reasonable grounds for their moral actions.

In the *Principles*, Paley stated that evidence was clearly required in the formulation of belief. He recommended that students should "pause and tarry at every proposition, till they have traced out its dependency, proof, relation, and consequences, before they permit themselves to step on to another."[116] Paley took evidence and proof to be valuable, and sought to establish rational basis of his moral philosophy. A question then arose for Paley that is what kinds of evidence obtained from revealed and natural religion in the *Principles* could indicate the will of God. In the letter (1785) to Edmund Law, Paley presented some criteria, such as "by a diligent and faithful examination of

111 Paley (2002), xxxvi.
112 Paley (2002), 228.
113 Clarke (1974), 100.
114 Paley (2002), 38.
115 Paley (2002), 228.
116 Paley (2002), xxxvii.

the original record, dismisses from the system one article which contradicts the apprehension, the experience, or the reasoning of mankind".[117] The key words of Paley's idea of evidence to discover the will of God can be extracted from this text, such as "the original record", "the experience", and "the reasoning of mankind", which will be discussed in the following sections to demonstrate that Paley sought to unite the natural notions of God with the precepts of revelation to accomplish his system of morality.

In his works, Paley adhered to this epistemological hierarchy that Scripture was regarded as supplementary to natural religion. Scripture introduced "the deity to human apprehension, under an idea … more personal than the theology of nature can do".[118] But natural theology was "the firm foundation to rest our foot upon".[119] After several editions of his *Evidences* and *Principles* had become Cambridge textbooks, Paley claimed that the subject and theme of his next work would complete his philosophical and intellectual system which consisted of "the evidences of natural religion, the evidences of revealed religion, and an account of the duties that result from both".[120] As LeMahieu mentions, the order in which Paley's books ought to be read is the reverse of the order in which they were written. *Natural Theology*, being the last of his works, is considered first and followed by the *Evidences*. They both form the bedrock of the *Principles*.[121] In the next few sections, I will argue how Scripture and nature were treated as evidence and fit together in the *Principles*.

**2. Scripture as Testimonial Evidence**

In this section, I explain why Paley considered Scriptural testimony as a viable form of evidence for a scientific system of moral philosophy. Edmund Paley, the son of William Paley, who wrote a biography of his father entitled *An Account of the Life and Writings of William Paley* (1825), pointed out that a main source of evidence used by his father was "the books of the New Testament", which he believed "were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed".[122]

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[117] Paley (2002), xxxii.
[118] Paley (2006), 230.
[119] William Paley, "The Being of God Demonstrated in the Works of Creation (part I)", in *Sermons on Various Subjects*, ed. Edmund Paley, 2 vols. (London, 1825), vol. 1, Sermon XXV, 255.
[120] Paley (2006), 3-4.
[121] O'Flaherty (2019), 127-128.
[122] Paley (1825), 213.

According to Edmund Paley's further explanation, his father held that "there is no more reason to doubt but the Gospels were Matthew's, Mark's, Luke's, and John's; the Epistles, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, St. James, &c."[123]

Paley held that one way to assess the authenticity of evidence was to trace the lineage of its original and authoritative historical sources. The chapter "Of The Scripture Account of Sabbatical Institutions" in the *Principles* evinces this kind of assessment of Scripture. Paley discussed two questions in this chapter. The first question is whether the Jewish sabbatical institution extended to Christians. The second question is whether any new command about this institution was delivered by the authority or example of Christ and his apostles.[124] In order to answer the first question, Paley collected the accounts that are preserved in the Old Testament which he viewed as the authentic record of the Jewish history. He held that the content of Old Testament was not false since it was kept by the Jews who had no reason to forge inaccurate testimony.[125] He cited evidence from Genesis, Exodus, Ezekiel, Nehemiah, and gave his own opinion that the transaction in the wilderness was the first actual institution of the sabbath.[126] Accordingly, the consistency of the different narratives in Scripture cited by Paley led him to affirm the historical authenticity of particular doctrinal traditions in Scripture, and to argue that the sabbath was only instituted for the Jews.

Paley smoothly moved on to the second question: if the sabbatical institution was only a law to Jews, whether any new command upon this subject was delivered by the authority of Christ or his apostles. After considering plenty of evidence from the New Testament's Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of St. Paul, Paley concluded that, although the practice of holding religious assemblies upon the first day of the week was so early and universal in the early Christian Church, "the opinion, that Christ and his apostles meant to retain the duties of the Jewish sabbath, shifting only the day from the seventh to the first, seems to prevail without sufficient proof; nor does any evidence remain in Scripture […]."[127] In this example, Paley regarded Scripture as evidence which was instituted by the propositions of Christ and the apostles.

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123 Paley (1825), 214.
124 Paley (2002), 257.
125 Paley (1825), 226.
126 Paley (2002), 257-262.
127 Paley (2002), 268.

Besides the examples mentioned above, Paley used the books in Scripture to argue his principles of moral philosophy throughout the *Principles*. He cited the contents of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 Corinthians and James to discuss his idea of moral virtue.[128] To explain his detailed classification of moral duties, Paley used the Old Testament books of Genesis,[129] Exodus,[130] Leviticus,[131] Deuteronomy,[132] Psalms,[133] and Zechariah.[134] From the New Testament, Paley used evidence taken from Matthew,[135] Luke,[136] John,[137] Acts,[138] Romans,[139] 1 Corinthians,[140] 2 Corinthians,[141] Galatians,[142] Ephesians,[143] Philippians,[144] Colossians,[145] 1 Thessalonians,[146] 1 Thimothy,[147] Hebrews,[148] James.[149]

Moreover, Paley regarded Scripture's depiction of miracles as sound evidence as well. In this sense, he asserted that some Christian revelation was so supernatural and distinctive that it could only be explained by miracles. In the chapter entitled "Of Reverencing The Deity", Paley highlighted the inestimable importance of a message by which God's mission was introduced and attested and through which the wisest people could find an answer to their doubts and inquiries.[150] Paley thought that the eyewitness accounts of miracles or prophets, and some certain religious doctrines of such wise authors were valid. The trustworthiness and authority of evidence were reduced to the capacity to witness miracles. It was for this reason that Paley was concerned to show that the metaphysical dogmas of Scripture were historically authentic.

Overall, Paley was a devout exponent of the authority of the written revelation of God in

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128 Paley (2002), 31.
129 Paley (2002), 67.
130 Paley (2002), 153, 242, 258.
131 Paley (2002), 178.
132 Paley (2002), 93, 115, 184, 216.
133 Paley (2002), 111, 242.
134 Paley (2002), 242.
135 Paley (2002), 113, 142, 146, 163, 173, 178, 184, 190, 241, 243, 244, 245.
136 Paley (2002), 241, 243, 251.
137 Paley (2002), 159, 178.
138 Paley (2002), 84, 143, 144, 155, 242.
139 Paley (2002), 153. 221, 241, 242.
140 Paley (2002), 155, 178, 221.
141 Paley (2002), 242, 243.
142 Paley (2002), 150, 178.
143 Paley (2002), 99, 173, 221.
144 Paley (2002), 241.
145 Paley (2002), 153. 173.
146 Paley (2002), 153, 222, 241, 242.
147 Paley (2002), 200, 241, 242.
148 Paley (2002), 115, 178, 245.
149 Paley (2002), 148, 242.
150 Paley (2002), 278-279.

Scripture. He gave credence to the evidence provided by highly reliable persons such as the prophets and apostles. In the words of Edmund Paley, his father accepted such authors as those who "places the authenticity of the Scripture beyond any controversy—beyond the authenticity of any other book in the world".[151] To Paley, the authority of Scripture relied on the different authoritative authors of Scripture corresponding with each other. A belief in Christian doctrines is equated with a belief in Christ and persons who God revealed him in.

**3. The Credibility of Scripture**

This section explains Paley's discussion of the credibility of Scripture. In the *Principles*, Paley's insistence on the use of Scripture in articulating belief invites questions about the credibility and reliability of Scripture. In a letter (1785) to the Bishop of Carlisle, Edmund Law, Paley said that "whatever renders religion more rational, renders it more credible".[152] Based on the debate between Paley and David Hume, Paley held that the credibility of Scripture was authorized by Christ and the apostles, and its own internal consistency.

Paley's view on the epistemic side of Scripture seen as opinion warranted by authority can be explained in detail by Ian Hacking's words. Following the epistemic tradition of the Middle Ages, *scientia* was knowledge that was necessarily true in logical terms. It was obtained by demonstrative and deductive reasoning.[153] The opposite of *scientia* was opinion. For medieval thinkers, opinion did not refer to self-evidential belief or doctrines. In this sense, opinion was contrasted with the traditional rationality of demonstrative certainty. The credibility of opinion relied on the authority either given in authoritative books or supported by prestigious people.[154] In the seventeenth century, there was a criterion that "the true religion taught and established by the apostles".[155] Thomas Sprat, one of the key members of the Royal Society, wrote that "Christ himself … was … to introduce a rational, moral, spiritual Doctrine, and a plain, unaffected, saving way of teaching it."[156] In this statement, Christianity as a propositional religion was instituted by the authority of Christ and his apostles.

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151 Paley (1825), 218.
152 Paley (2002), xxxii.
153 Hacking (1975), 20.
154 Hacking (1975), 30.
155 Harrison (2015), 104.
156 Thomas Sprat, *Sermons Preached before the King at White-Hall, December 24th 1676* (London, 1677), 7.

Paley accepted Christ and the apostles as the authority of the historical authenticity of the Scripture. His discussion in the *Evidences* mainly focused on the topic of miracles which had long been regarded as the main grounds for the truth of Christianity. Apologists like Samuel Clarke saw miracles as "the positive and direct proof of His Divine Commission".[157] Joseph Butler regarded Scripture as "an authentic, genuine history" and miracles as "historical evidence".[158] In common with these predecessors, Paley's *Evidences* embodies a series of standard and orthodox arguments about miracles. Harrison thinks that Paley's *Evidences* provides a series of pieces of external evidence for Christianity, and then explains that external evidence is to do with the credibility of persons or books which promulgated particular doctrines.[159] In this sense, people's reliance on Scripture was because they could not be at the scene. They valued the experience of Christ and the apostles who are outside of them rather than their own. This is the reason that the authors of the Port Royal *Logick* (1662) called the evidence of testimony external or extrinsic.[160] According to Paley, certain evidence in the form of miracles declared in Scripture was authorized by the experience of Christ and the apostles. The credibility of Scripture was reducible to the credibility of its witnesses.

The strongest objection to the credibility of Christ and the apostles during the eighteenth century came from Hume's *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748). Hume argued that miracles violated the natural order established by "firm and unalterable experience".[161] Hume held that like all beliefs, the credibility of any testimony relied upon long and invariable experience which is trustworthy. However, a miracle in itself was contrary to universal experience and was a breach of the laws of nature. According to this, Hume concluded that "it appears that no testimony for any kind of miracle has ever amounted to a probability, much less to a proof".[162]

Paley argued that Hume's rejection of miracles was based on a presupposed view of theological argumentation. According to Paley, Hume's objection that the existence of miracles violated the unalterable laws of nature was based on Hume's preestablished repudiation of the

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[157] Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* (Glasgow, 1823), 338.
[158] Joseph Butler, *The Works of Bishop Butler*, ed. David. E. White (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 274.
[159] Harrison (2015), 149, 112.
[160] Hacking (1975), 33.
[161] David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Various Subjects* (Boston, Published by J. P. Mendum, 1868), 68.
[162] Hume (1868), 75.

existence of a Deity. Paley mentioned that for Hume "miracles are alike incredible to him who is previously assured of the constant agency of a Divine Being, and to him who believes that no such Being exists in the universe".[163] However, because Paley assumed that God was the maker of the laws of nature, he accepted that God should have and reserve the ability to vary such laws which was established by him and might do so for his will and purposes on earth. From this, Paley pointed out that "once believe that there is a God, and miracles are not incredible".[164]

Given his Cambridge education, Paley upheld Newton's view that divine design was a constant progress.[165] In order to reconcile the invariability of the laws of nature with divine continuous actions in the universe, Paley first claimed that "Where he [God] acts, he is; and where he is, he perceives".[166] Just as John Ray's *Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation* (1691) that is a basis of Paley's *Natural Theology* demonstrated, there must be "some external intelligent Agent, either God himself immediately, or some Plastick Nature".[167] The core analogy in *Natural Theology* underlines the necessity of a constantly divine agency. The fact that the watch has a designer embodies that a "power, distinct from mechanism, is, at this present time, acting upon it", and convinced Paley that "mechanism, without power, can do nothing".[168] According to this analogy, Paley drew a conclusion that "mechanical dispositions, fixed beforehand by an intelligent appointment".[169]

Based on such expressions of ongoing agency, Paley presented an image of a personal Deity who are involved in the whole universe.[170] Although the laws of nature were uniform and universal, the Almighty certainly reserved "the power of winding and turning as he pleases, the course of causes which issue from himself", and did "in fact interpose to alter or intercept effects".[171] For Paley, this was "not only . . . a creative, but . . . a continuing care".[172] Just as one of Paley's contemporary Cambridge latitudinarians, Edmund Law, wrote, "Were the laws of nature absolutely fix'd and unalterable what room . . . would there be left for the particular duties of faith, hope, and

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[163] William Paley, *A View of the Evidences of Christianity in Three Parts, and the Horae Paulinae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 5.
[164] Paley (1849), 5.
[165] O'Flaherty (2019), 155.
[166] Paley (2006), 231.
[167] John Ray, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation* (London, 1691), 34.
[168] Paley (2006), 218.
[169] Paley (2006), 219.
[170] O'Flaherty (2019), 154.
[171] Paley (2006), 270.
[172] Paley (2006), 272.

trust in God . . . in short, for any kind of duty and devotion towards him, — unless we really believe that he has the disposal of events, and that he will direct them for our benefit?"[173] Viewed in this context, there was no contradiction between the idea of miracles and the invariable laws of nature.

Aside from doubt about the existence of miracles itself, Hume moved on to question those people who claimed to witness miracles. As to witnesses' credit, jurists distilled the theory of legal proof derived from Roman and canon law from the period of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.[174] Confessions, oaths, written documents, and witness all were regarded as legal proof and applied to the judgement of this jurisprudence during the period.[175] As Daston summarizes, "judges were advised to consider the reputation of the witness; his age, sex, and social status; his relationship to the accused; any private interest in the case; and comportment under interrogation (paleness, vacillation, and timorous manner all reduced credibility)."[176] To some degree, this legal thinking about evidence means what is significant is who says it, not what is said. It seems that credibility might be independent of the content of the testimony. For Hume, the moral elements of informants, including the freedom of action, social standing, the level of education, and the codes of honor and virtue, were decisive factors.[177]

In regard to the credibility of the apostles as witnesses, Hume argued that they could not be trusted since they were uneducated and were lacking of good sense.[178] Hume argued that there was no miracle undoubted enough attested by a sufficient number of people of unquestioned good sense and education who could make sure such miracles were not out of their own delusion throughout the whole course of history.[179] Upon the whole, Hume claimed that the apostles lacked such credit and reputation which are requisite for a full assurance of testimony.

