

The
LOGIC OF CONDUCT

by

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PREFACE

The study of reason is most conveniently divided into three parts, corresponding to the three kinds of tests which can be applied to a proposition, tests namely of its intelligibility, its probability and its utility. Intelligibility constitutes the subject-matter of a logic of language, probability of a logic of belief, and utility of a logic of conduct. This division of logic indicates the place properly occupied by the present volume in the realm of reason. It is the third part of a completed logic, but has been prepared and published first because of its adaptability to gauge the public demand for a work on such a subject expounded by a method not heretofore attempted.

The logic of conduct, as its title implies, deals with the practical aspect of reason, the branch adapted to the direction of action. It is the end of the study of the nature of reason, and the beginning of the study of its applications. It is the starting point of a science of usefulness or utilitechnics devoted to the general principles of utility, of which all recognized engineering sciences, and indeed all divisions of useful conduct, may be regarded as branches. Thus it is the middle member of a series connecting the science of logic with its applications. Should the demand justify the preparation of volumes on the other members it can readily be supplied.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of book. The purpose of this book is to illustrate a method of applying science to morals whereby a logic of conduct may be established on a foundation as secure as that upon which rests the recognized logic of belief. Science is only another name for reason, and reasons are of two kinds—reasons for beliefs, and reasons for acts.

The object of the logic of belief is to disclose the nature of a reason for a belief, and it is a subject taught in our colleges and recognized as the foundation of knowledge of what has been, is, or is to be. The object of the logic of conduct is to disclose the nature of a reason for an act, but it is neither taught in our colleges, nor recognized as the foundation of knowledge of what ought to be. Yet in every-day speech alleged "reasons for doing" are referred to and acted upon as often as "reasons for believing." Why then is there a recognized λόγος which treats of the one kind of reason, and none which treats of the other? Is it not as important to understand clearly what we mean when we ask "Why do you do?" as when we ask "Why do you believe?" To omit a logic of conduct from our philosophy leaves one-half the realm of reason unexplored. It leaves

unforged one-half the tools of human judgment, and excludes morals, and hence the guidance of conduct, from the sphere of science—an exclusion of ominous import to mankind. If the following work succeeds in suggesting how such an omission may be provided for, it will have accomplished its purpose.

Form of exposition. The method of exposition used in pursuing this purpose is a modified combination of the methods of Plato and Euclid. Plato's dialogue method follows the natural steps whereby thought feels its faltering way from confusion to clearness. Euclid's geometric method follows the artificial steps by which thought proceeds unfalteringly from what is obvious to what is not obvious, after clearness has been successfully attained. Plato's method is not adapted to the erection of a self-consistent body of truth. It is not a system building method. It does not arrive at a structure of definite conclusions expressed in clear-cut propositions. The method of Euclid, on the other hand, when thought has cleared the way for it, leads to the establishment of a self-consistent body of truth. It is a system building method. It erects step by step a structure of definite conclusions expressed in clear-cut propositions.

To combine the methods of Plato and Euclid, to proceed by natural paths of thought from confusion to clearness, and then to combine what is clear into a self-consistent body of truth, erecting by a series

of logical steps a system of definite conclusions on the subject of morals, expressed in simple and intelligible propositions, would appear to be an object worth attaining. The present attempt to attain it assumes the form of an experiment which, if successful, may indicate the usefulness of extending the method to the whole realm of reason.

The dialogues are divided into daily sessions, of a brevity adapted to avoid too long sustained attention, the main conclusions reached being summarized at the close of each session. Propositions established in one session become the premises for conclusions of later sessions, just as in Euclid, but—still following the Euclidian practice—these propositions are not confined to such as will subsequently be used as premises, but include related propositions adapted to indicate the general trend of the reasoning. Thus step by step the reader may proceed from what is obvious to what is not obvious in morals as readily as in geometry.

The discussions neither profess nor seek to exhaust the subjects of which they treat. They are condensations intended to suggest and stimulate the more extended thought required to maturely establish the main conclusions arrived at.

The dialogues are assumed to be carried on between two serious-minded men, intent, not on victory in disputation, but on increase of understanding. *Senior* (*Sen.*) is assumed to be the leader, more or less familiar with his subject, and *Junior*

(*Jun.*) a less mature follower, not familiar but not opposing, except for purposes of understanding.

The place of discussion is supposed to be a retired corner of the veranda of a country club-house, facing on an extended view, where the two principals meet for a few minutes conversation daily, previous to engaging in the pastime of golf.

Kinds of propositions established. A proposition is a statement about something, and the propositions in this book are of two kinds—definitive and material. The first are called definitions; the second it will be convenient to call theorems.

Definitions are expressions relating a word to other words of the same meaning. They are statements about words. Theorems are expressions relating one meaning to another. They are statements about meanings; and meanings are the things expressed by words. Both definitions and theorems, of course, use words to accomplish their objects, but their objects are different. The object of definitions is to provide men with verbal means of expressing thought. The object of theorems is to express it.

It is as important to distinguish definitions from theorems in morals as in geometry. Hence in the summaries definitions are designated as such, while theorems are left undesignated.

Some of the propositions found in the summaries

are marked "Provisional." These are expressed more clearly or accurately in later sessions.

Methods of establishing propositions. Disputes over propositions are likely to arise from misunderstanding of the methods used, and the degree of uncertainty involved, in establishing them. The two different kinds of propositions presented in the summaries are "established" by two different methods, and involve different degrees of uncertainty.

The method of establishing definitions is by postulation or stipulation, just as in Euclid, and attention is called to the fact that dispute of a stipulated definition is futile. Unlike a theorem, no question of its truth or untruth can be properly raised, since it is merely a convention about words. Its intelligibility or its usefulness may be disputed, but not its probability. An expositor should always be granted permission to use a word in the meaning he stipulates. Euclid is always granted this permission. The words in this volume are used for the purpose of representing certain meanings and introducing them into the mind of the reader. If they succeed in doing this they are thereby justified, since it is the meaning not the word that is important. To raise the question of the "proper" *vs.* the stipulated meaning of a word can lead nowhere, since proper can only mean customary. Custom should determine the meaning of a word when custom involves convenience, but not otherwise. Custom too often

involves ambiguity, and in the search for clearness of understanding ambiguity is not convenient. No inference, therefore, is required to establish the definitions found in the summaries. They are simply presented for acceptance in order to accomplish an object. Their usefulness is what justifies them.

The method of establishing theorems differs very much from that of Euclid, because a science of conduct to be of any use must be an observational science, and geometry is not observational. The theorems of Euclid are established entirely by deduction and the demonstration is complete. The theorems in the summaries of this book are established by deduction, by induction, or by a combination of the two processes, and the demonstration is incomplete. Rigorous demonstration would be altogether too tedious for inclusion in a volume such as this. Hence an abridged demonstration is employed, not sufficient for complete proof, even inductive proof, but presumed to be sufficient to secure the general agreement of candid minds. In other words, after following out and thinking over the discussions which lead up to and seek to "establish" the theorems in any summary, it is presumed that the average reader will agree with them without requiring a complete demonstration. Indeed, many of them are so obvious or of such familiar verbal usage as to require no reflection, but really

follow from the customary meanings of the words used.

Intelligibility, sufficient and insufficient. The inconclusiveness of philosophy as compared with science arises from deficiency, not of data, but of meaning. The difference between the scientific and the metaphysical methods of attacking problems is not a difference in the mode of weighing evidence, but in the standard of intelligibility. Clearness in the understanding of meanings is sometimes essential and sometimes not. Terms sufficiently intelligible for some purposes are insufficiently intelligible for others. Words are the tools of the mind and require different degrees of sharpness according to their application. No one thinks of using a butter knife to shave with, though it may suffice very well to cut butter. Yet philosophers continually attempt to solve the deepest philosophic problems with such words as matter, existence, reality, etc., provided with meanings little if any more sharpened than is required for common purposes. The result is strictly comparable with that of attempting to shave with a butter knife.

Science uses a standard of intelligibility which avoids such futilities. Euclid, for example, while not defining every word he uses, does not attempt to prove that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles until he has provided the words angle, right angle and triangle with meanings suf-

ficiently sharp to permit proof to be given. This book seeks to apply the scientific standard of intelligibility to the most important of philosophic problems—the problem of morals.

In the following sessions all words not defined are judged to require no definition, since the unsharpened meanings provided by usage are sufficient. Those which afford a chance of misunderstanding are defined to the degree required by the purpose to which they are applied. A number of words require a special sharpening process, and hence may need to go through one or more stages of provisional definition before arriving at the required degree of sharpness. Thus in the dialogues such words as should, ought, right, reason, are often used in a vague untechnical sense corresponding to popular usage. Hence the reader cannot apply the meanings finally arrived at to every example of such terms he finds in the sessions. The dialogues indeed are carried on between two hypothetical philosophers for the very purpose of discovering what they are really talking about. If they already knew, the discussions would have no object. Of all people, philosophers know least what they are talking about, not because their understanding is weak, but because their verbal problems are hard. But though hard they are of the highest importance. For if the moralist can bring the meanings of such words as should, ought, right and reason to as sharp a focus as that to which the geometer brings the

meanings of triangle, square and circle, or the physicist those of gravity, inertia and momentum we may hope for a true science of morals, a real logic of conduct.

Exemplification. Most words are readily defined by expressing their meanings in terms of other classes of meanings, distinguishing them as species of a genus in the manner familiar to logicians. But some words, particularly those designed to express the more elementary states of consciousness, such as redness of color, shrillness of sound, or roughness of feeling (touch), are difficult or impossible to define in the ordinary manner. For the definition of such words a process of illustrative definition or exemplification is generally convenient, and sometimes necessary. By this process we direct attention to a number of different states of consciousness, or causes thereof, which include or cause the state or quality of consciousness which we wish to define, and no other. Then to this common state or quality we attach some appropriate word, and thus define the word by exemplification. Thus it would be misleading to say that redness was this or that kind of orange or yellow, nor would it do any good to say it was a red kind of color, but by pointing out to a person a variety of objects open to his observation which partake of the quality to which the term redness is to be attached, such as red bricks, books, clothes, sunsets, etc., and no other quality, the

word can be defined as standing for the color common to those objects. Such words as happiness, desire, approbation, etc., are of this character. It is hard or impossible to define them with sufficient sharpness by referring them to other classes of meanings. Hence in this book their meanings are fixed by a process of exemplification.

Scientific groping. The progress of science results from identifying and discriminating the objects and processes of nature; but it is a progress by means of thought and therefore a groping progress. Thinking things out is a process of feeling and fumbling about in the dark. Discovery usually results from sharpening a focus, or dissipating a fog, causing vague things to become clear. This process is exemplified throughout the history of science. As late as the early nineteenth century "natural philosophers" did not discriminate between matter and energy, electricity was a substance, and so was heat (caloric), and the first views of the concept of energy were foggy, fuzzy and out of focus. A few decades ago, force, energy, and power were confounded together even by scientific men. Clear identification and discrimination came only by degrees.

Now thought follows the same general lines in the internal as in the external world. We identify and discriminate among states and processes of consciousness just as we do among objects and processes

of external nature. And in both worlds discovery comes from clearing our ideas, sharpening the focus of our mental vision by a process of groping and feeling for the significance of meanings, relations, or observations. As one of the main objects of this book is to clear up the meanings of certain important and familiar words, and as this requires the usual groping process, a procedure suited to the purpose is commonly adopted. This consists in a combination of customary and stipulated definition, general agreement in verbal usage furnishing the clue, and analysis of consciousness the solution. Such a process of nominating meanings by usage, and electing them by stipulation is abundantly illustrated in the discussions following.

Abridging the groping process. To follow the actual process by which a pioneer breaks his way out of obscurity into clearness, however, would be tedious. There are too many sidetracks, wanderings, doubts and false clues. In the dialogues therefore the wanderings are curtailed within reasonable limits, the sidetracks mostly chopped off, and the false clues largely eliminated; but effort has been made not to carry the curtailment too far to obscure the general process. The groping is, to be sure, a guided groping, for the expositor knows where he is going while the pioneer does not. But all the windings of the road have not been eliminated. Indeed, some short cuts which might have

simplified the discussion have been deliberately omitted.