In order to refute Hume's claim, Paley claimed that the credibility of Christ and the apostles was authorized by their own experience and situation. Paley maintained that the appearance and

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[173] Edmund Law, "The Grounds of a Particular Providence: A Sermon Preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal", in the Abby Church, Westminster, on 30th Jan 1771, in *Monthly Review or Literary Journal* (London, 1771), vol. xliv, 263-264.
[174] Daston (1988), 41.
[175] Daston (1988), 42.
[176] Daston (1988), 42.
[177] See for more details in Steven Shapin's "The Man of Science", in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 3 (2006), 179-191; "The Image of the Man of Science", in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 4 (2003), 159-183; Peter Lipton's "The Epistemology of Testimony", *Stud. His. Phil. Sci.,* Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 1-31, 1998; Shapiro (1983), Ch V "Law", 163-193.
[178] LeMahieu (1976), 98.
[179] Hume (1868), 69.

existence of Christianity as a credible religion was due to its founder and his associates, and the extreme labours, dangers and sufferings from Judaism and Roman power they encountered. The apostles voluntarily defended their faith at the risk of persecution and at the cost of lives of danger and hardship, which ensured the reliability of their activities. Paley affirmed that:

> *there cannot much doubt remain upon our minds, but that a number of persons at that time appeared in the world, publicly advancing an extraordinary story, and for the sake of propagating the belief of that story, voluntarily incurring great personal dangers, traversing seas and kingdoms, exerting great industry, and sustaining great extremities of ill usage and persecution.*[180]

In other words, Paley refused to judge the credibility and reliability of the apostles according to Hume's criteria, namely, education, good sense and social status. Paley thought that these elements had no relevance to an inner conviction. Instead, Paley concluded that the apostles possessed the proper credentials to validate their testimony because of their personal qualities, moral endurance and resilience against ruthless torture.

The authority of witnesses at this time was linked to wider understanding of rationality. The moral and social status of informants might be supposed to be proof against lying, but not against error. The internal consistency of the content of testimony should be considered as well.[181] There was a further appeal of intellectual assent to the contents and propositions of testimony.[182] Faith in a person came down to give credence to the propositions given by that person. Belief in a person meant that believing the rationality of the content of testimony given by and associated with that person.

Like many eighteenth-century intellectuals, Paley held that the evaluation of unquestioning belief depended on the physical courage, personal dedication and moral endurance of witnesses as well as the internal consistency of testimony. Paley used this principle in all his works. In his *Evidences*, for example, he extracted heavily from Nathaniel Lardner's *The Credibility of the Gospel History* (1727-1755). Paley showed his admiration of Lardner's work by drawing on his research of ancient sources for his own discussion of the historical credibility of Scripture.[183] Paley shared Lardner's view that the consistency and harmony between different Gospels embodied the truth

[180] Paley (1849), 42
[181] Daston (1995), 310.
[182] Harrison (2015), 106.
[183] LeMahieu (1976), 104.

and credibility of Scripture.[184] In the *Principles*, Paley cited many different declarations of Scripture in order to articulate a certain topic. For instance, he used the narratives of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 Cornithians and James to reinforce one another and prove his viewpoint of moral virtue.[185] Thus, as pointed out by Edmund Paley, his father paid attention to internal evidence "that which arises from the contents of the books themselves".[186] Paley emphasized that the consistence of the different narratives of Scripture reinforced the credibility of Scripture.

In sum, on the one hand, the authority of Scripture was legitimated by the credibility of Christ and his apostles; on the other hand, the internal consistency between different narratives of Scripture signified the reliability of the contents of this book. Paley held that "the truth of Christianity depends upon its leading facts", and all facts together are "a body of strong historical evidence".[187] For the testimony of moral doctrines to be reasonable, it must meet this standard which Paley expressed clearly in the *Evidences* and applied directly in the *Principles*.

**4. Evidence from Experience**

In this section, I argue, in addition to scriptural evidence, Paley used another kind of evidence, namely, evidence taken from personal experience. Harrison argues that from the seventeenth century, there was an increasing stress on the usage of such evidence in works that argued for the inherent rationality of Christianity. Accordingly, the religious literature of early modern England was full of terms like "grounds", "reasons", "evidences", and "proofs".[188] Paley's effort to build a rational defence for Christianity extended this tradition. Prior to writing the *Principles*, Paley gave sermons entitled "The Being of God Demonstrated in the Works of Creation". These sermons formed the epistemological framework for evidence from experience in his *Principles*, and were eventually integrated into *Natural Theology*.[189]

The notion of "the argument from design" with the concept of divinely imposed and universal laws of nature was the mainstream ideology in the eighteenth century. It was a belief

[184] LeMahieu (1976), 105.
[185] Paley (2002), 25-33.
[186] Paley (1825), 215.
[187] Paley (1849), 296, 299, 303.
[188] Harrison (2015), 105.
[189] LeMahieu (1976), 104.

that the existence of God could be learned from God's designs in the world.[190] In that time, the study of nature, such as John Ray's *Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation* (1691), William Derham's *Physico Theology* (1713) and Bernard Nieuwentyt's *The Religious Philosopher* (1718), had already provided the rational evidence of Christianity. Reading "the book of nature" authored divinely came down to the principles of design since the Divinity was "represented to the understanding by its own remarks, its own reflections and its own reasonings".[191] Paley held, in addition, that the evidence of their own senses rather than "any language that can be used by others" would leave a deeper impress on human.[192] In other words, the interactive process that nature was read for the teleologically systematic investigation of its underlying arguments from design would produce a firmer conviction of a wise and powerful Deity.

Paley agreed with Locke that "the works of nature everywhere sufficiently evidenced a Deity" and that "a rational creature who will but seriously reflect on them cannot miss the discovery of a deity".[193] A paragraph of words in Paley's *Natural Theology* exemplified his view of evidence taken from his experience of the natural world:

> *In a moral view, I shall not, I believe, be contradicted when I say, that, if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme intelligent Author. To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of every thing which is religious. The world from thenceforth becomes a temple,……The works of nature want only to be contemplated.*[194]

The evidence observed from the experience of nature is also elaborated in chapter "The Divine Benevolence" in the *Principles*, which was eventually expanded to *Natural Theology*. Harrison holds that "the latter work was thus concerned with internal evidences, drawn almost exclusively from the design argument".[195] Thus, it is worth discussing the "The Benevolence Divine" chapter at length because it presents a helpful picture of Paley's view about evidence from experience.

The empirical evidence that Paley used in the *Principles* was based on his own observations of nature and human body, especially anatomy. Anatomy was the basic source of

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190 Clarke (1974), 89.
191 Paley (2006), 279
192 Paley (2006), 279.
193 Locke (1836), 40.
194 Paley (2006), 278-279.
195 Harrison (2015), 149.

evidence of physico-theologies from the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries.[196] Paley, for example, discussed teeth at the beginning of his arguments. Based on his observation of teeth, Paley held that they were designed for chewing, not for aching.[197] He then moved on to discuss other parts of human body, such as ducts, kidneys and glands. In the same way, Paley argued that ducts were not designed to convey the gravel to the kidneys, and glands were not designed to cause gout.[198] According to these personal observations of anatomy, Paley confirmed that evil might be called a defect of design, but it was not the object of it.[199] According to Paley, observing and reasoning from nature could prove the benevolent personality of God because God directly revealed himself through nature.

Paley also employed the observations taken from daily life. He thought that sickles were made for husbandry, not for cutting the reaper's fingers.[200] Drawing from domestic life, Paley insisted that children's happiness was described as an object of one of the purest forms of enjoyment while the pleasure of adulthood might be considered as the product of an adult's own development and education.[201] The happiness of children that existed beyond children themselves was a clear example of human happiness provided by a benevolent God. In children's happiness, Paley perceived "a kind of sensible evidence of the finger of God, and of the disposition which directs it".[202] On the whole, Paley concluded that the evidence taken from the experience of the animate could be used to offer a credible and rational defence for the existence of God's benevolence.

Paley held that empirical evidence through its properties could point to another thing beyond it. In the chapter "Of the Personality of the Deity" in his *Natural Theology*, for instance, Paley gave a deeper explanation about his view on how empirical evidence gained from personal experience pointed out something else beyond and outside itself, namely, a superior designer.[203] That why Harrison says that Paley's *Natural theology* is acknowledged to afford internal evidence

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[196] M. D. Eddy, The Rhetoric and Science of William Paley's *Natural Theology*, *Literature & Theology*, Vol. 18. No. 1, March, 2004, 1-22.
[197] Paley (2002), 40.
[198] Paley (2002), 41.
[199] Paley (2002), 40.
[200] Paley (2002), 40.
[201] Paley (2002), 41.
[202] Paley (2002), 41.
[203] Paley (2006), 215.

for the truth of the existence of God.

For eighteenth-century natural philosophers, the contemplation of nature educed many instances of God's design of his creatures. An ongoing and systematic investigation of nature was directed to uncover the underlying principles that pointed to the existence of a wise and benevolent Deity in a way that goes beyond the allegorical theological significance. Paley concluded that nature provided accurate evidence of the dispositions of a benevolent designer.[204] If the reliance on the declarations in Scripture might be judged as a subjective feeling of enthusiasm, the personal experience of nature expanded the dimensions of Christianity by affording empirical facts. In turn, natural theology reaffirmed the authenticity of evidence from revealed religion and awakened the strong feelings of a benevolent Deity. As LeMahieu concluded, in Paley's moral philosophy, "in its power to reaffirm and enlarge an existing faith in God, it led men back to revelation, the recorded testament of God's intervention in history".[205]

**5. The Credibility of Evidence from Experience**

In this section, I explain why Paley thought the credibility of experience rested on people's own constant observations and the authority of observers themselves. In addition to testimony as "opinion" derived from authority, Hacking introduces another kind of evidence as "natural signs" correlated by experience.[206] For Hacking, this kind of evidence was derived from sixteenth-century low sciences and based on frequent observations. In this sense, the credibility of this kind of evidence was on account of the numerical accumulation of evidence from experience. The degrees of certainty of this kinds of evidence depended on mathematical frequency of experience, which was very different from the classical evidence of testimony. Just as Butler said, the degrees of assurance of empirical evidence depended on the constancy of human experience.[207] Thus, Daston concludes that "the constant experience that facts conform to these principles is our sole reason to believe them."[208]

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[204] Paley (2002), 40.
[205] LeMahieu (1976), 104.
[206] Hacking (1975), 43.
[207] Daston (1988), 205.
[208] Daston (1988), 191.

The revival of skepticism in the late sixteenth century brought about a new form of knowledge and new claims about the degrees of probability. Because of the suspicion of senses, it was necessary for the intellectuals of that era to reconsider the complex problems of certainty. According to the table below, they distinguished between the degrees of certainty and probability, and were satisfied with moral certainty which was the highest level of probability available where observation and experience were concerned. This level of probability was not a simple collection of matters of fact, but an interaction between subjective judgments and objective facts. Although assent was not compelled, reasonable people was certain of his own observation and experience. A brief sketch of some of the core arguments employed by Paley's predecessors to justify the credibility of evidence from experience would be helpful to characterizing Paley's contribution to this debate.

FIGURE 1[209]

| *Knowledge* | *Method* | *Certainty* |
|---|---|---|
| God's knowledge | none (creation) | absolute, infallible, certainty |
| Science A: mathematics, metaphysics (in part) | logic, mathematical demonstration | compelled assent |
| Science B: direct or intuitive knowledge | immediate sense experience introspection | more than moral certainty |
| Belief (including science C), religious belief, history, & conclusions about everyday life | Observation, analysis of reports of others of their observations | moral certainty at least |
| Opinion | Gathering evidence including second-hand reports of sense observation & reports of other opinion | Probability, "mere" probability, plausibility |

The Port Royal *Logick* was the first to combine the reliability of testimony with semi-quantified probability. Daston says that "the Port Royal authors recommend two criteria: the intrinsic credibility of the fact itself; and the extrinsic credibility of the witnesses".[210] The former means inherent rationality of belief. The authors of *Logick* still paid attention to the extrinsic

[209] Shapiro (1983), 29.
[210] Daston (1988), 39.

credibility, however they thought that the assessment of certain evidence should be also guided by "what happens incomparably more often in the evaluation of these circumstance".[211] When historical witnesses and documents conflicted with each other, the Port Royal authors suggested that people should make a judgement in accordance with what happened "incomparably more often".

Locke represented the culmination of a generation's attempt to devise a new theory of knowledge appropriate to the experiential evidence of the era. Locke sought to find out a rule for the rational judgement of evidence from experience in "Of Probability" and "Of the Degrees of Assent" which reveals that experience and belief were the objective and subjective aspects of a single psychological operation.[212] Locke held that constant experience should produce conviction. Experience generated credibility and probability by the repeated sensations following the same conduct happened in past. The frequency of experience was correlated to the intensity of the mental association, which in turn intensified beliefs.[213] Hence the objective credibility of experience and the subjective assent of belief were interoperable in a well-ordered mind.

Locke held that "highest probability amounts not to certainty; without which there can be no knowledge", however, he still acknowledged the existence of rational assent of propositions without certainty. Locke believed that the strength and intensity of empirical evidence varied "as the conformity of our knowledge, as the certainty of observations, as the frequency of and constancy of experience".[214] According to this, he established the degrees of knowledge, starting with certainty and demonstration which correspond to the degrees of assent from full assurance and confidence down to conjecture, doubt, and distrust.[215] For Locke, although probability was inferior to demonstrative knowledge, the constant observations from experience offered a very strong credibility.

Under the influence of skepticism, Paley only sought to prove the existence of God beyond reasonable doubt, and he knew that deductive logical proofs for human experience were impossible. For Paley, empirical evidence of God's actions was probable. He mentioned that "the

[211] Daston (1988), 39.
[212] Locke (1836), 500, 502.
[213] Daston (1988), 197.
[214] Locke (1836), 502.
[215] Locke (1836), 503-510.

light of nature leaves human to controverted probabilities".[216] In the *Principles*, Paley argued the Copernican system was just a singular probability since Copernicus was the same person who both discovered and proved, and concluded that "it is idle to say, that a future state had been discovered already".[217] That is, Copernicanism was probable and just the best one supported by the strongest argument at that time. In this sense, Paley accepted that knowledge based on evidence from personal observation and experience was not necessarily true in logical terms.

Although a conviction of belief did not have to depend on a rigorously demonstrative evidence, a certain degree of rational grounds for belief was necessary. In *Natural Theology*, Paley said that empirical evidence of nature was founded upon uniform experience.[218] Because of this experience, a person himself was a witness to the actual formation and situation of things. Moreover, Paley held that what happened more constantly in experience offered a higher level of credibility. He said that this resemblance which a Deity constantly produces in the world of nature left people under the smallest doubt.[219] For Paley, the accumulation of evidence from experience formed a solid foundation for his moral knowledge.

For the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, certainty was beyond human reason in human affairs, however, the degrees of probability were accessible. For the most ordinary reader, Paley thought that evidence obtained by stable investigations was the most generally acknowledged and was supposed to be true.[220] Paley's utterances of the relationship between the frequency of experience, the degrees of probability, and the intensity of belief belonged to the tradition of his day. In the *Principles*, Paley used the sentence pattern "it is (seems) or it is probable" seventeen times.[221] There are other phrases like "by probable arguments at least", "the most probable that he could proceed by", and "upon a probable reason being suggested" in the *Principles*.[222] The certainty and credibility of evidence from experience did not have to be a demonstration from axioms that were self-evident but must be the most probable at least which could exclude any other available option and remove any reasonable doubt in his moral philosophy.

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[216] Paley (2002), 240.
[217] Paley (2002), 279.
[218] Paley (2006), 215.
[219] Paley (2006), 216.
[220] Paley (2006), 277.
[221] Paley (2002), 58, 65, 70, 72, 105, 113, 115, 152, 182, 234, 261. 268, 282, 314, 387, 426, 462.
[222] Paley (2002), 59, 88, 336.

Although Paley confessed in the *Principles* that he did not examine any doubts, encounter any errors, discuss any obscurities or advert to any controversies, he firmly believed the existence of rational evidence even if among these doubts, errors, obscurities and controversies.[223] Without evidence derived from personal observations and repeated trails, there was only "habitual opinion".[224] Due to the limited understanding of humankind, Paley concluded that "in human affairs, *probability* ought to content us".[225]

Therefore, Paley made natural and revelated religion work hand in hand in the determining of the will of God. In *Natural Theology*, Paley confirmed again that "his inward veneration of this great Being, will incline him to attend with the utmost seriousness, not only to all that can be discovered by concerning him by researches into nature, but to all that is taught by a revelation, which gives reasonable proof of having proceeded from him".[226] Meanwhile, he "combined with the conclusion of reason the declarations of Scripture, … , as of co-ordinate authority."[227] Through evidence both from experience and Scripture, Paley contented that people could gain a reasonable basis for the conception of the will of God.

**Conclusion**

It was the purpose of this chapter to examine the kinds of evidence that Paley used in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. With the shift of the definition of science, most English intellectuals were very satisfied with a highly probable knowledge by the end of the seventeenth century. A family of related and overlapping concepts, such as reason, evidence experience, testimony, credibility and probability, played a major role in shaping science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Shapiro mentions, "moral decision making, like religious belief and scientific evaluation, required a reasoned calculation of probabilities based on the best and the most complete information and evidence available".[228] Before making efforts to establish moral principles, these thinkers felt it necessary to show what kinds of evidence could formed solidly rational foundation for their moral principles.

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[223] Paley (2002), xxxix.
[224] Paley (2006), 278.
[225] Paley (2002), 206.
[226] Paley (2006), 280.
[227] Paley (2002), xxxix.
[228] Shapiro (1983), 105.

Section 2 and Section 4 examined Scripture as testimonial evidence, and evidence from experience that Paley used in the *Principles* respectively. Paley stressed on the evidential value of Scripture, both the Old Testament, which he regarded as the authentic records of the history of Jews, and the New Testament, which he saw as the undoubted religious doctrines authorized by Christ and the apostles. Section 4 addressed evidence that Paley took from his experience of nature, especially evidence from body organs and human daily life, by which Paley firmly believed that the divine benevolence was sufficiently revealed.

Section 3 and Section 5 explained the criteria of the credibility Paley applied to Scripture and evidence from experience in the *Principles*. Paley held that physical suffering, personal dedication and moral perseverance rather than social status, the level of education and the code of honour and virtues which were generally accepted standard in the eighteenth century and were used by Hume to attack the credibility of the apostles, were the criteria of the credibility of Christ and the apostles. Moreover, Paley attached importance to the internal consistence and concurrence of the different narratives in Scripture. Section 5 explained that Paley endeavored to establish empirical standards for the evaluation of evidence from experience in the context of uncertainty. Paley followed the eighteenth-century tradition of skepticism to acknowledge that the rational assessment of the credibility of evidence from experience was derived from constant observations of experience. This kind of credibility was based on numerical accumulations.

Paley valued revelation as Scripture, and natural theology as evidence from experience, as viable evidence that could be used in a scientific system of moral philosophy. Just like O'Flaherty says, the task of Paley's *Principles* was simply to "reassure his readers that natural theology was not corrosive to Scriptural faith".[229] This chapter agreed with Daston that Paley found a considerable satisfaction in moral probability that was sufficient for a reasonable person to believe the principles of happiness and expediency divinely imposed, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

[229] O'Flaherty (2019), 149.

## Chapter 3

## Moral Law and the Principle of Expediency

### Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that Paley established the principle of expediency as the basis of his understanding of a moral law in the *Principles*. At the beginning of his book, Paley noted that "Moral Philosophy, Morality, Ethics, Casuistry, Natural Law, mean all the same thing; namely, that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it".[230] As his definition suggests, Paley endeavored to arrive at a general rule which could clearly teach all people their duty and give them practical rules in human affairs. Paley wanted the principle of expediency to work in the moral realm in the same way that Newton's principles of gravitation did in the world of nature. Section 1 discusses Paley's motivation to set up a better moral law and the inadequacies and limitations of current laws, Scripture and an innate moral sense. Section 2 argues that Paley regarded private happiness as a motive of human behaviour in his moral philosophy in order to compensate for those deficiencies mentioned above. Section 3 avers that Paley combined virtuous self-interest with Christian eschatology and refined his moral philosophy on the basis of the principle of expediency. In the *Principles*, the combination of Christian theology and the principle of expediency played a significant role in both earthly and heavenly happiness. In this way, Paley provided a core principle that he could use to make a moral system of knowledge for thoughtful people who demanded a reasonable explanation of duty and a universally valid guide for ordinary application which conformed to their Christian faith.

### 1. Inadequate Laws and Instincts

In the eighteenth century, moral philosophy was supposed to provide general rules to human conduct.[231] Paley defined moral philosophy as a science which teaches men their duty and governs their actions.[232] Just like divinely authored laws of nature would replace the inner qualities of natural things, divinely authored moral laws would similarly replace human virtues. If

[230] Paley (2002), 1.
[231] Daston (1988), 55.
[232] Paley (2002), 1.

grasping natural laws could conquer the natural world, comprehending moral laws could indicate the direction of human conduct. This tradition attempted to do for moral philosophy what Newton had done for natural philosophy. As Mary Poovey writes, "eighteenth-century British moral philosophers sought to assimilate cultural otherness because, like the Newtonian natural philosophers whose method they emulated, they assumed that 'facts' emerged at the level of universals or abstractions, not individuals".[233] Paley was part of this tradition, but he found that none of the current moral laws and instincts were perfect guides to human behaviour. To solve this problem, Paley devoted himself to finding a better moral law in the *Principles*. He wanted to solve the limitations he saw in the contemporary laws, rules and instincts used to judge and direct human moral conduct. This section identifies these limitations with a view to showing why Paley opted to eventually choose to base his moral law upon the principles of happiness and expediency.

For Paley, "the doctrine of general rules pervades and connects the whole".[234] In the *Principles*, Paley was concerned less with the theoretical knowledge of ethics and more with the practical instructions of daily life based on the application of principles. Accordingly, Paley held that general rules were essential to any moral philosophy for the purpose of practical application. In "any dispensation, whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures", if the moral government of the world punished one of two identical actions while it rewarded the other, "rewards and punishments would cease to be such, – would become accidents".[235] The "full and constant consideration" of general rules, according to Paley, made any moral system "satisfactory or consistent", and made the application of it "clear and easy".[236]

Paley admitted that the use of general rules was deeply entwined with the consideration of the consequences of an action. Any moral action should be considered in reference to its particular and general consequences. Paley said that "The particular bad consequence of an action, is the mischief which that single action directly and immediately occasions. The general bad consequence is, the violation of some necessary or useful *general* rule".[237] For instance, the immediate consequence of assassination is the death of an individual, which is comparatively

[233] Mary Poovey, *The History of The Modern Fact* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 256.
[234] Paley (2002), xlii.
[235] Paley (2002), 44-45.
[236] Paley (2002), xlii.
[237] Paley (2002), 43.

insignificant, while the general consequence is the violation of the public authority, which is catastrophic. Allowing these actions to occur, like coining, forgery, sheep-stealing or horse-stealing, and house breaking, must introduce them "to all who act in the same manner, and from the said motive", "which would soon fill the world with misery and confusion; and ere long put an end to human society, if not to the human species".[238] Here, Paley emphasized the long-term consequences by which "the same sorts of actions" are "generally permitted or generally forbidden".[239]

Paley found the contemporary treatises of moral philosophy imperfect because they lacked general rules to calculate general consequences of actions. The works of Grotius and Puffendorff were "too much mixed up with civil law and with the jurisprudence of Germany, to answer precisely the design of a system of ethics—the direction of private consciences in the general conduct of human life".[240] For Paley, these moral rules were erroneous because these above mentioned moralists paid more attention to the relations of independent nations than to the correspondence of domestic life. Contemporary moral philosophy works abounded with classical quotations and ornaments of terms and phrases, and were consequently "not sufficiently adapted to real life and to actual situations".[241] Last but not least, for Paley, contemporary English ethicists falsely divorced the law of nature from the precepts of revelation.[242] Thus, Paley in his letter written three years after the publication of the *Principle* regarded the principle of expedience as a hard and fast rule, applicable in all situations:

> *I know nothing immutable in morals but their principle. That principle is public expediency, not a present temporary particular expediency but an expediency which comprehends all consequences which includes every tendency operation and every operation tendency by which in any way or at any distance of time human happiness may be affected by our conduct. Expediency so interpreted becomes the measure of our duty because it is the object upon to which the will of our supreme governor is constantly and uniformly directed. This principle is founded in our relation to him – like that relation is invariable. It travels unchanged thro' every region of the earth & continues the same in every situation of our being. That which is expedient, expediency being well understood, is always right – so far morality is universal – but what is expedient; what conduct or what measure under given circumstances is entitled to that character becomes the subject of a calculation which must nececcarily [sic] be affected*

238 Paley (2002), 43, 47.
239 Paley (2002), 44.
240 Paley (2002), xxxv.
241 Paley (2002), xxxv.
242 Paley (2002), xxxvi.

*by the previous situation the established habits customs disposition and manners of the persons upon whom our resolution is to operate. If these vary the result of the calculation will vary with them. If this variety follow the progress of climates I know not why we should deny that our duties moral rules must be adapted to the same temperature*.[243]

The declared aim of this paragraph is to assert that compared with other rules, the principle of expediency was the best one to attain the clearest knowledge of what people should do and to lay the surest foundation for human conduct. Before elaborating the principles of happiness and expediency in his moral philosophy, Paley invited his readers to consider the limitations of the different moral laws and instincts by which men tried to determine their duty in the eighteenth century.

Let us begin with the law of honour. Paley's definition of the law of honour was the rules of fashionable life.[244] With regard to the inadequacies of the law of honour, Paley thought that it was not applicable to everyone in society. He thought the law of honour which was constituted by the will of the law-makers might be found easily to indulge in natural passions to pursue pleasures.[245] Paley explained the law of honour as the law that "only prescribes and regulates the duties *betwixt equal*; omitting such as relate to the Supreme Being, as well as those which we owe to our inferiors".[246] For Paley, the law of honour only regulated the etiquette and dealt with the affairs of particular classes in society. The social conventions varying on different social classes also revealed the inadequacy of the law of honour as an ideal moral guideline. For Paley, the law of honour easily wallowed in natural passions and worked only for certain classes in society.

Paley moved on to argue the limitations of the law of the land to distinguish right and wrong. He viewed the law of the land as the civil law. For Paley, the law of the land labored under two defects. The law primarily commanded where it could compel. Consequently, its voluntary duties were out of the reach of its operation and power.[247] The law of the land also failed to punish crimes when the circumstances which made the law changed or when the magistrate's character changed.[248] For Paley, the law of the land implied a strongly territorial jurisdiction which made this law neither constant nor universal.

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[243] PRO 30/12/17/4/ 25–26 in 1787. See O'Flaherty (2019), 87-88.
[244] Paley (2002), 1.
[245] Paley (2002), 2.
[246] Paley (2002), 1.
[247] Paley (2002), 2-3.
[248] Paley (2002), 3.

In addition to his criticism of the laws of honour and the land, Paley held that the specificity of Scripture was limited. Although Scripture provided comprehensive guidance on ethical issues, it did not give specific directions and statements on every moral question.[249] Paley mentioned that "Whoever expects to find in Scriptures a specific direction for every moral doubt that arises, looks for more than he will meet with".[250] Instead, Scripture preferred to lay down general rules and to illustrate them by examples.[251] Besides, according to Paley, Scripture presupposed that its readers already had a knowledge of the principles of natural justice. The teachings of Scripture were not to present new rules of morality but to enforce the practice of morality by new sanctions and a greater certainty.[252] Paley's suggestion that "the Scriptures do not supersede the use of the science [moral philosophy] of which we profess to treat, and at the same time to acquit them of any charge of imperfection or insufficiency on that account" showed that he was not content with Scripture as sole basis for human conduct.[253]

In addition to finding problems with the foregoing laws, Paley questioned the existence of an innate moral sense. A group of intellectuals of the eighteenth century viewed an innate moral sense as a criterion and motive for moral obligation.[254] The most famous supporter of an innate moral sense in the eighteenth century was Antony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury. He helped establish what later was called as the "moral sense theory" or "aesthetic intuitionism". Shaftesbury believed in a special moral faculty in human and defined it as "a real affection or love towards equity and right, for its own sake, and on the account of its own natural beauty and worth."[255] According to this definition, this faculty enabled people to distinguish rightness from wrongness in their thoughts and actions, which seemed like aesthetic appreciation or the sense of beauty. Shaftesbury's understanding of an innate moral sense gave people ability to distinguish between the right and the wrong just as his sense of beauty gave him ability to pick out the ugly and the beautiful. In other words, Shaftesbury thought that the sense of right and wrong, same as the sense of beauty, was a fundamental faculty of human nature, and provided people an

[249] Paley (2002), 3.
[250] Paley (2002), 3.
[251] Paley (2002), 4-5.
[252] Paley (2002), 5.
[253] Paley (2002), 5.
[254] See "Introduction" in *British Moralists: Being Selections from Writers principally of the Eighteenth Century,* ed. L.A. Shelby-Bigge, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), vol. 1.
[255] *British Moralists* (1897), 20.

instinctive ability to judge immediately the rightness and wrongness of a certain action and regulate their conduct.

Although O'Flaherty holds that Paley's idea of how to know moral obligation and duty was the converse of what Joseph Butler said in some ways, however, it was indeed part of Butler's theory.[256] Butler attempted to answer the question of how to know moral duty by stating that conscience was in accordance with the will of God. At the very start, Butler assumed the existence of a final cause. For him, it seemed certain that "There must be some movements of mind and heart which correspond to his perfections, or of which those perfections are the natural object", or of which "that Image of God which was originally stamped upon" human nature.[257] This utterance implies a teleological end in human nature. He argued that if human nature was adjusted to a certain purpose, that was what it aimed for. Based on this premise, Butler reasoned that a person was capable of achieving his highest goal by complying with the purpose which is on the basis of his nature since a theological end presupposed that the author of nature made a person as he is under consideration.[258] For Butler, the justification of this claim depended on a theological basis and it thus made the criterion of morality.

Butler insisted that in essence an individual as a moral creature was a complex being of different hierarchical propensities. In the preface to his *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* (1726), he mentioned that in order to understand human inner nature, it was necessary to comprehend and consider it as a system, including not only its constituent parts, but also the relations between those parts, and between each part and the system.[259] In his sense, these propensities must be a harmonious whole and be placed in a systematic relation of subordination. Every part must be in its proper proportion. According to their nature, the lower propensities were naturally subject to those which are more authoritative. For Butler, human nature regarded as a part of a systematic unity was in conformity with a final cause.

On the nature of conscience, Butler insisted upon a half-way course between a wholly acquired moral constitution and Shaftesbury's inborn intuitionism. Butler agreed with Shaftesbury that a moral sense or conscience was a special faculty. But Butler considered it more than just an

[256] O'Flaherty (2019), 104.
[257] Butler (2006), 45, 53.
[258] Butler (2006), 47.
[259] Butler (2006), 38

instinct. His teleological view of human nature embodied that the authority of conscience was the voice of God and not a merely personal statements of individual subjective wishes. Butler named conscience as a "principle of reflection".[260] Although Butler did not identify conscience as reason, it was not merely an instinct but presaged the nature of reason. As O'Flaherty concludes, according to Butler, "the virtuous life consisted in granting 'absolute authority' to the 'superior principle' of conscience".[261]

Based on the theory of Butler, Paley more radically rejected the theory of an innate moral sense. Paley regarded "the experience, or the reasoning of mankind" as a way of recommending the belief, as the basis of "the understandings and consciences of serious inquirers", and as the path of "universal reception and authority"[262]. He then stated that after:

> *Having experienced, in some instance, a particular conduct to be beneficial to ourselves, or observed that it would be so, a sentiment of approbation rises up in our minds; which sentiment afterwards accompanies the idea or mention of the same conduct, although the private advantage which first excited it no longer exist.*[263]

According to Paley, moral approbation of certain actions was followed by benefits and the sentiments triggered by such benefits in past experience. Even if such benefits faded away, such approbation fixed in mind.