Scientific expositions usually seek to present only the completed results of thought. They avoid the process by which the pioneer reached those results, and hence do not provide illustrations of the kind of thinking required of pioneers. This book is an experiment in combining the results of thinking with the process—or rather an abridgment of the process—by which the results were attained. It presents the central structure of a logic of conduct, surrounded by a skeleton of the scaffolding by means of which it was built.

THE LOGIC OF CONDUCT

SOCRATES. *What sort of difference creates enmity and anger? Suppose for example that you and I, my good friend, differ about a number; do differences of this sort make us enemies and set us at variance with one another? Do we not go at once to calculation, and end them by a sum?*

EUTHYPHRO. *True.*

SOC. *Or suppose that we differ about magnitudes, do we not quickly put an end to that difference by measuring?*

EUTH. *That is true.*

SOC. *And we end a controversy about heavy and light by resorting to a weighing machine?*

EUTH. *To be sure.*

SOC. *But what differences are those which, because they cannot be thus decided, make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? I daresay the answer does not occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that this happens when the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honorable and dishonorable. Are not these the points about which, when differing, and unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, we quarrel, when we do quarrel, as you and I and all men experience?*

EUTH. *Yes, Socrates, that is the nature of the differences about which we quarrel.*

PLATO — *Euthyphro.*

THE LOGIC OF CONDUCT

SESSION 1

Junior. This is a peaceful spot sufficiently retired from the world to promote reflection on its follies.

Senior. Yes. Peace gives us a chance to collect our thoughts. But do you find much folly in the world?

Jun. I seem to.

Sen. And are you disposed to reflect on it?

Jun. Sometimes I am. But what good does it do? Reflection is futile.

Sen. And futile reflection is itself a folly?

Jun. To be sure. But what, after all, is futility? Is not everything futile?

Sen. I can imagine an ancient Egyptian or Persian so reflecting, for he would look around him on a seemingly stationary world, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, each generation leaving the earth as they found it. But in our time things are different. Man is progressing, and though there are many futilities, surely everything is not futile. With all its folly compare our world with that of our grandfathers and you must admit that marvellous strides have been made.

Jun. In what direction? Are we more contented than our forefathers, think you?

Sen. I will not venture to judge of contentment, but this is surely the generation of achievement. It is an age of wonders.

Jun. You refer, I suppose, to the inventive exploits of the age, the automobiles and airships, the telephone and radio systems, to the modern subway and irrigation projects, and similar marvels of engineering?

Sen. Yes. Are you prepared to call these things futilities?

Jun. I do not know. We certainly live in a time of great bustle and activity. There is much running to and fro on the earth and moving things about on it; but what is it all about? Are men happier, better or more contented than when their activity was less mechanical?

Sen. Do you mean that our accomplishments are one-sided?

Jun. They seem so to me. We have tremendous material means of accomplishment, vast machinery and complex systems of business and industry, but we are still plagued with war, poverty, discontent and misery on a scale vaster than ever. Our wonderful material means are devoted to evil ends. Our accomplishments are miraculous, but of what use are miraculous accomplishments of evil? Ours is a purely material civilization.

Sen. You are surely a pessimist. Think of the good accomplished along with the evil. The slum dwellers, to be sure, are more numerous than ever,

but they have at their disposal comforts, conveniences and services which kings could not command in former ages. Would it not be more accurate to say that the ends to which modern means are devoted are haphazard, chance-determined, rather than exclusively evil.

Jun. No doubt that is a more accurate statement. Man seems to have got hold of a means of accomplishment of tremendous power directed more by the wind than by reason or foresight. It constructs and destroys with equal efficiency. It improves the means of curing as rapidly, but no more rapidly, than the means of killing. It presents man with mechanical slaves to which he promptly becomes a slave. It fulfils his wants only to increase his necessities, multiplying impartially his blessings and his miseries.

Sen. And what has given man this curious lopsided command over nature? What is the origin of the mighty material civilization which has grown up in the last two hundred years? Is it not the application of science to material things?

Jun. I suppose so.

Sen. And what is science? Is it not the name for a certain method of guiding belief?

Jun. Yes, and a very successful one.

Sen. And by successfully guiding man's beliefs concerning the things about him it enables him to control those things for his own ends?

Jun. It enables him to control them—yes.

Sen. Man has become very successful in achieving material ends because he has applied the method of science to their achievement?

Jun. Yes. I should say that was the reason.

Sen. And do you notice a like degree of success in the achievement of moral ends—in the arts of abolishing vice, crime, war, poverty and misery, improving human character and conduct, and creating a paradise on earth?

Jun. I notice no such thing. On the contrary I have already pointed out that our mighty material means are devoted to evil ends as often as not, and if they do any final good in the world at all it is as much accidental as otherwise. With all our material progress we are as far from the millennium as ever—perhaps further.

Sen. And how about these moral ends? Is science applied to their achievement also?

Jun. No, of course not. It cannot be applied to them. Moral ends are and must be left to religion and conscience. To accomplish such ends something higher and more spiritual than mere science is required.

Sen. If science should be applied to conduct—that is to moral ends—you think it would be unsuccessful?

Jun. I think everyone agrees that it cannot be done, and should not be done if it could.

Sen. We can apply science to the production of

pig iron and paper, but not to the production of virtue and happiness?

Jun. Certainly not. Material things may be left to the head, but morals is a matter of the heart.

Sen. And yet you say that our civilization is one-sided—that it is successful materially, but unsuccessful morally.

Jun. Yes, that is my observation.

Sen. In other words, it is successful where the method of science is applied and unsuccessful where it is not. Does that fact suggest anything to you?

Jun. You don't mean to imply, do you, that the materialistic, unspiritual methods of science should be applied to morals?

Sen. The methods of science are materialistic and unspiritual only when applied to material and unspiritual ends. If you confine them to such ends, of course you will achieve no others.

Jun. And those are all we are achieving to-day. Don't talk to me about science. Why, what is carried on more scientifically than war, and yet what is more destructive and damnable? No; science has done sufficient harm already. It is the source of abominations enough. Do not suggest polluting morals with it.

Sen. But consider a moment. Science is applied only to the *means* of war, is it not? It is not applied to the *ends*. Such things as the love of power and conquest, the propagation of a faith, or the extension of trade are the motives and objects of war.

These motives and objects are sanctioned, not by science, but by tradition and emotion and often by religion, and are to-day what they always have been. It is only the *means* which are modern and scientific.

Jun. Well, what of it. They are no less frightful for that.

Sen. In other words, when you seek harm by science you achieve harm.

Jun. You certainly do, and the more scientifically you seek it the more harm you achieve.

Sen. Well, then, if you would seek only good by science you would achieve good, would you not?

Jun. Well, perhaps so.

Sen. And the more scientifically you sought it the more good you would achieve, for science is only a *method*—of itself it seeks neither harm nor good.

Jun. That sounds reasonable, but is it not sophistical? How are you going to confine the application of science to good ends?

Sen. You can't unless you know what is meant by "good."

Jun. And how are you to decide what is meant?

Sen. Such a question calls for rather a lengthy answer. For the present all I am trying to do is to state plainly a condition of affairs open to the observation of all who care to observe. We find that where science is applied we accomplish our ends, and where it is not applied we do not. We

apply it to material ends and are successful materially. We refuse to apply it to moral ends and are unsuccessful morally. Why not try applying it to moral ends and see if we cannot turn failure into success?

Jun. Then you think that science can be used to solve the fundamental question of morals—the question of right and wrong ends?

Sen. That is what I am suggesting. You have yourself asserted that our civilization is one-sided—that it is only “half-there.” Does this not suggest that men are able to do half of something and not able to do the other half? And which half are they able and which unable to do? We are agreed that they are able to judge means because they have in science a guide to means. But how about ends? Are they able to judge ends? And if so, by what are they guided?

Jun. There is something very confusing here. It seems strange that science should be either needed or adapted to solve the problem of morals. Surely you have often heard it said that *everyone* knows the difference between right and wrong. The difficulty arises from the fact that people will not act on their knowledge.

Sen. Both you and I have often heard this said; and have you not also heard it said that *no one* knows the difference between right and wrong—that omniscience alone can reveal it?

Jun. Yes, I believe I have heard both these things asserted.

Sen. And even by one and the same person, depending on his mood and the circumstances he is facing?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Yet the two statements are mutually contradictory.

Jun. It would seem so. Have you any explanation for this curious situation?

Sen. It is all a part of the confusion that beclouds the moral question. Its origin is to be found in the same one-sided way of thinking that gives us our one-sided civilization. We use one method of thinking when we seek to decide questions of number, magnitude or physical quantity, quality, or occurrence; and another method when we seek to decide questions of good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong.

Jun. And can we do anything to clear the matter up, do you think? It is easy to criticize, but hard to construct.

Sen. We cannot do much to clear it up in five minutes; but if you and I should discuss this question for five or six minutes a day for five or six weeks perhaps—we might between us get some light on it.

Jun. How can we afford to waste so much time on what promises to be only another futility?

Sen. We cannot unless we have time to waste; but do we not waste time in other ways?

Jun. I suppose we do.

Sen. If, then, we merely substitute one method of wasting time for another we are guaranteed against any loss, are we not?

Jun. Yes, we should lose nothing by that.

Sen. And we surely waste a few minutes a day in idle gossip or other casual and useless pursuits.

Jun. More than a few minutes, I should say.

Sen. I suggest, then, that we devote five, or even occasionally as much as ten, minutes a day, which we would otherwise waste, to following up the subject we have stumbled upon to-day. It happens to be rather a hobby of mine. We both spend our afternoons here playing golf. Suppose each day before our game we meet here on the porch and waste that much time in a session devoted to discussion of the matter.

Jun. I am quite willing to try it as an experiment, for you have raised a question that interests me.

Sen. Well, even to raise a question is something. It is a beginning. I take it we are agreed that the possibility of applying science to morals and thus getting moral results comparable to present-day material ones, is a subject worth inquiring into?

Jun. Yes, for those who have time to waste, and that includes most of us.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 1

A scientific guide to belief has created a material civilization.

A scientific guide to conduct should tend to create a moral civilization.

Search for a scientific guide to conduct is an inquiry worth pursuing.

SESSION 2

Senior. I suppose you would agree that in setting out to search for a scientific guide to conduct we are searching for a right guide?

Junior. I certainly assume we are not searching for a wrong one.

Sen. And do you and I agree that there is such a thing as right conduct and also such a thing as a right guide to it?

Jun. I can agree to that. Indeed, I should say that a right guide to conduct is necessary if men are to recognize right conduct and distinguish it from wrong.

Sen. But how do you suppose we are to recognize a right guide when we find it?

Jun. That is a question for you to answer. If I could answer it, or if it was easy to answer, all men would have agreed about it long ago, and we would not be wasting our time discussing it here and now.

Sen. We have set ourselves rather a hard problem, in your opinion?

Jun. Yes, but I am not worrying, since it is you that have the responsibility of solving it.

Sen. I realize the difficulty of the task, so propose to begin rather deep down. You will agree perhaps that to recognize a right guide to conduct

it is necessary to understand what is meant by rightness in a guide?

Jun. Yes, I can admit that, since it is little more than a redundancy.

Sen. And would you admit also that the meanings of words, or equivalent expressions, are things to be found in the mind—that is, in consciousness?

Jun. Well, I suppose a meaning of which no one was or could be conscious would not be much of a meaning. Words are commonly supposed to stand for ideas, and ideas are things in the mind.

Sen. Then to understand the meaning of such a word as “rightness,” I take it we must institute a search of consciousness. We must probe what we have in mind when we use the word.

Jun. No doubt that is the place to find the meaning, if anywhere. I have a notion of what I mean by rightness floating about in my own consciousness, but I should not like to have anyone ask me to write it down.

Sen. It is rather vague, is it?

Jun. It is not as clear as other meanings that I have in my head. If you should ask me what I meant by a chair or a table I could tell you pretty well.

Sen. But if we take pains to consider what we mean by a word, can we not make it clearer?

Jun. I presume we can. Yet in the case of a word like rightness we should have to grope around a good deal. This must be so, it seems to me, be-

cause if it were not, there would not be so much confusion and disagreement about it among men. They would not be quarreling so much about what was right and what not right.

Sen. Searching consciousness for the meaning of words is a groping, fumbling kind of process then?

Jun. It would seem so when the meaning of such a word as "rightness" is the thing sought.

Sen. Nevertheless, I am going to attempt to establish a first criterion of rightness as a guide to conduct, and I am going to try to find it in a certain characteristic of this groping or fumbling process. You have a pretty good idea of what you mean by the word "rock," have you not?