Paley held that moral approbation depended on the climate, local situations, fashions and institutions of a certain country, which "looks very little like the steady hand and indelible characters of Nature".[264] He used a wild boy or a savage without experience, without instruction, out of society, and out of the influence of authority, education or habit as an example to support his view that moral approbation or disapprobation was a result of social circumstances.[265] Paley claimed that natural instincts did not exist as an innate moral sense, but were not different from prejudices and habits.[266]

As O'Flaherty mentions, Paley's point-blank suspicion and objection of the theory of an innate moral sense followed Lockean tradition that if people were given a moral instinct from God,

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[260] Butler (2006),40, 50, 56, 59, 64.
[261] O'Flaherty (2019), 85-86.
[262] Paley (2002), xxxii.
[263] Paley (2002), 8-9.
[264] Paley (2002), 8.
[265] Paley (2002), 6.
[266] Paley (2002), 11.

they would share and insist on the same moral values.[267]. In order to make instincts intelligible, Paley argued that a clear and precise idea of an object must had been implanted together with an instinct.[268] This instinct and idea of the object were inseparable and accompanied each other even in the imagination, which is appropriate for all correlative ideas.[269] More prosaically, before people approved a certain action by nature, they must have received from nature a distinct conception of the action that they are later prompted to approve.[270] Paley was sure that people had never received such a conception.

In order to explain his "objection to the system of moral instincts", Paley denied the existence of the uniformity of moral approbations.[271] He said that "there is scarcely a single vice which, in some age or country of the world, has not been countenanced by public opinion."[272] In order to support this view, he discussed that in some lands the responsibility of children was to care their aged parents while in others no such obligation existed.[273] He also noted that the views of suicide changed with times and trends.[274] The regulations and censures of all civilized nations were not the same, and were still different from the savages of the tropical regions or wild America.[275] Thus, Paley concluded that "there are no maxims in the science which can well be deemed innate*,* as none perhaps can be assigned, which are absolutely and universally true*;* in other words, which do not bend to circumstances".[276] On this account, Paley held that "it is not a safe way of arguing, to assume certain principles as so many dictates, impulses, and instincts of nature, and then to draw conclusions from these principles, as to the rectitude or wrongness of actions, independent of the tendency of such actions, or of any other consideration whatever".[277] For Paley, the theory of an innate moral sense was not a firm foundation for moral reasoning.

In his *Principles*, Paley confessed that he was to "resort to a rule and a motive ulterior to the instincts themselves".[278] For him, moral codes derived from "prejudices and habits" had no

[267] O'Flaherty (2019), 85.
[268] Paley (2002), 10-11.
[269] Paley (2002), 11.
[270] Paley (2002), 11.
[271] Paley (2002), 10.
[272] Paley (2002), 7.
[273] Paley (2002), 7.
[274] Paley (2002), 7.
[275] Paley (2002), 8.
[276] Paley (2002),10.
[277] Paley (2002), 11.
[278] Paley (2002), 12.

practical value in the progress of morals. Instead, such public affections always existed side by side with conventional and current norms, but never corrected them.[279] Paley wondered which system of morals could fulfill this mission, and asserted that it was utility that could provide an objective principle by which all moral customs and norms could be judged, evaluated and possibly improved. According to Paley, people must act on a general principle of expediency because they were largely creatures of prejudices and habits. Therefore, the next section will move on to discuss that Paley turned his attention to look for "a surer road" to determine of the divine will.[280]

**2. The Principle of Happiness**

Since Paley considered the foregoing laws and instincts as inadequate motives for his moral philosophy, he recognized that it was necessary to find a general motive which could be applied to everyone. In this section, I move on to argue that Paley regarded happiness as a motive of human actions, that is to say, the reason why human is called human was not an innate moral sense but the ability learned from his society to judge what is good for him and to regulate his moral conduct. In LeMahieu's words, "Paley argued that man's basic instinct was to seek pleasure and to avoid pain".[281]

Since Paley rejected an innate moral sense as a motive and guide for moral behaviour, a question then arose: why is a person obliged to act morally?[282] For Paley, "a man is said to be obliged, when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another."[283] The first key point of this axiom is that the motive of moral obligation must be violent.[284] For Paley, if a person who is another one's benefactor, asked the latter one to vote for him, the latter one was obliged to vote to do so. The motive of this action was not out of gratitude or exception but out of a violent motive.[285] This leads to the second elements of moral obligation that it must be result from the command of another.[286] From this, Paley answered the question of moral obligation that "wherever the motive is violent enough, and coupled with the idea of command, authority, law, or

[279] O'Flaherty (2019), 86.
[280] Paley (2002), 12.
[281] Paley (2002), xv.
[282] Paley (2002), 34.
[283] Paley (2002), 34.
[284] Paley (2002), 34.
[285] Paley (2002), 34-35.
[286] Paley (2002), 35.

the will of a superior, there, I take it, we always reckon ourselves to be obliged."[287] Paley contended that a person should not be obliged to obey the laws, the magistrate, even or the commands of God, except he could gain rewards and pleasures following his obedience.[288] This answer draws forth the fundamental principle of Paley's moral philosophy: private happiness is the motive of moral behaviour, and the will of God is the rule.[289]

Paley was not the first moral philosopher to use the relationship between pleasure and happiness to understand human bebaviour. John Gay, whose "Preliminary Dissertation", translated by Edmund Law, had a vital influence on Paley,[290] used an example of "money and happiness" to explain that the approbation or disapprobation of moral virtues was a matter of impulse.[291] Gay stated that the desire and endeavor to gain money was due to the perception of happiness that money would bring. When observing the action of obtaining money promoted human private happiness, Gay held that people attached pleasure to this action. Eventually such action became inextricably fixed in mind through association with an idea of enjoyment. For Gay, people were not born with an instinct of love for money but developed a love of money. The happiness or misery "that which was first pursued only as a Means" turned into "a real End".[292] Moreover, what cannot be ignored is that many of these associations were gradually accumulated by a way of imitation.[293] Gay concluded that "I deny that this moral sense, or these public affections are innate or implanted in us; they are acquired either from our own observation or the imitation of others".[294]

Gay acknowledged that people's approbation and disapprobation of moral actions could be attributed to Lockean theory of the association of ideas instead of innate or implanted instincts. More specifically, Gay hypothesized that "the principle of all action" was rooted in the rational calculation of self-interest, which was ultimately originated from the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain.[295] Such actions were gradually apprehended in the imagination, and eventually the approbation or disapprobation of them was spontaneous without any consideration of self-

[287] Paley (2002), 35.
[288] Paley (2002), 35.
[289] Paley (2002), 36.
[290] Paley (2002), xvii.
[291] O'Flaherty (2019), 85.
[292] John Gay, "Preliminary Dissertation", in William King's *An Essay on the Origin of Evil* (London, 1731), xxxi.
[293] O'Flaherty (2002), 42.
[294] Gay (1731), xxxiii.
[295] Gay (1731), xxii.

interest and private happiness. For Gay, moral approbation was a way of encouraging men to pursue and promote pleasure annexed to a certain action.

Paley agreed with Hume's view of habits and placed great emphasis on the value of psychological associative operation in the regulation of human conduct in the *Principles*. In *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739-1740), Hume gave a clear and concise explanation about this psychological process by which habits are formed, reinforced and strengthened constantly, frequently and repeatedly:

> *As the habit, which produces the association, arises from the frequent conjunction of objects, it must arrive at its perfection by degrees, and must acquire new force from each instance, that falls under our observation. The first instance has little or no force; The second makes some addition to it; The third becomes still more sensible; and 'tis by these slow steps, that our judgement arrives at a full assurance.*[296]

Hume explained in detail how mind formed habits on the basis of the frequent repetitions of this psychological enhancement. The formation of certain habits only depended on the number of the psychological repetitions. He held that "every past experiment has the same weight and that 'tis only a superior number of them, which can throw the balance on any side."[297] The psychological assent rested merely on the number of experience and was definitely indifferent to which they responded to. In this sense, custom and education could also produce the same effect of mind due to frequent and prolonged repetitions.[298] Hume took a skeptical attitude to the ultimate validity of belief reproduced through the associative operations of mind, however, he accepted its practical necessity and regraded it as a standard of rational belief. For Hume, "habits may not be strictly rational, but it is exact."[299] The mental process of association could be operated reasonably by a habitual connection.[300]

In Paley's sense, forming a habit of approving was influenced by the principle of authority, by the principle of imitation and by the inculcation in early youth.[301] These effects usually came "from censure and encouragement, from the books one read, the conversations one hear, the current application of epithets, the general turn of language".[302] Thus, Paley concluded that

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296 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. David Fate Norton and Mary. J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 90.
297 Hume (2007), 93.
298 Daston (1988), 201.
299 Daston (1988), 201.
300 Hacking (1975), 183.
301 Paley (2002), 9.
302 Paley (2002), 9.

"moral approbation follows the fashions and institutions of the country we live in; which fashions also and institutions themselves have grown out of the exigencies, the climate, situation, or local circumstances of the country".[303] In short, Paley held that moral approbation or disapprobation of certain actions was a programme of psychological instruction of the impacts constituted by all members of society.

Paley posed a question that if a man's conduct is determined by his social circumstances, then what is his own moral responsibility. For Paley, a man's moral responsibility resided in "the forming and contracting of these habits".[304] As he wrote, "Man is a bundle of habits".[305] Paley believed that most actions were to be done solely for the sake of habit. His moral teaching aimed to persuade people to consider the good of humankind as the subject, the will of God as the rule, and everlasting happiness as the motive of all virtue.[306] For Paley, this would happen just because people consciously trained certain actions accompanying sentiments in a long time by the desire to do the will of God, or to attain everlasting happiness, or to contribute to the good of mankind. When these principles have been strengthened and consolidated into a pattern of conduct, people could act without keeping these principles in mind. As Paley concluded, "whatever is made habitual, becomes smooth, and easy, and nearly indifferent".[307]

On this point, it is worth noting that Abraham Tucker's *The Light of Nature Pursued* which was the only one work commended in the preface of the *Principles*, had a remarkable influence on Paley's moral thought of habit.[308] According to Tucker, by focusing consciously their attention on certain motives rather than others, people could better command their organs of sensation and reflection.[309] Tucker emphasized on "the desire of retraining desire".[310] For him, the scope for moral choice laid in human power of "raising up ideas or fixing them in mind, which shall determine us to such volitions as we want".[311] Tucker held that any moral rule which wants to have an effect on behaviour needed to remain in mind by becoming "habitual, and striking with the force of an

[303] Paley (2002), 8.
[304] Paley (2002), 27.
[305] Paley (2002), 28.
[306] Paley (2002), 25.
[307] Paley (2002), 22.
[308] Paley (2002), xli.
[309] O'Flaherty (2019), 62.
[310] Abraham Tucker, *The Light of Nature Pursed*, the 7th edition, 2 vols. (London, 1848), vol. 1, 64.
[311] Tucker (1848), vol. 1, 74.

obligation or an object of desire".[312] Like Gay, Tucker and Paley were also passionate about the principle of association. But more importantly, the latter two raised association to the level of practice because they held that the chief goal of moralists was to make affections habitual.[313]

Paley mentioned that habits were formed through experience. People developed a habit of praising or condemning certain types of behaviour by the reinforcement of the feelings of pleasure and pain. When they found a particular conduct to be beneficial to themselves, a sentiment of approbation of this conduct rose up in their minds and accompanied afterwards the idea of the same conduct, although the private advantages which first stirred up the sentiment no longer existed.[314] For Paley, a servant could serve a master well without realizing the latter's will or interest, as the virtue and merit consisted in the formation of these service over time under the direction of dutiful motives.[315] That is why it is important to discuss Paley's view of happiness which is stimulus of habitual formation.

Paley emphasized the cognitive nature of happiness. In a long note, he mentioned that "I should take it to denote a certain state of the nervous system in that part of the human frame in which we feel joy and grief, passions and affections"[316]. Then Paley explained each painful sensation could not only violently influence and derange the nervous system but also at length produce a perpetual irritation, which would be showed as the feelings of fretfulness, impatience, and restlessness.[317] In the same way, pleasurable sensations might have such an effect upon the nervous system. Such effect might return into their place and order, and thereby recover, or it might preserve as harmonious feelings like the sense of complacency and satisfaction.[318] Paley maintained that happiness did not refer to any particular enjoyment or any gratification of the senses but to the secondary effect which such enjoyments and gratifications produce upon the nervous system.[319]

At first glance, Paley's definition of happiness might be quantitative. He said that "In strictness, any condition may be denominated happy, in which the amount or aggregate of pleasure

[312] Tucker (1848), vol. 1, 211.
[313] O'Flaherty (2019), 45, 63.
[314] Paley (2002), 8-9.
[315] Paley (2002), 28.
[316] Paley (2002), 13.
[317] Paley (2002), 13.
[318] Paley (2002), 13.
[319] Paley (2002), 13.

exceeds that of pain; and the degree of happiness depends upon the quantity of this excess."[320] Happiness in this passage was defined simply as "the greatest quantity of it ordinarily attainable in human life."[321] O'Flaherty summarizes Paley's definition of happiness that "the bigger the surplus, the happier the person".[322] At this point, Clarke argues that Paley did not attempt to distinguish between the qualities of happiness.[323] Similar to Clarke, Rosen avers that Paley had no intention to classify different classes of pleasures and pains.[324] For example, health, one of the four components of Paley's happiness, was an enjoyment which is common to "infants and brutes, especially of the lower and sedentary orders of animals, as of oysters, periwinkles, and the like."[325] Paley seemed to be suggesting that he was indifferent to the different qualitative classes of pleasures and pains.

Paley did not differentiate between the spiritual happiness and the physical one, however, he held that pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity.[326] As Paley explained, "the alacrity and spirits of men who are engaged in any pursuit that interests them, with the dejection and ennui of, almost all, who are either born to so much that they want nothing more, or who have used up their satisfactions too soon, and drained the sources of them".[327] His understanding of happiness showed a qualitative emphasis on continuance and endurance. Paley explicitly denied that happiness consisted in the pleasures of sense, for "computing strictly the actual sensation, we shall be surprised to find how inconsiderable a portion of our time they occupy".[328] For Paley, the reason why sensual pleasures were not parts of human happiness was because of either their short duration or the loss of the relish by repetition.[329] The frequent repetition of cognitive enhancement reinforced Paley's emphasis on the quality of the endurance of happiness.

Paley valued actions by whether it could produce a steady stream of pleasures over a long

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320 Paley (2002), 13.
321 Paley (2002), 13.
322 O'Flaherty (2019), 92.
323 Clarke (1974), 62.
324 Frederick Rosen, "Introduction" to Jeremy Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, eds. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Harts (Oxford, 2005), lv.
325 Paley (2002), 40.
326 Paley (2002), 33.
327 Paley (2002), 20.
328 Paley (2002), 14.
329 Paley (2002), 14.

period of time.[330] Paley's discussion of happiness consisted firstly in the exercise of social and domestic affections.[331] In his view, exercising social affections was oriented to good spirits and mental tranquility.[332] And Paley attached importance to health as another source of pleasure.[333] He considered health as "freedom from bodily distempers, as that tranquility, firmness, and alacrity of mind, which we call good spirit."[334] In this sense, social affections and health were two necessary elements of happiness because they made sure that people kept away from lucrative situation, favorite indulgences, intemperate passions, and tedious regimens.[335] For Paley, social affections and health both were the basis and prerequisite for other lasting happiness.[336]

More importantly, happiness consisted in engagement, defined as " the exercise of our faculties either of body or of mind in the pursuit of some engaging end".[337] Paley held that present gratifications could make the possessor happy only as he had something in reserve—something to hope for and look forward to.[338] People chose their ends wisely, and then commanded the imagination to find happiness in the means; after this, the ends might be forgotten.[339] For Paley, happiness was almost similar to the wise selection of enjoyments. He thought that these pleasures had the greatest value because people had a profound goal and a perpetual engagement for life.[340] For him, hope was the most important pleasure for human happiness because it drove engagement and activity. In this sense, "engagement is everything."[341]

Paley's view that happiness relied on the prudent contribution of habits annexed to his idea of engagement.[342] He explained that to a large degree the secret of human happiness was to set habits in this way that every change is better than the former one. Paley's analogy was that it is not the income which a man possesses but the augment of income that gave happiness. Thus, Paley assured his readers that "the method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of the action to promote or diminish the general

330 O'Flaherty (2019), 92.
331 Paley (2002), 20.
332 Paley (2002), 20.
333 Paley (2002), 24.
334 Paley (2002), 24.
335 Paley (2002), 24.
336 Paley (2002), 24.
337 Paley (2002), 20.
338 Paley (2002), 20.
339 Paley (2002), 21.
340 Paley (2002), 21.
341 Paley (2002), 21.
342 Paley (2002), 20.

happiness."[343] Here, Paley reiterated the most important question of happiness was not the definition of it, but its practical significance and value on how to maximise the amount of pleasures in human affairs.

Paley's view of engagement was in many respects similar to Tucker. Tucker put forward the idea of "the aggregate of satisfactions" which is a progress made of a long-term goal and a resolution to purse it.[344] For Tucker, this process not only included the happiness of the final reward but also implied regular and steady repetition of engagements which provided peace habitual to mind. On the one hand, Tucker insisted that engagements enabled people to achieve their desirable objectives by effectively sustained means. In terms of theological utilitarianism, Tucker held that the primary and proper role of moralists was to nurture and facilitate a steady stream of engagements of the pursuit of God's will from this earthy world to a blissful afterlife.[345] This idea was very similar to Paley's definition of engagement.

On the other hand, Tucker gave an example of the musical novice to expound the relationship between temporary pain and final happiness. The novice always practiced with pain at first, however, he could associate notes with the keys of the instruments and their sounds in the imagination after several regular practice. By habitually repeating the types of action recommended by reason, he could associate temporary painful practice with long-term happiness and ultimate good, which could render he pleasant in the course of learning.[346] For Tucker, although the process of the pursuit of goals was not always pleasurable, the preparatory and temporary pain ultimately led to the final prize.

Paley's view of the problem of evil was in many ways similar to Tucker's discussion of the relationship between temporary pain and final goals. On the chapter "the Divine Benevolence" in the *Principles* and latter in *Natural Theology*, Paley had to face the question of the origin of evil. He took the same measures as Tucker did to turn this question to a matter of explaining how evil was eventually necessary to human happiness. Physical pain was an alarm of bodily health, and facilitated the formation and development of salutary habits.[347] Paley concluded that "a world

[343] Paley (2002), 39.
[344] Tucker (1848), vol. 1, 210.
[345] O'Flaherty (2019), 68.
[346] Tucker (1848), vol. 1, 645.
[347] Paley (2002), 41.

furnished with advantages on one side, and beset with difficulties, wants, and inconveniences on the other, is the proper abode of free, rational and active natures, being the fittest to stimulate and exercise their faculties".[348] In this sense, evil was the mother of engagement. Paley, following Tucker, insisted that a ruling passion provided mind with a constant source of engagement.

Paley's principle of happiness was concerned with the steady and perpetual regulation and constancy of passions. His definition of happiness including the pursuit of engaging ends embodies his rejection of the previous and conventional measurement and classification of happiness. As Hirschman explains, "it advocated in the injection of an element of calculating efficiency, as well as of prudency, into human behavior", and "that one set of passions, hitherto known variously as greed, avarice, or love of lucre, could be usefully employed to oppose and bridle such other passions as ambition, lust for power, or sexual lust".[349] Paley's satisfaction of some passions over others was not determined by the superiority of intellectual over sensual pleasures, but only by duration and intensity of pleasures. The pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of pain indicated a calculation of pleasure over pain. The next section will expound that how Paley transformed this calculation into a practical ethics, just as his epigram said: "Whatever is expedient, is right".[350]

**3. The Principle of Expediency**

In this section, I argue that Paley viewed the principle of expediency as remedy for the shortcomings of moral philosophy in his time. Paley intended to look for a sufficiently clear and comprehensive principle to judge and direct actions in the realm of morality. For Paley, the principle of expediency was regarded as such an effective guide to human moral actions, because virtuous self-interest was supposed to be predictable and constant.[351] According to the doctrine of "interest will not lie", Hirschman explains that during Paley's day some thinkers thought that interests would become transparent and predictable.[352] In that time, the qualities such as constancy and stability derived from predictability, implied a reasonable basis for the moral

348 Paley (2006), 260.
349 Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and The Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 40-41.
350 Paley (2002), 42.
351 Hirschman (1977), 48-56.
352 Hirschman (1977), 50.

conduct of "rational individuals".[353] Seventeenth-century moralists such as Joseph Butler, John Gay, Edmund Law and Abraham Tucker who had a heavy influence on Paley reconciled the inevitably imperfection of human knowledge with the rational base of beliefs in accordance to practical aspects of daily life.[354] They combined self-interest as expectation and Christian apologetics, and stated Christianity would promise maximum expectation of virtuous self-interest.[355] Paley and these moralists contributed to the rise and development of Christian utilitarianism.

Butler gave the framework and blueprint of theological utilitarianism. He argued that "mankind is appointed to live in a future state; that there everyone shall be rewarded or punished; …… that our present life is a probation, a state of trial, and of discipline, for that future one".[356] Butler's view delineated three pillars of theological utilitarianism: this life as a trial, sanctions in the future life, and a practical guide for present life from Christianity. In short, human welfare after death provided all rational people with sufficient high expectation which could be operated in this life.

According to Butler's three pillars, theological utilitarians were to consider how to produce the utmost happiness within the province of reason. If the will of God was the rule of virtue, then it still needed to answer what was he commanded. As far as Gay concerned, the pursuing of happiness was consistent with the design of God. As mentioned in the last section, Gay argued that the approbation of certain moral actions was not due to an instinct implanted by God but was "finally resolvable into *Reason* pointing out private *Happiness*".[357] For Gay, the plentiful goodness of God's works evidenced the rectitude of the pursuing of happiness, which plainly demonstrated that "that he [God] could have no other design in creating Mankind than their Happiness".[358] In this sense, a morally good action, according to the will of God, promoted a degree of human happiness.

There were some situations in which the good of virtue might be contrary to private happiness, however, Gay argued that it was necessary to identify inferior and ultimate happiness.

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353 Paley (2002), xxi.
354 Daston (1988), 58.
355 Daston (1988), 60-67.
356 Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion: Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (London: JM Dent, 1736), xxxi.
357 Gay (1731), xiv.
358 Gay (1731), xix.

As one approved of his fellows' happiness, he also took advantages from it. This kind of behaviour sometimes seemed to conflict with his temporary interest and pleasure, but was good for his general well-being. Such actions that benefit people in a long term were the source of and motive for public affection.[359] For Gay, since the pursuit of happiness was the principle of all actions, the merit of an action must concern its ultimate end.

Gay's effort to establish the necessity of divine sanctions and public welfare was a starting point and developed by Edmund Law. In his *Religion and Morality* which was annexed to the fourth edition of King's *Origin of Evil* (1758), he was aimed at solving the theological weakness of Gay's work. Based on Gay's two arguments that human happiness relied on the design of God, and that people generally were concerned for their welfare in the afterlife, Law bought eternal rewards and punishments to moral obligation. In his view, the most of human happiness was related to the life to come, and this fact more greatly explained why people are obliged "to an action when we can see no further Reason for it".[360] As far as Gay was concerned, if actions were concerned for the good of humankind, then they would be morally good. However, according to Law, an action was good only if it complied with the will of God. There must be a "eternal and immutable Reason" assured by God to oblige men to perform selfless actions, because private happiness promoted selfish affections and actions to a greater extent. By putting the divine will over expedient actions, Law tied moral actions and religious duties together.

Gay and Law paved a path for future construction of a workably theological utilitarian practical code of ethics. By throwing supernatural rewards and punishments into moral obligation, they enlarged the scope of human happiness. On the one hand, the calculations of utility divorced Christian passions from enthusiasm. On the other hand, Gay and Law believed that benevolent affections could bring about selfless or at least not immediately self-interested actions. In all, Gay and Law's insistence on eternal sanctions laid a solid foundation for Christian moral code which was Paley's biggest concern and his greatest contribution.

Tucker accepted Law's judgment that it was possible to make God's will the guiding principle of all actions. Firstly, Tucker confirmed that self-interest was the only reason for the approbation of any moral action. For him, "Temporal interests" were "our surest mark to guide us in securing

[359] O'Flaherty (2019), 41.
[360] Edmund Law, "On Morality and Religion", in William King's *An Essay on the Origin of Evil* (1758), xlvi.

our future hopes".[361] Furthermore, Tucker still held that ethics without religious sanctions was insufficient since the absolute necessity of religion made the system of morality complete. Since "Self lies at the bottom of every action we do the love of God, to be sincere and . . . vigorous, must spring from a settled opinion of his goodness and beneficence, and that every act of conformity to his will is beneficial to the performer", Tucker implied that acting according to God's will was a kind of more rational calculations and produced more happiness than others.[362] Religion was "the science of attaining happiness", and human life was a ceaseless pursuit of happiness.[363] In this way, Tucker blended the goal of ethics and faith together in the theological utilitarian frame, which could be adopted as a way of life. Tucker's practical value on people's concern both for this world and the afterlife had a profound effect on Paley.

As mentioned in the last section, Paley regarded self-interest as "the mainspring of human action"[364]. Paley's definition of virtue was "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness". His definition revealed his heritage in theological utilitarianism.[365] It made "the good of mankind" the subject, "the will of God" the rule, and "everlasting happiness" the motive of human virtue.[366] The subject, rule and motive went to the same destination that God wishes for human happiness. Because God wishes and wills human happiness, people should strive to promote their own welfare. Humankind's basic preference to seek pleasure and to avoid pain was harmonious with the will of God, which was the essential element of Paley's principle of expediency.

Paley put the belief in an afterlife at the heart of his moral philosophy. After establishing happiness as the motive of human conduct, Paley turned to answer a question why people are obliged to keep their words, by saying "because I am urged to do so by a violent motive namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded, if I do, or punished for it, if I do not, resulting from the command of another, namely, of God".[367] Paley strove to tie moral obligation in this life with heavenly sanctions. If the motive behind morality was personal happiness, then a person should

[361] Tucker (1848), vol. 2, 267.
[362] Tucker (1848), vol. 2, 508-509.
[363] Tucker (1848), vol. 2, 515.
[364] Daston (1988), 59.
[365] Paley (2002), 25.
[366] Paley (2002), 25.
[367] Paley (2002), 35-36.

take account of his happiness in the next world as well as in this one. Paley relied heavily upon the doctrine of rewards and punishments in eternity and thus offered a strong theological sanction to his moral system. For him, earthly life was only a probation and human conduct should be considered in the context of eternity. Self-interest in the context of eternity did not merely mean the pursuit of worldly happiness, instead, Paley emphasized that the happiness of the next world should be the greatest self-interest.

Based on his eschatology, Paley found the final solution of questions of moral obligation, that is "private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule".[368] People were under obligation to do something because their welfare relied on their master's will. For Paley, the master was the master because he had the power to reward and punish. Thus, Paley confirmed "that moral obligation is like all other obligations" which are "from the command of another", and that "we consider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose by the act".[369] People must keep their word because God commands it. The motive was eternal rewards and punishments in an afterlife. In short, "we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come".[370]

In Paley's view, morality was still a matter of rational calculation. Paley held that those actions which are in harmony with the will of God would be rewarded and those which are out of harmony with the will of God would be punished. He held that "There are prepared for us rewards and punishments, of all possible degrees, from the most exalted happiness down to extreme misery; so that 'our labour is never in vain'; whatever advancement we make in virtue, we procure a proportionable accession of future happiness." [371] Paley was even more radical in the *Principles*, and he argued that earthly ambitions were less productive of morally good actions than heavenly rewards and punishments. "They who would establish a system of morality, independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation".[372] According to utilitarian calculations, Paley firmly believed that human happiness in the next world gave the maximum of self-interest.

Like many moral philosophy books published in the late eighteenth century, Paley's

[368] Paley (2002), 36.
[369] Paley (2002), 36-37.
[370] Paley (2002), 37.
[371] Paley (2002), 29-30.
[372] Paley (2002), 37.

theological utilitarianism needed to address several issues raised by David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). Hume held that human sentiment was a sufficient motive enough for selfless actions. He mentioned "that everything, which contributes to the happiness of society, recommends itself to our approbation".[373] In other words, behaviour conforming to social virtues recommend itself only because of their "immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment" and "the immediate satisfaction it conveys", this is to say, its own utility.[374] The pleasure or pain of certain moral actions was an end in itself. For Hume, the immediate inducements that such actions conveyed were sufficient for human conduct, and therefore such actions acquired their existence from their utility.

Paley attached special attention to Hume's complaint "of the modern scheme of uniting Ethics with the Christian Theology" in the *Principles*.[375] Paley pointed out that human sentiments without religious sanctions were insufficient for morality. In order to counter Hume, Paley invited his readers to pay close attention to the second part of the ninth section of the *Enquiry*. Paley noted that because the passion, such as lust, revenge, envy, ambition and avarice, impressed continuously stronger influence on human minds, readers should acknowledge the necessity of additional sanctions beyond earthly incentives.[376] He pointed out that such sanctions existed in the form of the rewards and punishments from Christian Religion.[377] For Paley, though everyone was motived by earthly and individual inducements, he still had a serious concern about his fate in an afterlife. As mentioned in last chapter, Paley's *Evidences* demonstrated and proved the existence and veracity of Christian miracles and sanctions and he took this demonstration as a given in the *Principles*. In Paley's view, it would be foolish to separate morality from Christianity.

In response to Hume's sceptical interrogation of the effectiveness of next-life ambitions as moral motives, Paley observed how Christian belief had become an integral part of human daily life. He explained charity which is a distinctively Christian virtue with emphasis. He applied charity "in a sense more commodious to my purpose, to signify the promoting the happiness of our inferiors".[378] Paley stated that superiors' obligation to their inferiors was much greater than their

[373] Hume (1868), 131.
[374] Hume (1868), 164.
[375] Paley (2002), 38.
[376] Paley (2002), 39.
[377] Paley (2002), 39.
[378] Paley (2002), 133.

inferiors to them because the inferiors' industry and labour supplied and served the superiors' necessities of life.[379] As to the current issue of slavery, Paley held that although Christianity could only indirectly alleviate the cruelty of slavery, it indeed soften the hardness of the civil institutions of slavery. With the advent of Christianity, there was a spirit of liberality which slowly but gradually transformed the nature of master-servant relations in Christian nations, even though Christ kept silent in Scripture.[380] Paley foresaw optimistically that with the spread of Christianity such transformation would inevitably break the institution of slavery down.[381] Here, Paley presented the power of Christianity as a softener of men's hearts and concluded that divine sanctions were the cornerstone of moral codes:

> *Charity, in this sense, I take to be the principal province of virtue and religion: for, whilst worldly prudence will direct our behavior towards our superiors, and politeness towards our equals, there is little beside the consideration of duty, or an habitual humanity which comes into the place of consideration, to produce a proper conduct towards those who are beneath us, and dependant upon us.*[382]

Obviously, charity was seen by Paley as the remedy for the law of honour. The law of honour, was a "capricious rule" "constituted by men occupied in the pursuit of pleasure" "to the licentious indulgence of the natural passions".[383] As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, for Paley, the law of honour only worked between equals and ignored the higher order's treatment of the lower orders. However, as mentioned in the last paragraph, Christian charity insisted on the reciprocal duties of people at different levels of society, therefore, instilled a strong sense that all people are equal before God. In Paley's view, the charitable behaviour associated with divine sanctions could remedy the limitations of the short-term and temporal pleasures of the law of honour. In short, Christianity could compensate for the shortcomings of customary morality.

Paley's definition of charity showed the mutual dependency and common progress of humankind. As Harrison explains, the institutionalization of "a charity" from the seventeenth century onwards was the very embodiment of the relief and care of human estate. The primary focus of charity in this period shifted from the preeminent theological virtue to the performance of duties toward others.[384] Charity, therefore, was understood by Paley as relative duties to

379 Paley (2002), 134.
380 Paley (2002), 137.
381 Paley (2002), 138.
382 Paley (2002), 133.
383 Paley (2002), 2.
384 Harrison (2015), 131-136.

promote the welfare of the inferiors in society in some material way, and to increase ultimately the total sum of the material welfare of the whole society. Moralists like Paley regarded themselves as participants in a providential plan to establish general charity based on self-interest. This was a thoroughly theological utilitarian reformation.