Jun. Yes, fairly good.

Sen. Well, is a piece of mica such as you find in the windows of stoves a sample of a rock?

Jun. It is certainly a mineral, but I hardly know whether to call it a rock. If all minerals are rocks, then jewels must be rocks, yet I do not think I should want to call them rocks, or that others would agree to such a usage of the term.

Sen. So you are doubtful of the meaning of a common word like "rock," are you?

Jun. I am doubtful in some cases perhaps. I am not sure where to place the dividing line between rock and not rock.

Sen. Suppose I should hand you a piece of green wood and ask you if it were a sample of a rock. Would you be doubtful about that?

Jun. Certainly not. I may not know exactly what I mean by rock, but I know I do not mean wood by it.

Sen. And take the word "time." You probably would have difficulty in saying just what you mean by it.

Jun. I rather think I would.

Sen. Nevertheless, if I should hand you a saucepan and ask you if it was a sample of time, you would have no hesitation in answering, would you?

Jun. I should not hesitate to say it was not a sample of time.

Sen. Even though you cannot say what you mean by time?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that it may be easy for a person to tell what he does *not* mean by a word when it is hard for him to tell what he *does* mean by it?

Jun. Yes, I should say that in the case of almost any word it would be easy to tell many things that are not meant by it.

Sen. To discover what men are sure they do *not* mean by a word is a clue to what they *do* mean, since it eliminates a possible meaning?

Jun. By discovering many things, especially large classes of things, which are not meant by a word it might be possible by a process of elimination to chase down what is meant, but this would appear to be a very slow and negative process. It seems hardly practical. Do you propose to use it?

Sen. Perhaps so, but all I wish you to assent to at this time is that to receive general, undoubting, and calmly considered assurance from reasonable men of what they are sure they do *not* mean by rightness is at least a negative clue to what they *do* mean.

Jun. I see no reason why I should not assent to that proposition if it will do you any good.

Sen. All right, then. We are setting out to search for something that all men have vaguely in mind—a scientific, or reasonable, or right guide to conduct, or something that such a general description seems to fit. Now men do not know clearly what they mean by such an expression, but it is easy to cite examples of things which would be promptly, calmly, and unanimously pronounced to be things which they do *not* mean. For instance, a rule of conduct which required that all sentient beings should on all occasions be made as miserable as possible would be unanimously and promptly rejected as a right guide to conduct, would it not?

Jun. Yes. It may be doubtful what men *do* mean by rightness in a guide to conduct, but it is not doubtful that they do *not* mean a guide to universal misery.

Sen. Very good. Now it is this kind of general or unanimous rejection that I propose as a first requirement of rightness in the guide we are setting out to find. In groping for a guide to conduct, we must begin by groping for guides to our guide; and

the first such guide I suggest we adopt is freedom from rejection, of the prompt and undoubting kind I have illustrated. The right guide may not be generally agreed upon, but it will at least not meet with universal disagreement, as in the examples cited.

Jun. As a first requirement of rightness, freedom from the kind of undoubting rejection you have suggested seems reasonable, and I am willing to accept it, at least until it proves unacceptable.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 2

Search for a scientific guide to conduct means search for a right guide.

Discovering a right guide to conduct requires discovering what is meant by the word "rightness" in a guide.

The meaning of words is to be found in the mind.

Search of the mind for the meaning of some words is a groping process.

In groping for meanings, discovery of what is *not* meant by a word is a clue to what *is* meant.

Discovery of what is *not* meant by rightness in a guide to conduct is a clue to what *is* meant.

General and undoubting rejection of a meaning

groped for is assurance that it is not the meaning sought.

A (first) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not meet with general and undoubting rejection of the kind exemplified in Session 2.

SESSION 3

Junior. How do you propose to waste our five minutes to-day?

Senior. Perhaps we had better begin by searching for another guide to our guide. We got one clue yesterday, and may get another to-day. Science, you know, is a kind of detective and arrives at its decisions by following up clues.

Jun. But the detective often makes blunders and follows the wrong clue.

Sen. So does science. Discovery is a fumbling process, but we must not confuse fumbling with futility. Science gropes for truth, but it gropes intelligently.

Jun. And have you a real clue to how or where we can discover a scientific guide to conduct?

Sen. I think I can suggest one that will carry us a step beyond the point we reached yesterday.

Jun. And what suggested it to you?

Sen. The methods by which men discovered our present scientific guide to belief.

Jun. What methods do you refer to?

Sen. Well, one of them was to discover what men agreed about.

Jun. And do men agree about anything?

Sen. Yesterday you and I agreed that they did.

They can be made to agree about rejecting meanings of words. Men would agree unanimously that a saucepan is not a sample of time, for instance.

Jun. They might agree on rejecting something, but would all men agree on accepting anything?

Sen. I do not refer to universal, but general agreement.

Jun. General agreement about beliefs?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. And is there general agreement about beliefs?

Sen. There is more or less of it.

Jun. And is general agreement in a belief a safe guide to belief? You will recall that not so very long ago there was general agreement in the belief that the world is flat.

Sen. No. I am referring to general agreement as a clue, not as a guide or criterion. All or most of those who have contributed to the discovery of the scientific method, from Aristotle down, are continually inquiring, either implicitly or explicitly, what would be generally agreed on as to this or that proposition.

Jun. But if you are only going to discover what men are agreed upon believing already, you are not going to get very far.

Sen. That is true, but by pointing out that there is disagreement among their agreements we can make some of the things they agree upon the crite-

tion of others, and so replace inconsistency with consistency.

Jun. You infer that because a certain method of procedure was fruitful in revealing a guide to belief that a similar procedure may be fruitful in revealing a guide to conduct?

Sen. That is my suggestion.

Jun. Well, as a clue only, I will admit it.

Sen. And I wish you to be a judge of that clue, so that when I ask you to agree to a certain proposition you will not do it unless you have reason to believe that your agreement represents general agreement.

Jun. You wish me in expressing agreement to represent as candidly as I can the average normal man?

Sen. Yes, and not only with respect to agreement, but with respect to disagreement and doubt also.

Jun. Very well, I will do the best I can.

Sen. That is all I ask. Let us as a preliminary, then, inquire how men generally use belief in guiding conduct. If you believe it is going to rain you take an umbrella when you go out?

Jun. I am likely to.

Sen. Why do you do it?

Jun. Because I wish to keep dry.

Sen. That is, you wish to achieve a certain result or effect, and in order to achieve it you select a cause adapted to produce it. In this case, keeping

dry is the effect and carrying an umbrella the cause.

Jun. That is right.

Sen. And suppose you are thirsty and wish to quench your thirst—what do you do?

Jun. I drink a glass of water.

Sen. Why?

Jun. Because I know it will produce the effect I am after.

Sen. When you say you “know” you mean you confidently or strongly believe, perhaps?

Jun. Yes. I mean I am convinced of the fact.

Sen. In this case also then you have used a belief to guide your conduct and in the same way as before. You aim at a certain effect, the quenching of thirst, and to accomplish it you select, or set in operation, an appropriate cause, the drinking of water.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And is it not in general true that we use our beliefs to guide conduct because we deem them adapted to tell us what causes are likely to produce the effects we aim at?

Jun. Yes, that would be generally admitted.

Sen. If we had no means of knowing the relation between cause and effect, then we could not guide our conduct, could we?

Jun. No.

Sen. But beliefs are sometimes mistaken, are they not; and, if so, are likely to misguide our conduct, so that we fail to achieve the effect we aim at?

Jun. Surely.

Sen. Belief alone, then, is not a good guide to conduct, since it is itself in need of a guide?

Jun. That is obvious. Before we can use belief to guide conduct we must find something to guide belief.

Sen. And if you believe it is going to rain, and it does rain, you say your belief is a true one, do you not, and guides you aright?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But suppose your belief that it is going to rain turns out to be mistaken?

Jun. Then the belief is untrue or false and misguides me.

Sen. And if you drink a glass of water expecting it to quench your thirst and it does quench it, what do you call your expectation?

Jun. A true or valid one and adapted to guide conduct.

Sen. And if it turns out that the water in the glass is salt water and fails to quench your thirst, what do you call it?

Jun. A false or invalid expectation adapted to misguide me.

Sen. And to confirm a prediction, meet an expectation, or fulfil a belief by observation in the manner illustrated is called verifying it, is it not?

Jun. Yes; to verify means to confirm by observation.

Sen. And to fail of confirmation or fulfilment in the manner illustrated is not to verify?

Jun. It is not to verify.

Sen. And is it not generally agreed that beliefs which will be verified and expectations which will be fulfilled are called true or valid beliefs or expectations and those which will not are called false or invalid?

Jun. That is quite generally agreed.

Sen. And is it not also true that a belief, whether actually confirmed by observation or not, is called true if it surely would be, or would have been, so confirmed had the trial been made?

Jun. But how can we be sure that it will be confirmed if the trial is not made?

Sen. I do not wish at this time to digress into a discussion of the logic of belief sufficiently to answer that question.

Jun. You do not wish to discuss the question. You simply wish me to assume that some substitute for actual confirmation is available.

Sen. Yes; to avoid a digression not pertinent to the issue under discussion, I ask you to make such an assumption.

Jun. Well, I suppose it is safe to assume that sufficient means of assurance that a belief would be, or would have been, confirmed by observation is as good a verification as the observation itself.

Sen. And in any case a false belief is merely one that is not true, is it not?

Jun. Yes, false means not true.

Sen. And we are agreed that science is a pretty good guide to belief?

Jun. Yes, pretty good.

Sen. And science is adapted to guide conduct because it can distinguish between true and false beliefs concerning the relation between causes and their effects?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that it guides conduct by first guiding belief?

Jun. That is true.

Sen. And if it were unable to guide belief about the relation of cause and effect it could not guide conduct, could it?

Jun. I do not see how it could.

Sen. Well, we have taken another step in our quest. We have found something which can distinguish between true and false beliefs, and this is an essential to the guidance of conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 3

General agreement is a clue to, but not a criterion of, a scientific guide to belief.

General agreement may prove a clue to, if not a criterion of, a scientific guide to conduct.

Def. To *verify* means to confirm a prediction, judgment, or belief by observation, in the manner exemplified in Session 3.

Def. A *true belief* means one which will, would be, or would have been, verified.

Def. *False* means not true.

A scientific guide to belief provides means of distinguishing true beliefs from false ones.

SESSION 4

Senior. When a man successfully selects a cause which will produce the effect he aims at—the effect he intends or designs to attain—he is said to adapt his means to his end, is he not?

Junior. Yes.

Sen. And if he selects one which fails him, what then?

Jun. Then he fails to adapt his means to his end.

Sen. So that science in guiding men to the relation between cause and effect enables them to adapt their means to their ends?

Jun. Yes, that is the way in which science guides conduct.

Sen. The means are the causes and the ends the effects?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Good. Now suppose you should see a blind man trying to cross the street, and in order to help him should take his arm and guide him across: you would in this course of conduct have adapted your means to your end, would you not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And what would your end be in so acting?

Jun. To help the blind man across the street.

Sen. And what would your means be?

Jun. Taking hold of his arm and directing his steps.

Sen. Now let us see if the words right and wrong have any generally admitted application to this incident. Would you say that your act in helping the man was right or wrong?

Jun. It would generally be considered right.

Sen. And how about the end, would that be deemed right?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And the means?

Jun. That would be right also, because adapted to achieve its end.

Sen. Here, then, we have a generally agreed upon example of a right act, a right end and a right means, have we not?

Jun. Yes, I can see nothing wrong about any of them.

Sen. Very well. Now suppose you see the same blind man trying to cross the street and, having a grudge against him perhaps, proceed to lead him in the wrong direction so that he loses his way and you have the satisfaction of causing him pain and inconvenience. Would your act be generally considered right or wrong?

Jun. Wrong.

Sen. And how about your end?

Jun. That would be wrong also.

Sen. And your means. How about that?

Jun. That would seem to be right, since it accomplished its purpose.

Sen. It would seem, then, that we have here a generally admitted example of a wrong act, a wrong end, but not a wrong means?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But suppose you had tried to mislead the blind man and failed to do so, what then would you say about your means?

Jun. It would be wrong, because it failed to accomplish its object.