After Paley published the *Principles*, his critics said that he placed the doctrine of expediency above the authority of Scripture. In the early nineteenth century, Adam Sedgwick complained that theological utilitarianism was too deeply "in bondage to the world, measuring every act by a worldly standard, and estimating its value by worldly standards".[385] Later in the nineteenth century, Leslie Stephen surmised that Paley's moral philosophy was merely "flimsy theological disguises".[386] In the twentieth century, M. L. Clarke believed that Paley's ethics was "too much based on the values of this world".[387] Generally, these critics argued that, for Paley, human conduct originated in motives of personal expediency, and from the calculations of individual loss or gain. However, the foregoing thinkers underplayed the fact that Paley thought that it was necessary to apply the doctrine of expediency only where Scripture did not give a specific and detailed statement. For Paley, Scripture declared such general rules as "worshipping God in spirit and in truth; doing as we would be done by; loving our neighbour as ourself; forgiving others, as we expect forgiveness from God"[388]. But Scripture did not define the criterion of how to love our neighbor and how to forgive others. It was in this lacuna that the doctrine of expediency provided an objective principle to practice the general rules laid down on Scripture. Indeed, Paley held that what Scripture said was final but that it was not adequate enough as a system of morality. Where Hume asserted that morality necessarily suffered when wedded to religion, Paley placed a higher value on religious over secular moral codes, on theological utilitarianism over other moral codes.

Paley thought of the principle of expediency as a remedy for the failings of moral philosophy in his time. His philosophical method of discerning the will of God through the principle of expediency revealed that a system of rewards and punishments after death was a part of his moral philosophy. Paley believed that the enjoyments of engagement were not limited to immediate

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385 Adam Sedgwick, *A Discourse on the Studies of the University* (Cambridge, 1833), 57.
386 Stephen (1876), vol. 2, 124.
387 Clarke (1974), 60.
388 Paley (2002), 4.

rewards. This concern not only gave a temporal vitality, but also provided profound ends of life, extending to the next world, which was strongly associated with his analysis of human happiness. Paley concluded that "let the sanctions of Christianity never be forgotten; by which it will be shown that they give strength and lustre to each other: religion will appear to be the voice of reason, and morality will be the will of God".[389] Although Paley held that the doctrine of expediency was the supreme guide of his moral philosophy, he still bore in mind that Christianity offered eternal rewards and punishments as religious sanctions.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued that the principle of expediency underpinned many of the positions Paley offered in his *Principles*. His contemporary moralists attempted to establish certain moral rules to serve as landmarks to help human's focus on their ultimate good constantly and continually, and work these into a system. The aim of these moralists was to encourage their audience to keep such rules as good in mind, and turn them into the principles of conduct. In this setting, John Gay, Edmund Law and Abraham Tucker chose private happiness as probabilistic expectation and put in Christianity as religious sanctions in eternity. Their thoughts about theological utilitarianism set up the foundation for Paley's moral philosophy in *Principles*. After solving the problems that he saw in the law of honour, the law of the land, Scripture and an innate moral sense, Paley affirmed boldly that it was a theologically grounded principle of expedience alone which could constitute moral obligation and direct behaviour in a sufficiently clear and comprehensive manner.

Paley's ideas contributed significantly to the development of a programme of moral instruction based on the principle of happiness, which extended Gay's "Preliminary Dissertation" and Law's "On Morality and Religion". Although Gay and Law were pioneers of theological utilitarianism, they had said little about its practical application. By accepting the metaphysical framework laid by Gay and Law, Paley focused on the practical task of the cultivation of virtuous habits in the *Principles*. It not only trained men to habitually take the long-term consequences of particular actions into account more seriously than the immediate consequences of them. But more importantly, it gave impetus to the ongoing pursuit of human happiness in this life and the

[389] Paley (2002), xxxvi.

next. Paley had very high esteem for his excellence in illuminating some fundamental issues of eighteenth-century moral philosophy, such as human psychology and the formation of habit. And in the *Principles*, Paley applied the principle of expediency to the lives of eighteenth-century Englishmen.

## Chapter 4

## Logic, Argumentation and Moral Knowledge

### Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that Paley used a synthetic method of argumentation in the *Principles.* The decline of deductive demonstration and the development of probability theory also manifested a methodological problem that how intellectuals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries dealt with the problems of language and communication. Logic that used to be thought to yield demonstrative knowledge started to entrench in the world of facts and common experience which was traditionally the realm of rhetoric. Syllogisms with universal premises and conclusions gave way to a new kind of argumentation and communication which was appropriate for the new forms of evidence and knowledge. To expound how Paley captured and transmitted his moral knowledge to students, namely, his synthetic pedagogics in the *Principles*, Section 1 explains the theories of logic in the late seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries. This theory followed the previous tradition, dividing the subjects into four parts: ideas, judgement, reasoning, and method, and emphasizing the function of discovery as well as communication. Section 2 moves on to introduce that following Locke and the latitudinarians, Paley showed his distaste for syllogism and preference for a plain writing style in the *Principles*. In Section 3, two types of methods of argumentation of eighteenth-century logic will be introduced: analysis and synthesis, as well as their different functions: investigation and communication respectively. Since syllogism could no longer satisfy the communicative function of eighteenth-century logic, which aimed to delivery knowledge easily, quickly, clearly and accurately, synthesis rather than analysis was regarded as a more convenient method in the field of education. Finally, Section 4 gives a detailed explanation that Paley used a synthetic method to convey moral knowledge to his young students. The *Principles* is an eighteenth-century example to reveal the function of synthesis in instruction and exposition.

### 1. The Theories of Eighteenth-Century Logic

In this section, I mainly introduce the theories of logic in the eighteenth century. The major

logical works in England during the late seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries consciously followed the *Port-Royal Logick* of the preceding century. Their subject was quadripartite, namely, ideas, judgment, reasoning, and method. This division particularly found expression in textbooks like Jean Pierre de Crousaz's *A New Treatise of the Art of Thinking* (1724), Isaac Watts' *Logick* (1725), William Duncan's *The Elements of Logick* (1748), George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), Joseph Priestley's *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777) and Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1778).[390]

In *Art of Thinking* which was published in English and widely read by the contemporaries of the eighteenth century, Jean-Pierre de Crousaz defined logic as "a system of such principles, observations, and maxims, as are able to furnish the human understanding with a greater degree of penetration, force, extent, exactness, and readiness either to discover truth of it self, or to comprehend it to them in its turn upon its own discovery".[391] In order to detail and systematize this general definition, Crousaz divided logic according to four basic operations of human mind.

Crousaz held that "In the first Place are form'd our *Perceptions*, that are called *Simple*, because they are only the Representation of Objects, without determining any thing about them, either affirmatively or negatively."[392] The theory of perception, as Crousaz understood it, involved sensations and ideas of objects. A sensation was a perception "which perceives themselves simply as they are".[393] For example, if one had a representation and recollection of an object, such as a tree, the sun, or a triangle, or if one had an emotional and sensory experience, such as thirst, pain, sorrow or desire, one had a perception.[394] In other words, a sensation was a perception which has nothing apart from itself.

An idea, however, was a perception which has an object different from itself.[395] If one saw a tree or a triangle, in the examples above, one was not only presented with a tree or a triangle

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[390] The reason I choose these works as typical examples of eighteenth-century logic is that Dr. Samuel Johnson mentioned them in the preface of Robert Dodsley's *The Preceptor* which Paley highlighted in the preface of his *Principles* (see the Principles, p. xxxvi). Dr. Johnson recommended reader the study of Crousaz, Watts and Locke' *Essay* if they needed further help in logic in addition to William Duncan's *The Elements of Logick*, since *The Preceptor* already contained it. See Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 307.

[391] Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, *A New Treatise of the Art of Thinking; or, a Compleat System of Reflections, Concerning the Conduct and Improvement of the Mind*, 2 vols. (London, 1724). vol. 1, 2.

[392] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 2.

[393] Crousaz, (1724), vol. 1, 10.

[394] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 2, 10.

[395] Crousaz, (1724), vol. 1, 10.

but also the names of objects of trees or triangles.[396] An idea was a perception representing things beyond itself. By sensations, people only knew their own conditions; by ideas, people were able to be acquainted with the conditions of things by which they could discover nature.[397] Crousaz summarized, "in order therefore to understand the Things which exist without us, we must consult our Ideas, rather than our Sensations".[398]

With respect to the second part of logic, Crousaz held that "we compare our Perceptions together, and observe their Connexion, or Opposition, which is call'd *Judging*."[399] The process of judging, considered by Crousaz, was an act that "when consider as within the mind is called a Judgment; but when express, it is a Proposition."[400] According to this definition, through the operation of judgement, one was not only able to obtain an innate relationship of perceptions but also to express an external verbal record of that judgment. Crousaz explained that judging was the process of comparing at least two ideas, and then perceiving the relationship of inclusion or exclusion of these ideas, and lastly expressing agreement or disagreement with the perceptions.[401] In other words, according to Crousaz, people compared their perceptions in order to form their judgments.

As to the third step of the operations of human minds, Crousaz mentioned that "in the same manner, as we compare our Perceptions in order to form our JUDGEMENTS, we also compare our Judgements together, and from thence draw a Conclusion, which is call'd *Reasoning*."[402] Crousaz regarded reasoning as an extension of the act of judgement. If the inclusive or exclusive relationship of two perceptions was not clear and perfect enough, Crousaz suggested bringing in a third one which is connected with the first two perceptions. Thus, for Crousaz, the principle that inserts the third one into the former two was reasoning.[403] Reasoning in Crousaz' theory of logic was an act of the combination of judgments into syllogistic or inductive structures.[404] As Wilbur Samuel Howell concludes, "this part of logical theory in the eighteenth century blended traditional

[396] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 11.
[397] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 12.
[398] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 11-12.
[399] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 2.
[400] Crousaz (1724), vol. 2, 102.
[401] Crousaz (1724), vol. 2, 108.
[402] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 2.
[403] Crousaz (1724). vol. 2, 192.
[404] Crousaz (1724). vol. 2, 271, 281-282.

Aristotelian doctrine of syllogism with insights of induction from the philosophy of Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, and John Locke".[405]

For Crousaz, the last step was "By rightly disposing a great Number of Thoughts, Reflections, Reasonings, Principles, and Conclusions, we form what is call'd a *Discourse*; and to succeed the better in the right ordering of so many different Parts, a certain *Method* is necessary."[406] The fourth part of eighteenth-century logic kept insisting on right disposition or method as a main division of logical theory. Crousaz took the long-held belief that the responsibilities of logicians should include both the discovery and communication of knowledge. As Howell mentions, "the fourth part of logic as Crousaz framed it emphasizes the presentation of ideas as distinguished from the problem of research and discovery".[407]

Other logicians in the eighteenth century also emphasized the functions of logic in the discovery and communication of knowledge. In *Logick* which was one of most famous textbooks of logic and well known in academic circles from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Isaac Watts defined logic as "the art of using our reason well in our enquiries after truth, and the communication of it to others."[408] Watts's *Logick* had four divisions: (1) perceptions, ideas and terms; (2) judgment and propositions; (3) reasoning and syllogism; (4) method. This book embodies that the doctrines of eighteenth-century logic included the theories of both enquiry and communication. Like Crousaz and Watts, William Duncan followed the tradition of Port-Royalists in dividing logic into four parts in *The Elements of Logick* which was reprinted many times during the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was the dominant logical treatise of its time.[409] The basic structure of Duncan's book specifically reveals both the investigative and communicative functions of logic.

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[405] Wilbur Samuel Howell: The Declaration of Independence and Eighteenth-Century Logic, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct., 1961), 463-484.

[406] Crousaz (1724), vol. 1, 2-3.

[407] Howell (1971), 325.

[408] Isaac Watts, *Logick; or, the Right Use of Reason, in the Enquiry after Truth*, (London,1797), 5.

[409] William Duncan divided his *The elements of logick* (London, 1787) into four books. Book I. *Of the Original of our Ideas, their various Divisions, and the Manner in which they contribute to the Increase of Knowledge; with a Philosophical Account of the Rise, Progress, and Nature of human Language*. Book II. *Of the Grounds of human Judgment, the Doctrine of Propositions, their Use in Reasoning, and Division into self-evident and demonstrable*. Book III. *Of Reasoning and Demonstration, with their Application to the Investigation of Knowledge, and the common Affairs of Life*. Book IV. *Of the Methods of Invention and Science, where the several Degrees of Evidence are examined, the Notion of Certainty is fixed and stated, and the Parts of Knowledge in which it may be attained, demonstrated at large. Designed particularly for Young Gentlemen at the University, and to prepare the Way to the Study of Philosophy and the Mathematicks*. Duncan's division followed the tradition of the Port-Royalists.

A change of the notion of science or knowledge in the seventeenth century brought established forms of evidence and principles into doubt, as well as challenging traditional forms of method that emphasized demonstrative certainty. Crousaz, Watts and Duncan insisted on the traditionally four basic structure of logic: perception and ideas, judgement, reasoning, and method, and did not split up the investigative and didactical functions of logic. Human understanding was still made up of the power to investigate, comprehend, and communicate knowledge in the eighteenth century. That is to say, this period saw significant developments not just in the nature of knowledge but also in its exposition. After the appearance of Locke's *Essay*, philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were suspicious of the possibility of certain demonstration, gradually lost interest in knowledge achieved by means of syllogism, and free logic from its traditional deductive structure.[410] Then next section will explain the search of the time for new forms of logic and language to replace traditional syllogism and rhetoric.

**2. The Dissatisfaction with Syllogism**

In this section, I argue that Paley, following Bacon, Locke and the latitudinarians, had an aversion to a syllogistic method of argumentation in his *Principles*. There was an increasing tendency to criticize syllogistic logic that remained strongly associated with the older demonstrative form of knowledge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, one of significant and striking features of the novelty of probable knowledge consisted in a deep dissatisfaction with and a systematic critique of the method of syllogism. Francis Bacon in his *New Organon* (1620) regarded syllogism as a method of analysis rather than investigation: the syllogism is "by no means equal to the subtlety of things", and "compels assent without reference to things".[411] And that went along with it was linguistic development for an unbiased relationship between words and thoughts. For this purpose, this section explains an attack on syllogism developed from the late sixteenth century onward by the examples of Locke and Paley's disapproval of syllogism as a proper way of scientific enquiry and learned communication.

Philosophers since the late sixteenth-century tried to find a new way of thinking and writing

[410] Howell (1971), 262; R. W. Serjeantson's "Proof and Persuasion", in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 3 (2006), 132-176.

[411] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, eds. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35.

which was suitable for knowledge based on facts and common experience. In the Greek and Roman world, academic communication was a field related to the logically certain while rhetoric was about the probable. However, Shapiro argues that a dichotomy between logic and rhetoric had gradually disappeared since the late sixteenth century. Rhetoric utilized facts and common experience for the purposes of emotional appeals and persuasiveness rather than the transfer of knowledge. For scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, probability was released from the rhetorical plausibility and verisimilitude, and entered in the realm of unbiased communication of knowledge.[412] Thus, although Locke put logic and rhetoric in two places, this section adopts Shapiro's idea of the new blends of logic and rhetoric. In Paley's day, logic dealt with probability that was traditionally the realm of rhetoric.

The willingness to criticize conventional forms of syllogism could be seen in Locke's *Essay* and *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* (1706), which were the most popular and the most influentially eighteenth-century English books in learned communities. In these two works, Locke mainly tried to solve the problem that how knowledge was to be sought, understood and transmitted.[413] In other words, the question was what should a man do to obtain valid knowledge. In order to deal with this question, Locke gave two criteria of evaluation, that is the accurate correspondence between human ideas and the realities, and the accurate correspondence between human ideas and their words.[414] Following these two standards, Locke presented two rules: right reasoning and perspicuity. For Locke, through these two rules, people could obtain the most probable level of knowledge about the realities of his environment.