Sen. And in all your answers *wrong* simply means *not right*, does it not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. It seems then that acts, ends, and means can be, and often are, referred to as right or wrong?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Suppose we had a guide to conduct which would tell what acts or courses of conduct are right and what wrong: would it be generally admitted that we had a guide worth having?

Jun. It would.

Sen. Well, is an act which adapts a right means to a wrong end a right act?

Jun. No, because it aims at a wrong end and hence is not worth doing.

Sen. How about a wrong means to a right end? Is that a right act?

Jun. No, because it selects a wrong means and hence cannot achieve its end.

Sen. Both these acts are wrong, then?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. A right act or course of conduct, then, would seem to be one which adapts a right means to a right end?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And a right means is simply one that is adapted to achieve its end, is it not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And what is a right end?

Jun. Ah, that is the big question.

Sen. Is it a question that science cannot answer?

Jun. It has not answered it yet.

Sen. But science is a guide to means. We have agreed to that, because it can tell us quite well what causes to set in motion to achieve effects.

Jun. Yes, science is a pretty good guide to means.

Sen. But not to ends?

Jun. No; it is as successful in achieving wrong ends as right ones. This we discovered in our first session.

Sen. Science then cannot guide men to right acts because it cannot guide them to right ends?

Jun. So far it has failed to do so.

Sen. In guiding men to means it uses the whole of something (namely, a reason for a belief), but in guiding men to ends it uses only half of something (namely, half of a reason for an act). It can get as far as *adaptive* acts—those adapted to the end aimed at—but not as far as *right* ones?

Jun. It would seem so.

Sen. If then we could discover a way by which science could detect a right end as successfully as it now detects a right means, we should discover the missing half of a reason for an act, and thus have the guide to conduct we are seeking?

Jun. Yes, we should then have as good a guide to acts as we now have to beliefs.

Sen. And it would be as good a guide because it would permit us to distinguish right acts from wrong ones?

Jun. I cannot see how it could be the guide we are after if it did not.

Sen. And is it not generally admitted that the methods of science and those of reason are the same?

Jun. The methods of science are generally admitted to be reasonable.

Sen. A belief could hardly be scientific and unreasonable at the same time, or unscientific and yet reasonable?

Jun. Hardly.

Sen. So that what is unscientific is also unreasonable?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. The name science is generally confined to the more difficult and systematic use of reason, perhaps?

Jun. That is a common usage.

Sen. The use of reason as a guide in such simple

acts as pouring a glass of water or lighting a cigar would not be called scientific then?

Jun. No, but such acts, if properly performed, would be scientific just the same, because they would be reasonably adapted to their ends—they would be adaptive acts. The name might not be appropriate but the process would be the same.

Sen. So that when we use reason in adapting means to ends we are using science whether we employ the name or not?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And of course in our search for a scientific guide to conduct it is clearly understood that we are not seeking the guidance of reason to *any* end, but to the *right* end in all cases. What we are after is the nature, not of an adaptive act merely, but of a right one. We wish science to tell us, not merely how, under given conditions, to light a match, but how to discover whether lighting it under those conditions is right. An adaptive act results from the application of reason as a guide to means but not necessarily as a guide to ends. What we want is the kind of act that results from the application of reason to both.

Jun. Yes, that is implied in what was said when we first raised the question. We are seeking as universal a guide for acts as science now provides for beliefs.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 4

Def. An *end* means an effect aimed at, designed, or intended.

Def. A *means* means a cause chosen in order to attain an end.

By distinguishing between true and false beliefs respecting cause and effect, science makes possible the adaptation of means to ends.

Def. An *adaptive act* means an act adapted to attain its end.

Def. A *right means* means a means adapted to attain its end.

A *right end* is something the nature of which is not yet agreed upon. (Provisional.)

Def. A *right act* means a right means adapted to a right end. (Provisional.)

Def. *Wrong* means not right.

A scientific guide to conduct would provide means of distinguishing right acts from wrong ones.

The methods of science and reason are the same.

A scientific guide to conduct would provide as universal a guide to acts as already exists to beliefs.

SESSION 5

Senior. So far we have spent most of our time inquiring into general usage in the matter of words.

Junior. You mean such words as true and false, right and wrong, reasonable and unreasonable?

Sen. Yes. We have come to some preliminary understanding as to ways in which they are used, and to-day I wish to extend this inquiry into verbal usage, for after all if we are to discuss a subject we must have some words to discuss it with, and some common understanding of the sense in which we use them.

Jun. That appears reasonable.

Sen. Now when you say that a certain belief ought to be held, do you imply that it is a true belief?

Jun. Yes. I should certainly say that if it ought to be held it could not be untrue.

Sen. And a belief that ought not to be held—Can that be a true belief?

Jun. No. If it ought not to be held it would be false.

Sen. You see we are following the clue of general agreement in the use of words, and I want next to inquire whether we have any correspondence in usage between beliefs and acts in this case. Would

you say that an act that ought to be done is right, or not right?

Jun. Clearly, if it ought to be done it is right.

Sen. And an act that ought not to be done—
Is that right or is it wrong?

Jun. Everyone would agree that it is wrong.

Sen. It would seem, then, that a true belief and a right act are thought to have something in common since the same words “ought to be” apply in much the same way to them both?

Jun. It would seem so. Indeed, come to think of it, a true belief is sometimes referred to as a right belief, and a right act would generally be considered a true act rather than an untrue one.

Sen. And there is a correspondence between a false belief and a wrong act, is there not, since the words “ought not to be” apply to both?

Jun. Yes. In fact, a false belief is often called a wrong one.

Sen. And do you not observe that in their relation to true beliefs and right acts the words “ought to be” and “should be” are used in an equivalent sense? For instance, an act that ought to be done is an act that should be done, is it not?

Jun. Yes, that would be generally admitted.

Sen. And similarly an act that ought not to be done is one that should not be done, is it not?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And these words “ought” and “should” occur quite often in general conversation about both

beliefs and acts, and would therefore seem to refer to something important about them?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And now to connect these matters up with what we are seeking: is it not true that a scientific guide to belief is a means of distinguishing between what ought to be believed and what ought not?

Jun. If it were not I should say it was not much of a guide.

Sen. And how about a scientific guide to conduct? Would it not be one that provided means of distinguishing between what ought and what ought not to be done?

Jun. I cannot see what good it would be if it did not.

Sen. And at this stage we are not compelled to decide whether a right act, and an act that ought to be done, are identical or not. We are agreed in any event that the guide we are seeking is a guide to both?

Jun. Yes. It would be a guide to what ought to be done as well as to what it is right to do.

Sen. Very well. Now suppose a man tells us that he believes the world is round, the sea is salt, and that it is colder in winter than in summer. Would you say that what he does believe and what he ought to believe are the same?

Jun. Yes. I should say these beliefs are such as ought to be believed since they are obviously true.

Sen. And if he should tell us that he believes the

sun goes round the earth, that the moon is made of green cheese, and that mosquitoes are more troublesome in winter than in summer, would you say he ought to believe these things also?

Jun. No, he certainly ought not to believe them, since they are false.

Sen. And do men ever believe what they ought not to believe?

Jun. Certainly they do.

Sen. It seems men sometimes believe what they ought to believe and sometimes they do not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. From which I should say it follows that it is not possible to discover what men *ought to* believe by discovering what they *do* believe.

Jun. That seems quite obvious.

Sen. And now, how about acts? When a man is honest, kind and industrious in conduct, would you say in general that in these respects he does what he ought to do?

Jun. Yes, to be honest, kind and industrious is right.

Sen. And if he lies, abuses his family, and loafs around street corners, is he doing what he ought to do?

Jun. By no means.

Sen. And do you not admit that men are sometimes honest and sometimes not, sometimes kind and sometimes not, sometimes industrious and sometimes not?

Jun. Yes, that is admitted.

Sen. So that men sometimes do what they ought to do and sometimes do not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. From which it would seem to follow that it is not possible to discover what men *ought to do* by discovering what they *do* do?

Jun. That would seem to be a reasonable conclusion. Indeed it is unanimously admitted that what *is* done is no criterion of what *ought to be* done. If it were, there is no crime in the calendar that would not be right.

Sen. In other words, what *is* is not a criterion of what *ought to be*?

Jun. Certainly not.

Sen. And will you agree that a second requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not merely prescribe what *is* as a criterion of what *ought to be*?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that if the "rightness" of a guide to conduct is urged on the ground that men actually do what the proposed guide directs them to do, or its lack of rightness is urged on the ground that they do *not* do what the proposed guide directs them to do, the unreasonableness of the ground is obvious?

Jun. So obvious indeed that in admitting it I cannot see that I am admitting much.

Sen. Perhaps you are admitting more than you

suppose; almost enough, in fact, to put most current codes of conduct into the discard.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 5

A belief that ought to be held is true.

A belief that ought not to be held is false.

An act that ought to be done is right.

An act that ought not to be done is wrong.

Ought to be is a synonym for should be.

A scientific guide to belief distinguishes between beliefs which ought to be held and those which ought not.

A scientific guide to conduct would distinguish between acts which ought to be done and those which ought not.

What men believe is not a criterion of what they ought to believe.

What men do is not a criterion of what they ought to do.

A (second) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not be merely a way of making what *is* the criterion of what *ought to be*.

SESSION 6

Senior. When you sneeze or wink, do you do anything?

Junior. I should say sneezing and winking is doing something, yes.

Sen. And when a victim of St. Vitus's dance makes convulsive movements of his face or shoulders, is he doing something?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But these acts are involuntary, so it would seem that "doing" refers to involuntary as well as to voluntary acts?

Jun. That would depend upon the sense in which the word "doing" is used.

Sen. You evidently use it in a sense to include both classes of acts, do you not?

Jun. It is in accordance with usage to so use it.

Sen. But in discussing questions of right and wrong, it is important to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary acts, is it not?

Jun. Yes, I should think so. An involuntary act can hardly be called either right or wrong, since the man who does it can't help doing it.

Sen. To forestall verbal disputes, then, I suggest that we establish a couple of definitions at this point. All acts, whether voluntary or involuntary,

let us call *behavior*, and voluntary acts let us call *conduct*.

Jun. That seems to be a plain distinction.

Sen. And it is also understood that when we speak of acts of conduct we include courses of action?

Jun. It is plain that courses of action are sometimes right and sometimes wrong. So, until it appears worth while to discriminate between them, I cannot see why we should not include courses of action under the name of acts.

Sen. Now involuntary acts throw no light on what ought to be done, do they? If a man falls in a fit it does not show that he ought to fall in it, or ought not to. The words "ought" and "ought not" do not apply to it at all, do they?

Jun. No, nor to any other involuntary act.

Sen. So that we can use the word "doing" in the sense of "behaving" and the last proposition we agreed to yesterday holds good, does it not? We cannot tell what behavior *ought to be* by discovering what it *is*?

Jun. I should say the proposition was as true of behavior as of conduct, for I cannot see how the fact that an act is involuntary can give it any standing as a criterion either of right or wrong.

Sen. Very well. Now the behavior of men is mental as well as physical, is it not? Thinking, for instance, is part of our behavior as much as walking or talking?

Jun. Yes. There would seem to be mental behavior as well as physical.

Sen. Then when we like or dislike, approve or disapprove, or feel in this way or that about a proposed course of conduct, we are doing something as much as when we wink, sneeze, walk or play golf, are we not?

Jun. Yes, I should say a person's mental reaction to a proposed course of conduct was a part of his behavior.

Sen. And from this it would follow according to the rule just agreed upon that we cannot, for instance, tell what men ought to like by discovering what they do like?

Jun. No, some men like to commit theft, murder, and other crimes.

Sen. Nor what they ought to prefer, want, or desire by discovering what they do prefer, want, or desire?

Jun. This would seem to follow both from theory and observation.

Sen. Nor would the fact that men pursue pleasure and seek to avoid pain be proof that they ought to do so?

Jun. No, since what they do is no criterion of what they ought to do.

Sen. And we cannot tell what men ought to approve or disapprove by discovering what they do approve or disapprove?

Jun. Well, I am not so sure about that. I can-

not think of anything that I do approve that I ought not to approve.

Sen. But how about others?

Jun. That is different. I often find others approving what they ought not to approve.

Sen. And disapproving what they ought not to disapprove?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. I thought so. You find in yourself, then, the single exception to the rule that what men do is no sure test of what they ought to do?

Jun. Well, I cannot imagine myself approving of the wrong or disapproving of the right.

Sen. There is an explanation for this which will come to light a little later. Just now I am going to ask you to suspend judgment on the point, and agree that, possibly excepting yourself, it is not possible to discover what men *ought to* like, dislike, approve, disapprove, desire, prefer, wish or want by discovering what they *do* like or dislike, approve or disapprove, desire, prefer, wish or want.

Jun. I think I must agree to that rule, since it is merely a corollary from the one about behavior in general, but it seems to leave us in a bad dilemma. Has the problem of good and evil, right and wrong, nothing to do with what men like or approve or wish or prefer then?

Sen. It might be going too far to say it had nothing to do with them, but there is no critical connection between the two things. For instance,

if I should eventually be able to point out that men in some contingencies ought to prefer poverty to wealth or death to life, it would be no answer to point out that they do not thus prefer.

Jun. It would be true though, would it not?

Sen. Yes, but it would not be pertinent. The problem of what *ought to be* is quite distinct from the problem of what *is*. Hence the citation of what *is* preferred, or liked, or approved among men has no pertinence in morals.

Jun. I can see that your proposition follows from what we just agreed upon, but when stated thus baldly it seems astounding and opposed to what I have always supposed. If men's desires, preferences and approbations are cast aside, what is there left to determine conduct by?

Sen. There is something left, and something very conspicuous—something which pervades all life and conduct.

Jun. And what is that?

Sen. Interest. Is not man's interest worth considering?

Jun. And what do you mean by interest?

Sen. I mean that which is of concern or importance to people.

Jun. And are not a man's desires and preferences important to him?

Sen. Yes, but they are no measure or test of importance. We cannot tell how important a thing is by discovering how much it is wished, desired or

preferred. A child desires to grasp the moon, but it is not important that he should do so. A hopeless invalid may prefer life to death, but this does not show that it is to his interest to live.

Jun. And do you think men's interests afford a better clue to the right and wrong of conduct than their likes, preferences and approbations?

Sen. As to "better" I will not now say, because we have not yet considered what we mean by such a word. But it affords an entirely new and independent clue—one that can be kept completely distinct from them, and it is important to keep them distinct. Failure to do so is sure to be a source of confusion.

Jun. You make a distinction between what men want and what it is to their interest to have?

Sen. Yes, that is a distinction I make. And would you not say that the problem of right and wrong, or of ought and ought not, was one of interest to men?

Jun. Yes, it is of great interest to everybody. There would be no disagreement about that. It certainly concerns and is important to everybody that right should be distinguishable from wrong, and what ought to be from what ought not to be.

Sen. And by everybody you mean literally all mankind, do you?

Jun. Yes, there is no one to whom it is not important.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 6

Def. Behavior means what men do, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

Def. Conduct means what men do voluntarily.

Conduct includes both voluntary acts and courses of action.

How men *do* behave is not a criterion of how they *ought to* behave.

Behavior is mental as well as physical.

Men's likes, dislikes, preferences, approbations, and disapprobations are a part of their behavior.

What men like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove is not a criterion of what they *ought to* like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove.

Def. Interest means that which is of concern or importance. (Provisional.)

What men like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove is not a criterion of their interest.

The clue provided by men's interest is independent of that provided by their likes, dislikes, desires, preferences, approbations, or disapprobations.

The distinction between right and wrong conduct is a distinction of great interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

SESSION 7

Senior. A rule or set of rules adapted to guide belief may properly be called a code of belief, may it not?

Junior. I should say so.

Sen. And a rule or set of rules adapted to guide conduct might properly be called a code of morals or of conduct, perhaps?

Jun. Yes, if you like.

Sen. And a code of conduct which would enable us to distinguish what ought from what ought not to be done, and right from wrong, would be the very thing we are seeking, would it not?

Jun. That is what we are seeking.

Sen. Very well, suppose we use the clue of human "interest" in a search for such a code.

Jun. There can be no harm in trying.

Sen. I will propose a few codes of conduct, then, and ask you to be a judge of their "interest." Perhaps it may give us a clue to the nature of what we are trying to mean by that word.

Jun. If we are to use interest as a guide it is surely important to discover what it is.

Sen. Well, here is one code to start with: "Whenever an alternative of doing or not doing a given act presents itself, toss up a coin and if it falls

heads doing the act is right, if tails it is wrong." Here is a simple rule of conduct easy to apply. What do you think of it as a moral code?

Jun. It is absurd.

Sen. Why?

Jun. Because it makes right and wrong depend upon mere chance or accident.

Sen. It is generally agreed then that right and wrong do not depend upon mere chance or accident?

Jun. It is universally agreed that they do not.

Sen. We may conclude then that a code of conduct which uses chance or accident as a guide is not of interest to mankind.

Jun. We seem so far to be discovering only the obvious.

Sen. True, but to overlook the obvious is a habit in philosophy. Perhaps we may uncover the right code of morals by eliminating all the wrong ones.

Jun. A discouraging prospect.

Sen. We may discover otherwise. To eliminate all moral codes which depend upon chance for their authority is to subtract a good many from the world's stock.

Jun. Possibly. But just at this point I wish to make a retraction. On reconsideration I will not admit that you have proposed a criterion by which to judge of anything. You propose to reject all moral codes which arise from chance, do you not?

Sen. That was my suggestion. In fact, it was

yours as much as mine, and I supposed we should be able to agree on another requirement of rightness in any proposed guide to conduct, namely, that it shall not use chance or accident as a means of guidance.

Jun. I should agree to that if it were not for one difficulty.

Sen. And what is that?

Jun. There is no such thing as chance, and if chance doesn't even exist it surely cannot be a criterion of anything.

Sen. No such thing as chance?

Jun. Certainly not. Don't you know this is a universe of laws, that there is a cause for everything, and hence nothing can happen by chance?

Sen. Hold on a minute. I suspect we are in a verbal tangle here. What do you mean by chance?

Jun. Well, I have not thought much about what I mean by it, but I suppose an event which happens by chance is one that happens without a cause.

Sen. When you talk about a chance event you are talking about an un-caused event then?

Jun. Yes, something like that probably. At any rate, an event outside the realm of natural law.

Sen. Just as I suspected, the difficulty you raise is verbal. I do not mean by chance what you mean, and the illustration I used shows that I do not. If I toss a coin and it turns up heads, would you say that the event happened without a cause or that it was outside the realm of natural law?

Jun. Oh, no. Some cause or some combination of causes determined that it should fall as it did.

Sen. In your meaning of the word then the fall of a coin is not determined by chance?

Jun. No, because as I use the word nothing happens by chance.

Sen. But I wish to use the word differently, and can accomplish a useful purpose by so doing. By chance I mean that which happens as the result of random or haphazard causes, without design, plan, intent, or aim; in other words, through such a combination of unpredictable and uncontrollable causes as is illustrated in the ordinary toss of a coin.

Jun. Yes, but is that the proper meaning of the word?

Sen. It would be idle for us to discuss whether it is or not. It would only divert us from seeking a guide to conduct to seeking the verbal customs of men, and might, if we pursued the subject long enough, take us back into the mists of history and etymology. I am using the word chance for the purpose of focusing attention upon a certain mode of origin of moral codes—a mode illustrated by the coin-tossing process, and I do not for this purpose inquire what possible meaning of the word would be deemed proper by this authority or that. I *stipulate* that for my purposes it shall mean what I say it means, and ask you to accept it as a means to understanding. Perhaps I am giving it an “improper” meaning, but that is not important so long

as it is mutually understood. Philosophy may get somewhere by giving words improper meanings as readily as it gets nowhere by giving them proper ones, though the latter procedure is the usual one.

Jun. Well, I do not wish to obstruct understanding by raising a verbal issue, so I accept your meaning for the purpose suggested.

Sen. Good. Then we can proceed with the discussion of a real instead of a verbal question. But in passing, it will be worth while to point out a resemblance between your meaning and mine—for there is generally a resemblance between the various common meanings of a word. An un-caused event is one that cannot be predicted, is it not?

Jun. Yes, if there were such a thing it would have such a characteristic.

Sen. Well, can you predict how a coin fairly tossed will fall?

Jun. No—it is indeterminate because the causes which determine the event of how it will fall are so complex.

Sen. In other words, an event determined by causes sufficiently random, haphazard and accidental, such as those which determine the way a coin will fall, give to a caused event an attribute characteristic of an un-caused one—and this no doubt is why the same word “chance” is applied sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other.

Jun. That appears plausible.

Sen. Well, now let us get back on the main track

again. You see how easy it is for a verbal question like that of the "proper" meaning of chance to side-track discussion. I was in the midst of proposing a few moral codes so that we might judge of their "interest." Would you like to pronounce judgment on another one? I have in mind a good one, one that you will be in no perplexity about.

Jun. I hope it is better than the last one you proposed. Coin-tossing is no guide to conduct.

Sen. Well, what do you say to this one? "The efforts of all men should be directed to the maximum production of brickdust. In every alternative which arises in life that one which tends most to the production of brickdust, directly or indirectly, is right, and all alternatives to it are wrong." Would there be any general opinion about that code?

Jun. It is as absurd as the first one and would be unanimously rejected, of course. It does not even meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Sen. Why?

Jun. Because in the first place brickdust is a merely material thing and hence cannot be a final object or end of human action in itself, and in the second place it is quite useless. Bricks are more useful whole than pulverized.

Sen. Well, suppose I should say soap instead of brickdust? All acts which tend to produce soap in maximum quantity are right, and alternatives to such acts are wrong. Here is

another simple moral code quite easy to apply.

Jun. It is another absurdity. No one would agree to it.

Sen. Why?

Jun. Because soap again is mere inert matter and no end in itself, and there is no use in producing so much soap.

Sen. Well, can we say the soap code is any better than the brickdust code, or is it just as bad?

Jun. Not much difference between them, but perhaps it is just a little better, for after all, soap is of some use and brickdust is not.

Sen. That is encouraging. A little progress is better than none. Suppose I should say houses instead of soap? Why not direct man's efforts exclusively to the production of houses?

Jun. Still an absurdity.

Sen. Why?

Jun. For the same reasons given before.

Sen. But have we made the code any better by substituting houses for soap, or are we as far from our goal as ever?

Jun. Oh, it is somewhat better perhaps because houses are more generally necessary and useful than soap. But man cannot live by houses alone.

Sen. We are progressing then. Suppose I say food instead of houses?

Jun. Well, food is a more useful thing to produce than brickdust, or soap, or even than houses

perhaps, but no one would admit that man's efforts ought to be directed exclusively to producing food.

Sen. Suppose I propose money in place of food? Why not set all men to money-making?

Jun. Let me see. You seem to be getting somewhat warmer. I believe there would be some who would accept this money code. Come to think of it the school of economic thinkers called the "mercantilists" suggested money as the object of all men's efforts, but I guess that even they would not have agreed that it was a final object or end in itself. Yet money-making is certainly useful, and I think you are nearer our goal than when you started. Money is certainly more useful and of greater interest than brickdust.

Sen. How about wealth as an object instead of money?

Jun. You certainly are getting warmer. Adam Smith and the economic thinkers of the "commercialist" school—the dominant school of economists to-day—set maximum wealth, or maximum production of wealth, as the goal of man's conduct. This code I believe would be accepted by some and rejected by others. Wealth is a very useful and interesting thing to produce.

Sen. Yes, but it is a purely material thing. Soap is a form of wealth, and if it is to be rejected as an end of human conduct on the ground that it is merely material, why should we not reject wealth in general?

Jun. You are right. And I believe that even the commercialists, if you pressed them, would agree that wealth was not a final or ultimate object of human conduct.

Sen. Why not?

Jun. Because they must recognize, as all men do, that wealth is merely material and unconscious, and hence is of no really intrinsic interest. The object of conduct is to get real results.

Sen. Surely wealth is a real result.

Jun. Yes, but it is in the wrong place for an intrinsic end of conduct. It is a result outside of consciousness.

Sen. And the result that men are really seeking, ultimately seeking, is inside of consciousness, is it?

Jun. Yes, it is a result in consciousness, not merely in a re-arrangement of matter in the outside world.

Sen. You are implying that there is more than one kind of interest, and that consciousness has something to do with it. Would you say there was one kind of interest outside consciousness and another kind inside of it?

Jun. Yes, I should say so. Wealth is certainly of interest and yet it is outside of consciousness. It is a merely material thing—but it would not be of interest unless it could affect consciousness in some way and arouse in it certain states of intrinsic interest. If no conscious beings existed, wealth would have no interest at all.