The first one of Locke's two rules is right reasoning.[415] In the *Essay*, Locke showed his aversion to syllogism because of his emphasis on scientific enquiry. Firstly, Locke was dubious about the syllogistic procedure of logic mainly because it acquired knowledge not from facts and experience but from maxims.[416] This procedure began with the citation of assumed and well-known maxims, and was followed with the reference for demonstrating a relevant but not so familiar statement.[417] Thinkers who accepted this procedure thought highly of maxims and looked

412 Also see Shapiro, 228-9.
413 Howell (1971), 267.
414 Howell (1971), 297.
415 Locke (1836), 520.
416 Howell (1971), 282.
417 Howell (1971), 282.

down on evidence from facts and experience which were regarded as lower objects.[418] However, Locke held that "the immediate object of all our reasoning and knowledge, is nothing but particulars".[419] For him, particulars were the proper objects of scientific discovery of knowledge although they were less self-evident. Therefore, Locke's new logic placed particulars above traditional maxims and made an attack upon acceptedly syllogistic logic without doubt because of the latter one was of less use in acquiring particulars.

Secondly, Locke proceeded to consider whether syllogism was the proper instrument of right reasoning. For him, syllogism was of less use in the establishment of knowledge. Locke argued that the judgement of a proposition must need a comprehensive consideration of all the evidence and situations, however, syllogism examined only one assumed maxim so deeply as to lose sight of others.[420] For him, all circumstances had to be considered in order to achieve "the greater probability".[421] Moreover, Locke held that syllogism was a more suitable method of disputation rather than of the exposition of knowledge. He argued that a person was easily persuaded by a chain of formal syllogisms but not truly convinced by them.[422] Upon the whole, Locke's disapproval of syllogistic logic was due to its less value in the direction of reasoning and in the use of exposition.

Paley agreed on Locke's opposition of syllogism. Locke's one letter on July 2nd, 1696 shows that his *Essay* started to get some credit in the development of logical education at Cambridge.[423] Harrison holds that Paley's *Natural Theology* which is expanded by the chapter "Divine Benevolence" in the *Principles* is typically regarded as inductive argument.[424] In *Natural Theology*, Paley brought about the way by which he drew together a common pattern from particulars:

> *Now it is by frequent or continued meditation upon a subject, by placing a subject in different points of view, by induction of particulars, by variety of examples, by applying principles to the solution of phenomena, by dwelling upon proofs and consequences, that mental exercise is drawn into any particular channel. It is by these means at least, that we have power over it. The train of spontaneous thought, and the choice of that train, may be directed to different ends, and may appear to be more or less judiciously fixed, according to the purpose, in respect of which we consider it: but, in a moral view, I shall not, I believe, be contracted when I say, that, if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the*

[418] Howell (1971), 282.
[419] Locke (1836), 250.
[420] Howell (1971), 288.
[421] Locke (1836), 411.
[422] Howell (1971), 287.
[423] Howell (1971), 272.
[424] Harrison (2015), 158.

*phenomena of nature with a reference to a supreme intelligent Author.*[425]

The proper inductive procedure ruled out metaphysical arguments and widely-accepted axioms and admitted only facts ascertained by experience and investigation. Therefore, Paley's natural theology was nothing more than an inductive science which was based on generalizations drawn from a large number of particular facts.

In the *Principles*, Paley also confessed his worry about the deficiency of the arrangement of arguments in his period. In the dedication of the book, Paley argued that a reasoning method with deductive arguments was not suitable for ordinary readers, in particular young students. These students not merely wanted axioms but also needed several evidence and explanations to set up their thoughts about the meaning and truth of moral assertions.[426] Paley was averse to the technique of stringing moral propositions together without subjoining a continued argument in his period.[427] Instead, Paley suggested his students "tarry at every proposition, till they have traced out its dependency, proof, relation, and consequences, before they permit themselves to step on to another".[428] This statement is very like what Locke said about the judgement of a proposition depended upon considering all the evidence, and is very similar to the way of reasoning that Paley applied in *Natural Theology*.

This view that the syllogistic form of argumentation was out of date was a corollary of an increasing emphasis on experiential and testimonial evidence. Paley belonged to the tradition that eighteenth-century logic placed particular things above traditional general maxims. He viewed morality primarily as an actual working force in life and paid close attention to deal with real problems in ordinary life.[429] Similarly with his natural theology, for Paley, the business of moral philosophy was an ongoing investigation of the particulars of everyday life. Every single particular instance was in itself a complete argument, and all such arguments had a more powerful effect than a single one.[430] In order words, Paley's arguments were cumulative. He shared the eighteenth-century traditional aversion to syllogism in the *Principles*.

This technique of stringing evidence from experience could be applied into testimonial

[425] Paley (2006), 278.
[426] Paley (2002), xxxvi.
[427] Paley (2002), xxxvi.
[428] Paley (2002), xxxvii
[429] Paley (2002), xxxviii-xxxix.
[430] Shapiro, 174.

evidence. Paley's moral philosophy was also an inductive science consisting of generalizations drawn from the particular instances of Scripture. The idea of natural theology as an inductive science called for a desire to bring an inductive reasoning into the understanding of Scripture. According to this, Scripture itself was thought to be a system of knowledge supported by particular instances. As Harrison holds, Paley regarded religion as simply another subject of human reasoning.[431] In other words, the readers of Scripture became the virtual witnesses of the particular instances under different historical circumstances.[432] Paley's use of Scripture as the textbook of his moral philosophy embodied that he recommended the young minds to turn to Scripture and find examples how God dealt with men under similar circumstances in other days. Paley was opposed to applying the method of syllogism to both natural and revealed religion.

Paley used a synthetic method to explain at length moral obligation and duties which were integral parts of the entirety of his moral philosophy. Then he proceeded to divide duties into three different types: relative duties (determinate and indeterminate), duties to ourselves, and duties towards God. As for these topics, Paley used particular instances from Scripture and his daily experience to respond to all the possible situations, which was already explained in the chapter "Evidence", as well as the examples of British, the European continent, America, Africa and even China which Paley did not give the origins of them.[433] In short, Paley followed inductive steps in the *Principles*.

The other of two rules Locke presented is perspicuity, which is related to the correspondence between human ideas and their words.[434] Locke eagerly put forward an art of impartial exposition to deal with the problem of learned communication. John Wynne, the complier of Locke's *Essay*, dedicated that the *Essay* concerned with the easy and plain transmission of knowledge.[435] And in *The Conduct of the Understanding*, Locke stuck to understanding everything just as it is in itself.[436] In order to do this, Locke held that "besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else, but to insinuate wrong *Ideas*, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgement; and so

[431] Harrison (2015), 155.
[432] R. W. Serjeantson's "Proof and Persuasion", in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 3 (2006), 157.
[433] Paley (2002), 8, 11, 18, 60-61, 64-67, 71, 87, 106, 119, 136.
[434] John Locke (1836), 348-352.
[435] Howell (1971), 271.
[436] Howell (1971), 277.

indeed are perfect cheat".[437] For Locke, the imperfection and abuse of language were twofold: a vague and slow process of transmission by language, and a distorted or even false view of language's subject.[438] According to Locke, language was abused or deficient if it failed in any of these.

Locke held that academic discourses should follow the rules of a plain style. First, it was necessary to "take care to use no words without a signification, no names without an idea for which he makes it stand".[439] Second was to make sure words annexed to simple ideas to "be clear and distinct", and those annexed to complex ideas to "be determinate".[440] Third, the names and definitions of things must agree with "the truth of things".[441] Only by adhering to these rules could academic audience acquire knowledge concisely.

Locke's idea not only inherited the predecessors, but also pervaded among the contemporaries. The first major effort to establish an appropriate mode of communication and presentation was made by Francis Bacon. He stated that "for all that concerns ornaments of speech similitudes, treasury of eloquence, and such like emptinesses, let it be utterly dismissed. Also let all those things which are admitted be themselves set down briefly and concisely, so that they may be nothing less than words".[442] Thomas Sprat, on behalf of the Royal Society, claimed that "In all Reports to be brought into the Society, the Matter of Fact shall be barely stated, without any Prefaces, Apologies, or Rhetorical Flourishes."[443] For him, language must "bring Knowledge back again to our very senses from whence it was first derived to our understanding."[444] The plain language expression and literature forms were suitable for scientific discourses.

In terms of the style of writing, Paley preferred a plain way with order and clearness as well. He confessed his life-long interest in both discovery and communication of moral philosophy in the letter to Edmund Law, the lord Bishop of Carlisle.[445] Paley thought highly of the skill and clearness

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437 Locke (1836), 372.
438 Locke (1836), 370-371.
439 Locke (1836), 375.
440 Locke (1836), 376.
441 Locke (1836). 382.
442 Francis Bacon, *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. by Markku Peltonen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 223-224.
443 Thomas Sprat, *The Charter and Status of the Royal Society of London, for Improving Natural Knowledge* (London, 1728), 48.
444 Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1959), 111-112.
445 Paley (2002), xxxi.

of Locke's argumentation.[446] Paley found that the manner of writing in the current treatises was overloaded with the quotations from classics, "if these extracts be intended as decorations of style".[447] For Paley this bewildering style of writing contributed to nothing but the distraction of readers' attention. He argued that "to propose them as serious arguments, gravely to attempt to establish or fortify a moral duty by the testimony of a Greek or Roman poet, is to trifle with the attention of the reader, or rather to take it off from all just principles of reasoning in morals".[448] In the preface of the *Principles*, Paley reiterated that he tried to "inform his readers distinctly ad specifically".[449] In the views of that time, language was deficient when it failed to convey knowledge from one to others easily, quickly, clearly and accurately.

Locke also emphasized attention to civil life. He suggested that:

> *we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement; as so indeed are perfect cheats; and therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly in all discourses, that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided.*[450]

In addition to improper use of rhetoric, Paley held that these imperfections of moral philosophy in his time also included indistinct explanation and inadequate rules that were not sufficiently adapted to real life and to actual situations.[451] Echoing Locke, Paley suggested that the expression of moral philosophy should be more quotidized.

The response to changes in rhetorical and logical theory was also involved in the realm of theology. The attitude of the latitudinarians towards the theories of probable knowledge and evidence, which has been discussed in earlier chapters, resulted in their rejection of a fanatical theology and the favor of a peaceful and reasonable religion which emphasized a virtuous life. However, they were apologists against atheists as well. They combined positions as apologists and intellectuals led them to reject confusingly allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Instead, they pursed the simplicity, plainness and charity of scriptural texts with a touch of religious affections.[452]

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[446] Paley (2002), xliii.
[447] Paley (2002), xxxv.
[448] Paley (2002), xxxv-xxxvi.
[449] Paley (2002), xxxviii.
[450] Locke (1836), 372.
[451] Paley (2002), xxxv.
[452] Shapiro, 252-256.

For example, John Tillotson objected to the unordered enthusiasm and syllogistic approach of theology. He insisted on the elimination of "sublime notions and unintelligible mysteries, with pleasant passages of wit, and artificial strains of rhetoric; and nice and unprofitable disputes, with bold interpretations of dark prophesies".[453] Obviously, Paley was concerned with the simple and clear interpretation of scriptural texts and theological argumentation. He considered Scripture as a textbook of teaching the science of morality, and highly recommended the teaching method in Scripture: general rules were followed by fictitious examples or instances which actually presented themselves, or the resolution of questions.[454] Through the efforts of the latitudinarians, a plain style of theology became mainstream in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Paley might have disagreed with Locke's view on the function of communication of eighteenth-century logic. As mentioned in the last section, eighteenth-century logic still included both functions of the discovery and transfer of knowledge. However, Locke intended to only focus on the function of scientific enquiry and tried to separate his new logic from the traditional learned communication. As Howell mentioned, Locke's two books embodies his preference for dissociating his logic from the function of transmitting ideas.[455] Locke's distaste for syllogism that was a more proper method of victory in disputation also reflects his efforts to free the function of the search for knowledge from the function of the communication of it. Locke always clearly insisted on the difference between the method of discovering knowledge and the method of transferring it, that is to say, "between the method of raising any science and that of teaching it to others".[456]

This did not mean that Locke ignored the importance of the communicative function, however, he just put it into the realm of new rhetoric. Locke always kept in mind that the method of discovering knowledge and the method of transmitting it should not be confused with each other.[457] But Howell argues that the influence of Locke's theory of new logic and rhetoric was a gradual process and fully emerged until the late eighteenth century.[458] Thus, Paley still was influenced by the traditional eighteenth-century view of logic. For him, logic included

[453] John Tillotson, "The Necessity of Repentence and Faith", in *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson*, 2 vols. (London, 1722), vol. 1, 5.
[454] Paley (2002), 4.
[455] Howell (1971), 280.
[456] Locke (1836), 459.
[457] Howell (1971), 282.
[458] Howell (1971), 279.

communicative function. By putting forward Locke's two rules of right reasoning and perspicuity firstly, I showed that Paley, following the fashion of the time, disapproved a syllogistic method of argumentation. Paley agreed with Locke because his moral philosophy was based on the particular instances from Scripture and experience, and because he accepted a plain writing style and disparaged redundant quotations from ancient materials. Therefore, Paley's *Principles* embodies his disapproval of syllogism.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, change in the conceptions of knowledge, evidence and probable theory encouraged a vehement and sustained attack on the value of conventional syllogistic logic for teaching knowledge and brought about a new standard of plain, unadorned language for science and Scripture. The next section will discuss that a group of philosophers like George Campbell identified their mission to find a more adequate method for pedagogical purposes.

**3. Two methods of argumentation of the eighteenth-century logic: analysis and synthesis**

In this section, I argue that analysis and synthesis were thought of as two main methods of argumentation in learned communities. The discipline of traditional arrangement of discourses consisted of six major parts: the exordium, the narration, the division, the proof, the refutation, and the conclusion.[459] This oratorical structure had pervaded from the classical Roman era to the seventeenth century. These six terms, however, no longer had a dominant place in the theories of eighteenth-century logic in England. Instead, George Campbell, Joseph Priestley, and Hugh Blair highly praised analytic and synthetic methods of new logic, which gradually had a strong influence upon the arrangement of discourses. As Shapiro mentions, the development of the theories of knowledge and evidence of the time blurred the dichotomy between rhetoric and logic, and raised a growing interest of pedagogy and academic communication.[460]

Campbell who had a prestigious reputation in the field of new logic in his time, in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, only discussed analytic and synthetic methods for the theory of argumentative forms instead of the traditional six parts of the classical oration. He stated that "In

[459] For more on the definition and development of these categories, see Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
[460] Shapiro, 227.

moral reasoning we proceed by analysis, and ascend from particulars to universals; in syllogizing we proceed by synthesis, and descend from universals to particulars."[461] The analytic method, Campbell explained, was the method of the discovery of knowledge not previously known, of "the acquisition of natural knowledge, or of whatever regards actual existences"; the synthetic method, however, was the proper method of the application of knowledge already acquired.[462] He summarized that "it is for this reason it [the synthetic] has been called the didactic method, as being the shortest way of communicating the principles of a science".[463] With respect to the methods by which arguments are put together, Campbell associated rhetoric with logic together and analyzed the investigative function of the analytic and the communicative function of the synthetic.

In the same way, Priestley, in his *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* which showed how to teach logic and rhetoric in English education during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, paid close attention to the analytic and the synthetic. He emphasized on logical methods with the procedures of analysis and synthesis. "Logicians speak of two kinds of method in argumentative discourses, the analytic and the synthetic."[464] Priestley explained that analysis proceeded from particular observations to more general conclusions; in contrast, synthesis began with more general and comprehensive propositions and then descended to particular propositions.[465] Priestley went on to account for the different functions of these two methods. "In the former method [analysis] we are obliged to proceed in our investigation of truth: […]. In the latter method [synthesis] it is generally more convenient to explain a system of science to others".[466] For him, analysis was an essential method of investigation while synthesis was a fundamental method of communication and explanation. When Priestley spoke of the theory of logical argumentative arrangement, he approved of analysis and synthesis.