Sen. Wealth then is of interest because it is capable of causing certain results or effects and only because it is?

Jun. Yes, it is a means to an end, or at least may be made so.

Sen. And yet it appears to be a sort of an end itself. Men certainly seem to spend much time in seeking to produce or accumulate it.

Jun. Yes, but it is only a proximate end, or one which is of interest because of what it is a means to.

Sen. A proximate end then is itself a means?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And are proximate ends always material things like wealth? Are they always outside consciousness?

Jun. No. Knowledge for instance is something within consciousness, but it is a means to ends, and hence a proximate end.

Sen. But you have distinguished between the interest of a mere means like wealth and some other kind of interest apparently confined to consciousness?

Jun. Yes, an interest actually felt is to be distinguished from the interest of mere dead external things like wealth. The pleasure of eating a good dinner, or the pain of a toothache, are things actually felt. They are interesting states of consciousness and hence of real intrinsic interest, independent of whether they are means or not.

Sen. And such states may be aimed at as ends?

Jun. They certainly may, and some of them often are.

Sen. And would you be inclined to say that an intrinsic end is one whose interest is confined to certain states of consciousness, such as pleasure?

Jun. Yes; to certain kinds of intrinsic interest, which are sought, not because of what they are a means to, but because of what they feel like.

Sen. We seem then to have distinguished two kinds of interest—proximate interest which attaches only to means, and hence may inhere in objects both outside and inside of consciousness, and intrinsic interest which attaches to certain peculiar states of consciousness and is confined to them.

Jun. Yes, that is a rough distinction between the two kinds of interest.

Sen. We seem to be groping a little nearer our goal. I realize this is a very long session because the word "chance" side-tracked us, but just one more point before we stop. I noticed that as we proceeded from the brickdust code of conduct to the wealth code you said we were getting warmer all the time. We seemed to be approaching the object of our search?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And you agreed that each code suggested was somewhat more useful than the preceding one?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. This would suggest that in the general

judgment the more useful a code the nearer it is to the right one.

Jun. Yes, that would be a view quite generally held. Other things being equal, the more useful a code of conduct the better.

Sen. And by usefulness I suppose you mean adaptability to a serviceable or desirable end?

Jun. That is about what I mean.

Sen. Then the series of codes proposed to-day, however absurd in themselves, have provided us with another clue. They indicate a convergence toward something called usefulness, to the meaning of which we have in this definition a first approximation.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 7

Def. A *code* means a rule or set of rules adapted to guide belief or conduct.

Def. *Chance* means that which happens as the result of random, accidental or haphazard causes, without design, plan, intent or aim, and is exemplified in Session 7.

A (third) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not use chance as a means of guidance.

Def. A *proximate end* means one which is of interest because of what it is a means to.

Def. An intrinsic end means one which is of interest because of what it feels like.

Def. Proximate interest means the interest of proximate ends.

Def. Intrinsic interest means an interest inherent in consciousness. (Provisional.)

A code of conduct which seeks only the attainment of proximate ends is not of great intrinsic interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

Def. Usefulness means adaptability to a serviceable or desirable end. (Provisional.)

SESSION 8

Senior. Before continuing our inquiry I should like to clear up a couple of matters which will facilitate it. The first is about general agreement in the use of some words. Would you agree that a right act is a better act than a wrong act, and a wrong act is a worse act than a right one?

Junior. I cannot say that I know at all clearly even my own meanings of the words better and worse or right and wrong, but I am sure there would be general agreement that the meanings, whatever they may be, justify the proposition you have made.

Sen. That is good, because I want to use the words better and worse a little more formally, and so wish to connect them up with right and wrong and thus with the object of our inquiry. The second matter is less of a verbal than of a material nature. We have agreed, have we not, that in seeking the difference between right and wrong we are seeking a guide to conduct?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And conduct consists of voluntary acts?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And an act is not voluntary if it is inevitable—if there is no alternative to it; that is, if there

are not one or more possible or potential acts which might have been chosen in place of it?

Jun. Such an act of course is not voluntary.

Sen. And would it not be generally agreed that a code which distinguishes between right and wrong conduct must, if it is to be of any practical use, provide men with a means of distinguishing between alternative acts or courses of action?

Jun. Yes. If it did not, it is hard to see how it could be a guide at all.

Sen. And would it distinguish between alternatives by marking off in some way the right ones from the wrong ones?

Jun. I do not see how else it would distinguish between them.

Sen. Good. With these two points agreed to we can proceed with our quest. I notice the masons have left a couple of bricks here on the porch which will be just the things we need to help us solve the problem of morals.

Jun. I should think they would be more useful in the foundation of a house than in that of a moral system.

Sen. They may be made useful in either. You will note one of the bricks is red and the other is more nearly white from the lime encrusted on it. Now let us suppose that we are confronted with two alternative acts or courses of conduct which we will call respectively Act A and Act B. Act A consists in placing the red brick on top of the white

one—thus—and Act B consists in placing the white one on top of the red one—thus. Which of these acts do you say is the better, and which the worse? Is A better than B, or B better than A?

Jun. There is no difference between them. Neither is better nor worse than the other.

Sen. Can we say that one of the acts is right and the other wrong?

Jun. No. I can see no such distinction between them.

Sen. Why not?

Jun. Because the bricks have no feelings, no consciousness themselves, and whether one or the other is on top makes no difference to anybody or indeed to any being that has any feelings. It is therefore a matter of indifference which alternative is chosen.

Sen. You are convinced, are you, that where there is no feeling, no consciousness, there is no distinction between better and worse, or right and wrong?

Jun. Certainly. A universe of bricks would know no such distinctions.

Sen. But you said a moment ago that you did not really know the meanings of the words better and worse, or right and wrong. Yet it seems you know something about them. Otherwise you would not be so confident that they had no application to the alternatives I have just proposed.

Jun. Yes—I know that much about them.

Sen. And do you think others would agree with you?

Jun. I am confident anyone would agree with me so far.

Sen. Very well, then, we will say we are agreed that in a world devoid of all conscious states there would be no distinction between right and wrong, and no such thing as a guide to, or code of, conduct.

Jun. Surely there would not. And it is because wealth and merely material objects in general are not conscious that they have no intrinsic interest as ends.

Sen. So far, so good. Let us now try to take another step in clearing our meanings. You will note that one of these bricks is materially larger than the other. Now please lay your hand upon the table here, palm upward.

Jun. All right.

Sen. I now lay the larger brick upon your palm. Are you conscious of anything as a result of my act?

Jun. I feel the weight of the brick.

Sen. Is it any discomfort or inconvenience to you?

Jun. None whatever.

Sen. I now remove the larger brick and lay the smaller one on your hand. Do you notice any effect?

Jun. I feel much the same effect as before, the weight of the brick, though I notice it is slightly less than before.

Sen. All right, we will close that experiment, and I now ask you whether, so far as you are concerned, my act in placing the large brick on your hand was better than my act in placing the small one there, or was it worse?

Jun. It was neither better nor worse.

Sen. But perhaps one of the acts was right and the other wrong?

Jun. Neither. There was no distinction of right and wrong between them.

Sen. But in both cases a conscious being was concerned. Feeling was involved. You received conscious results or effects, sensations of pressure from both acts, and you noted a difference in the sensations?

Jun. Yes, but it made no difference in my feelings.

Sen. Surely it did. You felt a slight pressure or weight in each instance, and the pressures were not the same.

Jun. Well, I mean no difference that counted. In both cases the effect was a matter of total indifference. I did not care one way or the other. Had I been entirely unconscious of the pressures it would have bothered me just as much and no more.

Sen. What is this feeling of indifference you speak of? From what you say it seems to be a kind of consciousness, which, in one respect at least, is the equivalent of unconsciousness.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Yet you felt something. You felt a pressure?

Jun. Yes, but what I felt was of no consequence, importance or interest to me.

Sen. Of no interest, you say. There is some connection between indifference and absence of interest then. That seems worth looking into. Under what circumstances is this feeling of indifference present in a living being?

Jun. Well, whenever he is asleep he is indifferent—provided he is not dreaming.

Sen. He is indifferent then because he is unconscious. At any other time?

Jun. Whenever a person, without being bored, feels no particular interest or concern in anything he is indifferent. It is a sort of neutral feeling.

Sen. Assuming a person to sit with folded hands for instance,—his state of mind, so far as “interest” is concerned, is not affected whether his right hand clasps his left, or his left hand his right?

Jun. No. It is indifferent to him.

Sen. And if his eyes are focused on one part of the wall rather than another?

Jun. That also would generally be indifferent if the wall were a blank one.

Sen. It would seem then that when an act or occurrence adds nothing to and subtracts nothing from the “interest” of a state of consciousness, it is a matter of indifference?

Jun. That is right.

Sen. I judge that the feeling of indifference like such elementary feelings as redness of color or shrillness of sound is hard or impossible to describe in words, but can be understood through verbal means only by referring to the feeling itself, or rather to the causes which normally produce, or the conditions normally associated with the feeling.

Jun. Yes, it is easier to illustrate than to define.

Sen. That is why I used the brick experiment. It illustrated the actual feelings and so dispensed with words. But I am going to assume that we have said and done enough for a common understanding of what we mean by "indifference" in consciousness.

Jun. Yes, it seems to me quite obvious that each knows what the other is referring to by the word.

Sen. That is the important thing; much more important than any question of what meaning is "proper;" and on that assumption I am going to ask you if it seems safe to say that in a world devoid of all but indifferent conscious states there would be no difference between right and wrong conduct?

Jun. It seems to me safe to say that much. A world of people or other beings capable only of indifference would hardly be acquainted with distinctions of better and worse, ought and ought not, right and wrong in conduct. I cannot see how it could make any difference to them what course of conduct was pursued by anybody or what choice was made between alternatives.

Sen. In respect to such distinctions then such a world would be equivalent to a world of bricks?

Jun. I cannot see how it would be any different.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 8

A right act is better than a wrong act.

A wrong act is worse than a right act.

Def. An *alternative* means one of two or more acts, between which choice may be made.

One alternative may be better or worse than another.

A code of conduct is a means of distinguishing between alternatives, and in the absence of alternatives has no application.

A code distinguishing right from wrong conduct must provide means of distinguishing right alternatives from wrong ones.

In a world devoid of consciousness there would be no difference between right and wrong conduct.

Def. *Indifference* means a neutral state of consciousness, exemplified in Session 8.

In a world devoid of all but indifferent states of consciousness there would be no difference between right and wrong conduct.

SESSION 9

Senior. Would you say that people usually spend their lives in a state of indifference?

Junior. No, I should say that a state of complete indifference was rare.

Sen. You would agree, perhaps, that people's feelings or conscious states are sometimes indifferent and sometimes are not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And when a person's state of mind or consciousness is not one of indifference, would it be proper and appropriate to call it one of non-indifference?

Jun. That would seem quite proper and appropriate.

Sen. And if a person were indifferent we should not say he was interested, should we?

Jun. No.

Sen. But if he was not indifferent we should be inclined to say he felt interest?

Jun. That would be usually admitted.

Sen. Perhaps then we may agree that interest or intrinsic interest is only another name for non-indifference?

Jun. I can see no harm in using the words interchangeably if anything is to be gained by it.

Sen. But we do not get far in clearing the meanings of our words, do we, by simply saying indifference is absence of interest and interest is non-indifference, although our use of the terms would probably conform to usage, and would get us as far as the dictionary often gets us.

Jun. No, by such a mutual substitution we do not get beyond the words.

Sen. So that we may use words quite properly and appropriately and yet not get beyond words?

Jun. Yes, that is true.

Sen. Whereas what we are trying to do is to get beyond words to meanings?

Jun. That is what we are trying to do.

Sen. We have already done this to some extent for the word "indifference," but perhaps we can see more clearly what we mean both by indifference and non-indifference by contrasting the actual feelings which these words represent. Will you kindly place your hand on the table again?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. I have here a small thumb-tack. You notice I place it on the palm of your hand point downward, and place one of the bricks on top of it. Do you feel anything?

Jun. I do.

Sen. Is it indifference that you feel?

Jun. No.

Sen. It is some kind of non-indifference then?

Jun. Yes, the tack is pricking my hand and it is painful.

Sen. You feel something or other which you call pain, readily distinguishable from indifference?

Jun. Very readily indeed.

Sen. Very well, we will remove the brick and the thumb-tack and resume our discussion. And to make matters easier, suppose hereafter we use our imagination instead of actual bricks and tacks in searching for kinds of non-indifference. It may serve as a convenient short cut to more vivid forms of experience and save us quite a little trouble. The thumb-tack, you say, caused you some sort of a feeling of non-indifference which you express by the word pain?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Perhaps there are other causes which can produce this kind of a feeling. How about a toothache? Is there any non-indifference associated with that?

Jun. A toothache is painful also.

Sen. Are you indifferent to the taste of castor-oil?

Jun. No, that is disagreeable.

Sen. Disagreeable. Here is a new word. Is this different from painful? Have we uncovered a new kind of non-indifference or only a new word? Is pain disagreeable?

Jun. Yes, it is.

Sen. The feeling of a toothache and the taste of

castor-oil have something in common then besides the fact that they are kinds of consciousness? They are both disagreeable kinds?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And disagreeableness is never indifference?

Jun. Never.

Sen. How about the odor of carrion?

Jun. That is disagreeable also.

Sen. And the sound of loud discords on the piano?

Jun. They are disagreeable also.

Sen. Then we may have disagreeableness in touch, taste, smell and hearing. Is there such a thing as a disagreeable sight?

Jun. Well, I suppose there is a disharmony of color just as there is of sound, but it is only mildly disagreeable.

Sen. Can you imagine what it feels like to see a child run over by a motor car?

Jun. Yes, it would be very painful—very horrible.

Sen. It would be a disagreeable, a painful sight, would it not?

Jun. Certainly it would, but its painfulness would be less in the sight itself than in the feelings or emotions of pity and horror excited by the sight.

Sen. Then disagreeableness or painfulness are mental as well as physical. They are not matters

of the senses merely, but are to be found in the emotions or internal feelings?

Jun. Yes, emotions such as fear, anger, jealousy, sorrow, are quite generally painful, and anything which excites those feelings is a cause of pain.

Sen. We may conclude then that there is at least one general class of non-indifferent conditions of consciousness, common to physical and mental states alike?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. In order to distinguish it from other conditions, let us for convenience agree to attach to it a convenient word. Are there any other words for this state besides pain and disagreeableness?

Jun. Yes, there are many, but perhaps the word unhappiness is the commonest and most comprehensive, though the milder forms of unhappiness generally go by such names as disagreeableness, unpleasantness or uneasiness, and the more intense by such words as anguish or agony.

Sen. Well, we cannot multiply names indefinitely, so we will use the word unhappiness to include all states of consciousness in which the peculiar kind of interest we have been illustrating is involved, irrespective of its degree or cause.

Jun. Very well. I will raise no verbal issue on that question.

Sen. That will expedite matters and allow us to render intelligible the statement that unhappiness is a kind of intrinsic interest.

Jun. But of course there are other kinds.

Sen. No doubt, but again let me insist that it is not sufficient for us to merely name them. We must distinguish their meanings in consciousness. Otherwise we shall be in danger of doing what is so commonly done—deal in words instead of in meanings. In order to suggest another kind of interest let me ask if you are fond of music?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. When you listen to it is your state of consciousness one of indifference?

Jun. No, it is an agreeable, pleasant, pleasurable—a happy state.

Sen. And is this the same kind of non-indifference as unhappiness?

Jun. No. It is a kind exactly the opposite.

Sen. And can you imagine any other conditions which will cause this particular kind of non-indifference?

Jun. Certainly. Eating a good dinner when hungry is agreeable. The odor of roses or apple blossoms is agreeable, and so is the view from a mountain-top.

Sen. And is it to be found in mental states also?

Jun. Yes. Love is quite generally an agreeable emotion, when not balked of expression. The excitement caused by the acquisition of money or knowledge, the self-satisfaction caused by praise, or the sense of having accomplished something worth while; curiosity such as that excited by a de-

tective story, or by a problem in science; these are all agreeable emotions.

Sen. There is something common then in these conditions of consciousness which marks them off as kinds of non-indifference to be clearly distinguished from unhappiness?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And by means of this common quality they are associated together in the mind?

Jun. Yes. There is nothing else to associate them, since in other respects they are very diverse.

Sen. Shall we agree to call this quality happiness?

Jun. Because of its peculiar relation to unhappiness that would seem to be the most appropriate name.

Sen. Having first distinguished the feeling, we have attached to it an appropriate name, and so we are now prepared to say that happiness is a kind of intrinsic interest, with real knowledge of what we mean when we say it.

Jun. Yes. Happiness is the second kind of intrinsic interest we have distinguished and defined.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 9

Def. Non-indifference means a state of consciousness distinguishable from indifference.

Def. Intrinsic interest means non-indifference.

Intrinsic interest is of more than one kind.

Def. Unhappiness means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9.

Def. Happiness means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9.

Def. Pleasure means happiness.

Def. Pain means unhappiness.

SESSION 10

Senior. I notice it is raining this morning. Do you feel indifferent about it?

Junior. No, I wish it would not rain. I want to play golf.

Sen. You are not indifferent about golf?

Jun. No, I like it, and want very much to play this morning.

Sen. And how about winning? Are you indifferent to that?

Jun. Every golf player desires to win of course.

Sen. I notice you are using the words wish, want, like and desire, apparently expressive of some kind of non-indifference. Do they imply any feeling of interest?

Jun. Yes, desire is distinguishable from indifference.

Sen. And is it the same as happiness or unhappiness?

Jun. Well, golf is agreeable and winning at golf is agreeable. Hence, whatever prevents such experiences prevents experiences of agreeableness.

Sen. And the rain prevents them?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And therefore causes in you a feeling of unhappiness?

Jun. Yes, if I dwell on it sufficiently.

Sen. When you express the wish to play a game of golf do you feel all the agreeableness of playing it?

Jun. No; at the moment of expressing the wish I may feel no pleasure at all.

Sen. No particularly agreeable feeling at the moment?

Jun. No.

Sen. And yet the wish is present in your mind?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And when you express a casual wish that the rain would stop, do you necessarily feel any pain because it does not?

Jun. I am not conscious of actual pain at the moment.

Sen. Nothing at any rate at all comparable with the deprivation it is causing you?

Jun. Not at all comparable.

Sen. Suppose I should remind you that the farmers round here need the rain for their crops and are delighted to have it?

Jun. Well, of course, for their sakes I wish it would continue.

Sen. Even though you know it can give you no personal pleasure either now or hereafter, and is actually spoiling your fun for the day?

Jun. Yes, I am willing to be inconvenienced if it will help the farmers any.

Sen. You actually want it to continue raining then?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. We seem here to have a new kind of non-indifference. It seems to be neither agreeableness nor disagreeableness; neither pleasure nor pain, happiness nor unhappiness. What then are these wishes, wants and desires you express?

Jun. You say they express neither pleasure nor pain? Surely they do. A desire for pleasure accompanied by the expectation that it will be fulfilled is pleasurable, whereas if we do not expect fulfilment it is likely to be painful. An opposite relation holds between desires and expectations when they refer to escape from pain.

Sen. This may be generally so, but by your own admission these associations do not always hold. You have said that in expressing the wish to play golf you felt no actual pleasure or pain, and in expressing the wish that it would stop raining you felt no actual pain.

Jun. Well, very little if any.

Sen. At any rate there was no comparison, so far as non-indifference was concerned, between the feeling expressed by the wish and the sum of the feelings wished for?

Jun. No.

Sen. And in wishing the rain to continue you actually wished for something that could give you no pleasure, and in fact was bound to deprive you of a great deal?

Jun. Yes, I think that is a fair statement.

Sen. I take it then that wishes, wants or desires, or whatever may be expressed by words of similar import, are not necessarily either pains or pleasures themselves, though they are usually, and perhaps always, associated with them in some way.

Jun. Now that I think of it I believe you are right. Wishing for a pleasure may be pleasurable or painful or neither, according to circumstances.

Sen. And the same is true of pain. Wanting to have your tooth out does not hurt you as much as having it out, nor does it relieve you as much if your tooth is aching.

Jun. That is so.

Sen. Are you even sure that the thing wanted is always pleasure or escape from pain? In wanting the rain to continue you actually wished for a deprivation of pleasure.

Jun. And sincerely wished it.

Sen. And yet when you have a wish, want or desire you have a feeling distinguishable from indifference?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. It would seem then that we have discovered a third kind of non-indifference and may conclude that desire is a kind of intrinsic interest.

Jun. Well, desire is certainly not a kind of indifference. So I suppose it must be a kind of non-indifference.

Sen. It seems reasonable to judge so. And now

if you will pardon me I will inquire a little further into your personal tastes.

Jun. As you please.

Sen. Well, do you like fruit?

Jun. Yes, as a rule.

Sen. Do you like it when it is decayed?

Jun. Not in the least.

Sen. You feel no desire to eat it in that condition?

Jun. On the contrary, I feel a great aversion to eating it.

Sen. And this feeling of aversion; is it merely the absence of desire?

Jun. It is something more than that; it is an active desire not to do something or have something done.

Sen. It is a kind of non-indifference then?

Jun. Yes, but it has a peculiar relation to desire. It is an urge away from something, as desire is usually an urge toward something. It is a sort of not-desire or dis-desire. It is a *dislike* instead of a like.

Sen. A rather vivid feeling of *not* desiring something?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Can you suggest some other things that you have an aversion to besides the eating of decayed fruit?

Jun. Well, I have an aversion to all disagreeable things.

Sen. To disagreeable thoughts and feelings

as well as disagreeable sights, sounds or smells?

Jun. Yes, I have an aversion to vain regrets as well as to the smell of garbage.

Sen. But to feel an aversion to vain regrets is not the same as feeling them, and an aversion to the smell of garbage is not the same feeling as smelling it?

Jun. No, it is the same as desire in this respect. Indeed, as I have already suggested, aversion is a sort of negative desire.

Sen. At any rate, are you satisfied that we have discussed the subject sufficiently to come to a mutual understanding of what we mean by aversion? That is all we are seeking for the present.

Jun. I suspect that we are both familiar with the feeling and are prepared to express it by the same word.

Sen. We may conclude then that we have unearthed another kind of non-indifference or intrinsic interest—aversion?

Jun. Yes, a fourth kind.

Sen. All right. Now how do you feel about the commandment—"Thou shalt not steal?" Is it a matter of indifference to you whether your friends or yourself observe it or not?

Jun. By no means—I approve of its observance.

Sen. And the ninth commandment—"Thou shalt not bear false witness." Are you indifferent about that?

Jun. Naturally I disapprove of lying. All men do.

Sen. And the other commandments?

Jun. I approve of all of them.

Sen. And when another disobeys any of them you have toward his conduct a feeling other than indifference?

Jun. Certainly. I feel disapprobation.

Sen. And when you disobey them yourself how do you feel?

Jun. I have the same kind of feeling of disapprobation for my own conduct, if it transgresses one of the commandments, that I have for that of another.

Sen. And for one who rigidly obeys the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule; you do not feel indifferently when thinking of his conduct?

Jun. For him and his conduct I feel nothing but approbation.

Sen. I observe that you are expressing some feelings which you say are not indifference, and yet you do not use the words pleasure, pain, desire, wish or aversion to express them. You use the words approve, approbation and disapprove and disapprobation. Do these words express kinds of non-indifference different from the kinds we have distinguished before?

Jun. I feel uncertain about this. When I disapprove an act I usually desire that it shall not be done; I may even have an active aversion

to it, and it is likely to give me pain if it is done.

Sen. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between the different kinds of non-indifference, then, but is it always so? For instance if you have an attack of indigestion you feel pain do you not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And you have a desire that it shall cease.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Do you have a feeling of disapproval also?

Jun. I think I should not use that word to express it except in a facetious or figurative sense.

Sen. Or of disapprobation?

Jun. No, my conscience is not affected by it one way or the other.

Sen. Suppose you see a ruffian abusing a child, do you feel indifferent about it?

Jun. Certainly not.

Sen. Does it give you a feeling of disapprobation or disapproval?

Jun. It certainly does. That would be a very mild term for my feelings.

Sen. And would you also have any desire or aversion in the premises?

Jun. Yes, I should feel an aversion amounting to abhorrence for the ruffian's conduct and a desire to kick him into the gutter.