Blair, the last great British rhetorician of the eighteenth century, in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* which was one of the most popular and most influential treatises of new logic

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461 George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1841), 68.

462 Campbell (1841), 68.

463 Campbell (1841), 69.

464 Joseph Priestley, *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (London, 1777), 42.

465 Priestley (1777), 42.

466 Priestley (1777), 42.

and rhetoric of its age, treated the theory of *disposition* as the traditional parts of the classical oration. Blair said that "two different methods may be used by Orators in the conduct of their reasoning; the terms of art for which are, the Analytic, and the Synthetic method."[467] Blair's explanation of the analytic and the synthetic was similar to contemporary logicians. Blair stated that, analysis planned to conceal the point which needed to be proved while synthesis aimed to lay down the point to be proved and make related examples to support it until the audiences were fully convinced.[468] Blair belonged to the tradition of his period to regard synthesis as a more suitable method to public speaking than the analytic one.

According to all explanations of these most famous eighteenth-century logicians, analysis and synthesis were the main logical methods of argumentation in the time. The analytic method consisted in going from observed facts to a general conclusion or theory. It allowed speakers to hide their intentions before their readers were fully convinced, which reflects its function of investigation and discovery. The reverse of analysis was synthesis, proceeding from general theories or principles to particular instances or facts. It firstly put forward argument points, and then convinced hearers with reasonable evidence and related examples, which reflects its function of the instruction, exposition and communication of knowledge already known. As Howell explains, eighteenth-century teachers applied the synthetic method to impart knowledge to students.[469]

Overall, a group of eighteenth-century logicians devoted intensive efforts to trying to establish a synthetic method as a new form of scientific and academic communication. This new approach revealed their concern for accurate reporting of observed evidence and particulars of Scripture and common experience. A shift in language contributed to the emergence of a literary form of textbook. The next section will explain that Paley's *Principles*, as a textbook, adopts a synthetic method of logic for the purpose of teaching.

**4. The Didactical function of synthesis in Paley's moral philosophy**

In this section, I argue that Paley's *Principles* adopts synthesis as the method of the arrangement of discourse. The new theories of knowledge, evidence and language raised the

[467] Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (London, 1845), 374.
[468] Blair (1845), 374-375.
[469] Howell (1961), 463-484.

status of synthesis and brought about a revised attitude towards literature forms.[470] As Watts mentioned, logic was "not only to assist us in learning, but in teaching also", and "we should be furnished with some particular directions relating to the definition of names, both in teaching and learning".[471] Paley's *Principles* reflects a eighteenth-century concern for classification and systematic communication in academic circles.

The emergence of textbooks as a new literary form revealed a growing interest in disciplinary communication in the eighteenth century. As R. W. Serjeantson mentions, the development of disciplinary subjects was an important stimulus to the decline of the expository and commentary mode of authoritative texts, and to the production of new syntheses.[472] Paley adopted the plan which he had used in his Cambridge lectures and enlarged it to the present form of the *Principles*. Paley mentioned that the method of teaching all practical sciences was that "[r]ules are laid down and examples are subjoined".[473] The replacement of the commentary tradition by textbook was related to changing conceptions of logic. The *Principles*, in the literary form of textbook, demonstrates Paley's effort to arrange disciplinary moral knowledge in a systematically synthetic manner.

At the micro level of the *Principles*, Paley stuck to a synthetic writing technique. For example, when discussing the topic of virtue, Paley uncovered his steps of writing that he placed the definition of virtue at the beginning of the chapter.[474] Paley defined moral virtue as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."[475] He collected evidence from both the particulars from experience and Scripture to answer the question how a human could perform a virtuous act without having either the good of mankind, the will of God, or everlasting happiness in his thought.[476] On the one hand, Paley gave an example of a servant to illustrate that a good servant who was not always aware of his master's will, interest and consciousness could do a good job because he had served for and lived with the awareness of his master's motives for a long time.[477] On the other hand, Paley had recourse to the authority of

[470] See Shapiro (1983), 173.
[471] Watts (1797), 79.
[472] R. W. Serjeantson's "Proof and Persuasion", in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 3 (2006), 165.
[473] Paley (2002), 5.
[474] Paley (2002), 28.
[475] Paley (2002), 25.
[476] Paley (2002), 28.
[477] Paley (2002), 28.

Scripture. Based on these examples, Paley came to the conclusion that "Man is a bundle of habits".[478] Paley, therefore, acknowledged that human acted from the effect and energy of pre-established habits by the means of synthesis.

There are other plain and simple examples of a synthetic teaching plan in the *Principles*. in the chapter "Partnership", Paley listed the general rules of partnership at first and then gave a variety of examples at the next paragraph.[479] This synthetic type of composing helped Paley present moral knowledge very clearly and directly. When explaining the general rule of expediency, Paley subjoined a serious of examples and explained the particular and general consequences of coining, forgery, sheep or horse-stealing, breaking, and smuggling in order to "impress this doctrine on the minds of young readers".[480] Paley explained perfect and imperfect rights followed with a bunch of examples in like manner.[481] The *Principles* reveals Paley's synthetic pedagogics which will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs by an example of the chapter "The Divine Benevolence".

The divine benevolence was the fundamental element of Paley's entire ethical system and a typical example of how Paley used a synthetic method of logic. Paley firstly pointed out the general rule: God is benevolent. When God created human beings, three probabilities might constitute his intention: God desired human happiness, or he desired their misery, or he was indifferent to both. The fact that God did not desire the misery of human race was demonstrated by the constitution of human senses which bring them more delight than pain. If God wished the race misery, "he might have made […] every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell a stench; and every sound a discord."[482] If God was not concerned about either happiness or misery of human, people must attribute to a very fortunate accident that their senses were able to receive pleasure and that so many external objects were capable of exciting it.[483] Inasmuch as human happiness should not be the product of an accident, Paley concluded that when God created human, desired their happiness.

In the second step of his synthetic method, Paley picked up the discoveries of anatomists

478 Paley (2002), 28.
479 Paley (2002), 103.
480 Paley (2002), 47.
481 Paley (2002), 53.
482 Paley (2002), 40.
483 Paley (2002), 40.

as evidence to show that none of the system of organizations calculated to produce pain and disease. In his view, "the world abounds with contrivances: and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with, are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance."[484] In Paley's text, teeth are designed not to ache but to eat. Aching is incidental to the contrivance, although it is perhaps inseparable from it. Aching can be called a defect of the design of teeth, but it is not the object of it.[485]

In a different example, Paley also found the evidence of the divine benevolence from his personal experience. He held that the benignity of the Deity was more manifestly demonstrated in the pleasures of very young children than in anything else, since the pleasures of adulthood might be considered as the product of the environment in which they lived. After taking the joys of children as another clear example of the divine benevolence, Paley again concluded that God must desire and ordain the happiness of his creatures.[486]

Overall, I used a few chapters of the *Principles*, especially the chapter on divine benevolence, to discuss the pedagogical purpose that Paley drew by synthesis. For the purpose of exciting young minds, Paley used synthetic method, putting forward the points to be proved and then supporting evidence and examples, until he thought that his readers were fully convinced. Thus, the *Principles* vividly embodies the teaching of a systematic body of knowledge by a synthetic method in the eighteenth century.

**Conclusion**

It was the purpose of this chapter to explain synthetic logic in Paley's the *Principles*. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a radical revaluation of probable knowledge. This change was not only limited in the nature of knowledge, but extended to the field of the methods by which scholars could communicate knowledge to others. Therefore, the eighteenth-century theories of logic did not reserve for the demonstrative, but opened the door for the probable. The shift in philosophical interest from metaphysics to epistemology also led to an urgent concern for literary forms which were suitable for the impartial and unbiased transfer of knowledge based on

[484] Paley (2002), 40.
[485] Paley (2002), 40.
[486] Paley (2002), 41.

facts and common experience. Paley's logic was very close to the common tradition of his day. Since the business of logic included both the discovery and exposition of knowledge, Paley focused on the *Principles* as a disciplinary textbook of morality, and aimed to teach students moral knowledge by a synthetic method in this book.

In order to achieve this aim, Paley shared Locke's rule of righting reasoning and was averse to syllogism. Paley had an aversion to a fashion of his time of stringing propositions together without following examples and explanations. Instead, he gave students a mass of relevant discussions and examples to vivify his moral assents. The general principles in his *Principles* were grounded on the particular instances from Scripture and experience, which was already discussed in the chapter "Evidence". Following Locke's rule of perspicuity, Paley also had an aversion to superabundant citations of classical materials. In other words, Paley insisted on a plain utterance in the *Principles*. This reveals that the function of communication was the impartial transmission of knowledge in Paley's time.

The most innovative part of this chapter was that Paley praised highly a synthetic method of teaching moral philosophy. As is known to all, the *Principles* was a textbook in the subject of ethics at Cambridge university, however, few people have thought about the way by which Paley achieved his teaching aim. Thus, this chapter explained in detail that Paley accepted a perspicuous writing style and a synthetic method of argumentation to work together for moral education in the *Principles*. This book proves Howell's view that eighteenth-century logic was still influenced by the previous tradition to include both functions of discovery and communication of knowledge. The *Principles* embodies Paley's intention to edify a general system of moral knowledge in a synthetic manner.

## Conclusion of Thesis

This thesis addressed several aspects of eighteenth-century moral science by the example of William Paley's *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. The theme of this thesis has been an intellectual revolution of the conception of knowledge, and the erosion of the traditional dichotomy between "science" and probability". The Latin term *scientia* precisely was only reserved for the province of demonstrative certainty. However, in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the revival of skepticism cast the traditional division of knowledge and opinion, certainty and probability, logic and rhetoric into doubt. At the end of the seventeenth century, the task of thinkers changed from absolute truths to probable knowledge. Undoubtedly, this paradigm shift played an important role in shaping English intellectual life in the middle of the eighteenth century. On the basis of the fundamental framework provided by Barbara J. Shapiro's *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England*, this thesis averred that Paley's works manifests an acute consciousness of the implications of the new notion of knowledge to replace the older conception of "science".

The changing conception of knowledge had a ripple effect on early modern notions of evidence. Chapter 2 dealt with evidence and probability, or the degrees of certainty. This topic revealed the tension between skepticism and dogmatism, as well as between the certainty of sense-based data and the fallibility and limitation of human senses. In theology, the latitudinarians' view of natural religion as experiential observations, and their treatment of Scripture as historical and testimonial evidence played a significant role in the formation of Paley's thought of evidence. They were interested in both the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture, and took efforts to establish a rational basis for a rational religion and morality. As to natural theology, evidence from observation and experience was evaluated to have certain reliability. With regard to revealed religion, Scripture was thought of as a written account of what actually happened in history.

In common with the tradition of eighteenth-century England, Paley treated both natural and revealed religion as the sources of the will of God. It was necessary for a reasonable person to obtain a rational interpretation of Scripture and nature. Paley's *Evidences* and *Natural Theology* made celebrated contributions to the supplement of evidence of religious impressions and apologetics of the divine benevolence. Paley's *Principles* was a product of a mutual cooperation of

reason and evidence, which was based on evidence from Scripture and experience. Like many seventeenth and eighteenth-century English intellectuals, Paley focused on grading evidence, and devoting himself to offering the scales of reliability beyond reasonable doubt to his moral philosophy.

Starting with rational evidence, Paley finally arrived at his destination of the general rule of expediency. Paley's moral philosophy could be seen as a remedy for the inadequacies of all moral codes of behaviour in his day. As Niall O'Flaherty concludes, "the doctrine of utility that Paley inherited comprised three essential elements: the Lockean account of moral sensibility, the utilitarian criterion of morals and the resting of moral obligation in divine sanctions".[487] Paley's engagement with each of three topics was examined in Chapter 3. On the one hand, accepting the framework of the principles of happiness and expediency laid by John Gay, Edmund Law and Abraham Tucker, Paley developed utility into a more widely-applied guide than any other moral codes in his day. On the other hand, Paley figured out the problem of the lack of sufficiently forceful charitable impetuses by building the science of ethics on a theological foundation. As O'Flaherty mentions, "a chief aim of Anglican utilitarians from Law onwards was to adjust man's religious (not to mention social and political) expectations to suit the 'frailty' of his nature as increasingly revealed by the science of morals".[488]

In the course of establishing such principles, Paley encountered many crucial issues, such as the fallibility of human senses, which threatened empirical observation, and the fallibility of the understanding, which was social and cultural bias. Paley deliberated on the nature of human happiness under the microscope and focused on the practical task of the cultivation and management of customary habits. In the meantime, Paley met with the challenge of forming general principles of behaviour based on the calculations of individual happiness. He raised Lockean account of moral sensibility into line with the practical principle of expediency, combining with eternal sanctions from religion. Paley partially resolved the issues of customary bias and the limitation of human inquiry by a mixture of customary habits, the principle of expediency, and religious sanctions, which mutually compensated for each other. It was the chief concern of Paley's *Principles* to find a practical method by which people might know their moral duty.

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[487] O'Flaherty (2019), 84.
[488] O'Flaherty (2019), 49.

The high probable level of knowledge arose the need of a fresh method by which moralists were able to effectively inculcate moral knowledge, therefore, Chapter 4 of this thesis concerned with the epistemological and methodological problems that came with the new form of knowledge. As mentioned above, knowledge and probability were closely overlapping in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is not surprising that some methods that used to belong to opinion or probability were applied to science or knowledge. O'Flaherty mentions that Paley's *Principles* was not merely a synthesis of an earlier tradition.[489] However, O'Flaherty's explanation mainly focuses on "how theological utilitarianism was regarded by Paley and his predecessors as an engine of such advancement", and does not expand on the topic of synthesis in Paley's *Principles*.[490] Chapter 4 filled in the topic of synthetic pedagogic method in Paley's moral philosophy, which conformed to the historical trend of probable knowledge. When moral knowledge drawn from evidence from experience and Scripture was thought to lie somewhere between the demonstrable truth and mere opinion, it was necessary for Paley and his contemporaries to find a way which was more appropriate for the highly probable form of knowledge than syllogism.

The construction of the probable knowledge since the late sixteenth century brought an intellectual movement into a number of fields that look different nowadays but used to be overlapping, just like natural philosophy, theology, morality and logic that I have discussed in this thesis. Even though Paley has been thought of as a prominent theologist, moralist and natural philosopher separately for a long time, a comprehensive and systematic discussion about his moral philosophy from the perspective of the early modern conception of science or knowledge has received little attention from historians. It should have not been so because Paley had the immense popularity and considerable success enjoyed by the *Principles* and his other works during the period of the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Such omissions may be due to Paley's profound influence on natural theology, Christian theology and utilitarian theory respectively, and each of them is worth discussing at length.

However, a striking feature of English intellectual life from the end of the seventeenth century was the inability of absolute truths and the satisfaction with highly probable knowledge under the theme of a unified system of knowledge. Ethical debates as a part and even main care

[489] O'Flaherty (2019), 2.
[490] O'Flaherty (2019), 306.

of religion had a crucial implication that Paley's theories of natural theology, Christian theology and utilitarianism should be placed under one frame. Just as Peter Harrison explains, the common context in the eighteenth century was a mixture, consistency and harmony of theological, ethical and natural philosophical knowledge.[491] In regard to this situation, this thesis put such theories under the frame of united knowledge to expound Paley's gift at weaving and utilizing information taken from morality, theology and natural philosophy by a synthetic method to establish a divinely imposed moral principle, expediency. This thesis probably would be beneficial for the researches of eighteenth-century moral philosophy on a smaller level, and for the understanding of a different interpretation of science before the mid-nineteenth century on a larger scale, which is very strange to the modern who has already accepted and regarded science as a specialized and professional term for a long time. In the end, Paley's *Principles* reveals the courage of eighteenth-century English intellectuals to face the imperfections of human understanding, and their efforts to seek a kind of knowledge which they called probability.

[491] Harrison (2015), 148-153.

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