Sen. So that in this case you would feel both disapprobation, desire and aversion, whereas in the case of the attack of indigestion you would feel desire but not disapprobation?

Jun. Yes, that is correct.

Sen. And in the case of the proposal to regale yourself with decayed fruit you would feel aversion but not disapprobation?

Jun. No, the aversion in that case would have no element of disapproval in it.

Sen. So that it is possible to distinguish disapprobation from desire and aversion since desire or aversion may be felt without disapprobation?

Jun. Yes, but I am not sure that disapprobation can be felt without desire or aversion.

Sen. We do not need to settle that question here. We are seeking the different kinds of non-indifference. Just how they may be associated is not the issue at present. And now to return to the case of the ruffian and the child: if you yielded to your desire to kick the man into the gutter, would you feel pleasure or pain?

Jun. Some of both. Pain from the pity I would feel for the child, and pleasure from kicking the man into the gutter.

Sen. Here seems to be a mixture of different kinds of non-indifference. We will discuss these mixtures later. But out of our discussion so far there seems to have emerged another kind of non-indifference—something you call disapprobation, which is neither pleasure, pain, desire nor aversion though it may be closely associated with them.

Jun. Yes, I should say it was different from any of them.

Sen. Disapprobation and disapproval express the same feeling, do they?

Jun. They do with me.

Sen. Very well then, let us say that disapprobation or disapproval is another kind of intrinsic interest.

Jun. That is a fifth kind.

Sen. Now how about approbation and approval. Are they the same without the "dis" as with it?

Jun. By no means. They express a directly contrary feeling, one that bears to disapprobation a relation analogous to that which desire bears to aversion.

Sen. And can you distinguish it from pleasure, pain, desire and aversion?

Jun. As easily as I can disapprobation.

Sen. Good, then we have uncovered another variety of non-indifference—approval or approbation—and appear entitled to say, at least provisionally, that approval or approbation is still another kind of intrinsic interest.

Jun. That makes a sixth kind.

Sen. So far then we have discovered six different kinds of feelings or conditions of consciousness which we can distinguish from indifference and from one another—unhappiness, happiness, desire, aversion, disapprobation and approbation. Do you think of any others?

Jun. Off-hand I do not; but I should like time to think the matter over, not only to decide whether

others occur to me, but to satisfy myself that the feelings we have enumerated are really distinct from one another. They are certainly often blended together in consciousness and we may be deceiving ourselves in attempting to separate them.

Sen. Very well. Let us both think matters over till to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 10

Def. Desire means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Aversion means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Approbation means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Disapprobation means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Approval means approbation.

Def. Disapproval means disapprobation.

SESSION 11

Senior. Yesterday we enumerated six kinds of non-indifference thus far distinguished. Do any others occur to you?

Junior. It seems to me that both in memory and expectation I sometimes experience distinct departures from indifference.

Sen. Memories and expectations of happiness seem tinged with happiness, and those of unhappiness with unhappiness, perhaps?

Jun. Yes, and sometimes the other way round—sometimes the contemplation of pain gives a sort of pleasure and of pleasure a sort of pain. Melancholy recollections, for example, sometimes appear to be a mixture of happiness and unhappiness.

Sen. Memories or expectations of indifferent experiences do not depart noticeably from indifference, do they?

Jun. Not noticeably.

Sen. But those of non-indifferent experiences are likely to be tinged with non-indifference?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. It is not the memories or expectations as such, then, that are kinds of non-indifference. It depends upon what they are memories or expectations of?

Jun. It seems so.

Sen. Do you find either memory or expectation tinged with any kind of non-indifference distinguishable from the six kinds we have discussed?

Jun. I cannot say that I do.

Sen. In the whole range of your consciousness can you discover any others?

Jun. I cannot say for certain, but thus far in thinking the matter over I have thought of none—at least not clearly.

Sen. Let us briefly survey the field of consciousness and see if we can discover any others. And what do you say of the bodily senses: touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell? What kinds of non-indifference can you detect in them?

Jun. Pleasure and pain surely.

Sen. How about desire or aversion?

Jun. I feel some uncertainty—a pain in the finger is clearly located in the finger, but whether the desire for food is in my mouth or my mind appears to me doubtful. Aversion to certain kinds of animals also seems to be physical as well as mental, but it is hard to be sure about it.

Sen. It is not important anyway, so let us leave it in doubt. Are approbation or disapprobation bodily or mental?

Jun. Clearly mental. They are not matters of touch, sight, hearing, taste or smell.

Sen. The senses experience pleasure and pain

then and perhaps desire and aversion. Any other kind of non-indifference?

Jun. None that I think of.

Sen. Suppose we survey the internal or mental conditions of consciousness. What do you say of the emotions?

Jun. I should say that happiness, unhappiness, desire and aversion were easily to be found in them.

Sen. Love, sympathy and hope for instance usually involve happiness and desire mixed together, and sometimes unhappiness also?

Jun. Yes, love for one who suffers may merge into sorrow, and sympathy into a painful pity.

Sen. And how about hate, fear, regret and despair?

Jun. Unhappiness prevails in these emotions, and aversion is an element of the first two. Pleasure would seem to be absent from such emotions, and yet I suppose in the gratification of hate there might sometimes be a sort of hellish happiness.

Sen. That may be true, but emotions are such mixed things that sometimes it is hard to identify or distinguish them. Hope and despair for instance are sometimes so blended or alternate so rapidly that they can hardly be separated.

Jun. Yes, there is little simplicity in emotions.

Sen. Self-gratulation and remorse are a couple of emotions in which happiness or unhappiness are easily recognized, and also approbation or disapprobation.

Jun. In self-gratulation, self-approval and happiness are predominant, while in remorse self-disapproval and unhappiness.

Sen. We have not time to go through the whole list of emotions, but it is safe to say that it is not much of an emotion in which there is neither happiness nor unhappiness.

Jun. I can think of none in which both are absent but of some in which both are present.

Sen. And the other four kinds of non-indifference we have discovered are also sometimes present?

Jun. Yes, it would seem so.

Sen. The question is whether any kinds other than these are to be found in the emotions?

Jun. I seem unable to clearly distinguish any.

Sen. Let us turn now to the more humdrum side of mental life—to the life of routine, where conduct is largely a matter of habit, or decisions are required in the regular course of occupation. Let us consider the feelings of the housekeeper cleaning her house, the clerk figuring his accounts, the farmer plowing his field, the cook preparing her dinner, the lawyer composing his brief, the judge reflecting on his decision, the laborer wielding his pick, or the postman going his rounds. This sort of thing constitutes the bulk of life for most people. It is not very emotional. It is not intensely interesting—yet it is by no means entirely indifferent. What kinds of non-indifference characterize consciousness in life of this kind?

Jun. About the same as characterize the emotional life, only milder. Happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation. Only, I notice that the weaker a feeling of non-indifference becomes, the harder it is to distinguish from indifference.

Sen. That is to say, non-indifference merges into indifference as light merges into darkness or sound into silence.

Jun. And I also notice that the stronger the feelings of desire or aversion or of approbation or disapprobation, the more emotional they become, the more they tend to merge into happiness, unhappiness or both.

Sen. In their highest intensity all feelings of non-indifference become pleasurable or painful then?

Jun. Yes, they seem swallowed up in one or the other feeling. Indeed, I am not entirely satisfied that, in the absence of all traces of happiness and unhappiness, the other four kinds of non-indifference would exist.

Sen. You mean you think it possible that all feelings distinguishable from indifference—all states of intrinsic interest—might be found to reduce to happiness and unhappiness?

Jun. I have such a suspicion.

Sen. It would vastly simplify our task if we could make such an assumption, but it would not be safe to make it. To do so might lead us to overlook matters of great importance.

Jun. But is not the issue worth discussing at this point?

Sen. No; it would side-track us. And before we are through you will see that our decision concerning the right guide to conduct would not be affected no matter what conclusion we might come to about it.

Jun. Very well. I agree with you that it is best to avoid doubtful assumptions; but you must admit that distinction between the various kinds of intrinsic interest is sometimes involved in much uncertainty.

Sen. There are three reasons why the different feelings of non-indifference are rather hard to separate from one another—they are generally blended together in consciousness; when weak they merge into indifference, and when strong into happiness or unhappiness.

Jun. Whatever the reason, it is certain people seldom try to separate them, or even suppose that they can be separated.

Sen. But the question for discussion to-day is whether they ever merge into anything else, or whether any other kinds of non-indifferent conditions of consciousness are to be discovered. We have briefly surveyed the field of bodily feelings, and of mental feelings, emotional and unemotional. Can you detect any other kinds among them?

Jun. I seem unable to do so.

Sen. Consider carefully now. Imagine your

consciousness completely devoid of happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation. Can you imagine anything left in it but indifference?

Jun. You mean devoid of even the slightest trace of these feelings?

Sen. Yes, of the slightest trace even.

Jun. I must admit I can think of nothing of interest which would remain; but we may nevertheless be overlooking some kinds of non-indifference.

Sen. That perhaps must be admitted. We have not time for exhaustive search; but this much at least may be said, that if there are other kinds they must be of rather feeble intensity and of little value as tests of the interest of mankind, since they seem not easily distinguishable in consciousness or plainly reflected in language.

Jun. I still feel doubt, but am inclined to agree that the six kinds of interest we have distinguished complete the list.

Sen. All right, we will take this step subject to some doubt, but future discussion I think will show it to be valid. At any rate we may agree upon it until shown to the contrary.

Jun. Yes, I will agree to it until shown to the contrary.

Sen. Well, in our eighth talk we decided that in a world devoid of all but indifferent conscious states there would be no distinction between right and wrong conduct.

Jun. Yes. I remember that.

Sen. And if we completely abstract from consciousness the six non-indifferent states just enumerated, nothing will be left but indifferent states.

Jun. It seems so.

Sen. From which we may conclude that in a world devoid of happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation there would be no distinction between right and wrong conduct.

Jun. If these are the only kinds of intrinsic interest, the proposition certainly follows.

Sen. This narrows the quest a little more, and leads to another matter that promises to narrow it still further. We agreed in our sixth session that the difference between right and wrong is something not only of interest but of great interest to everybody. Now great implies small and intermediate degrees, so it seems safe to say that intrinsic interest is something that varies in degree.

Jun. Yes, there would be general agreement to that statement. Happiness and unhappiness are certainly of various degrees, and high and low degrees of desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are certainly spoken of and felt.

Sen. And should we not say that a degree of non-indifference was great or small according as it departed much or little from indifference? For example a strong desire is further removed from indifference than one which is weak?

Jun. Degree of departure from indifference is certainly one way of gauging degree of desire.

Sen. And similarly with approbation, pain and the other kinds of interest?

Jun. Yes; they all vary in degree. Indeed, it would seem that in degree of departure from, or contrast with, indifference is to be found the *meaning* of degree of intrinsic interest.

Sen. And we may say further that in the degree of its departure from, or contrast with, indifference we have an approximate measure of the degree of any particular kind of intrinsic interest. That is, this degree is something which can be roughly designated or expressed?

Jun. Yes, the more strongly we feel desire, aversion, happiness, unhappiness, approbation or disapprobation the more distinctly they stand out and differ from indifference, and the degree of this distinction would seem to be a measure of their degree. The fact that we speak of happiness, desire, approbation and the rest as great, very great, slight, very slight, moderate, etc., implies a rough kind of measurement, and we have only to look into our own consciousness to observe a great range of degrees of intrinsic interest, a much more finely graded range than words are able accurately to express.

Sen. And to measure intrinsic interest and to measure its degree, means the same thing, I take it?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. My ideas of these matters coincide with

yours, and I suspect we are not unique among mankind.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 11

Happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are the only kinds of intrinsic interest.

In a world devoid of happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation, there would be no distinction between right and wrong conduct.

Def. Degree of intrinsic interest means degree of departure, from or contrast with, indifference. (Provisional.)

All six kinds of intrinsic interest vary in degree.

Def. Measurement of intrinsic interest means designation, or expression of its degree.

SESSION 12

Senior. The time seems ripe to institute a serious inquiry. It is this: What question are we trying to answer anyhow?

Junior. I should think the time to institute that inquiry was at the very start of our discussion. What have we been doing in our sessions together? Have we been engaged in trying to answer a question which has not been asked?

Sen. Well, if it has been asked you ought to know it. Tell me what it is if you can.

Jun. Why, we asked it way back in our first session. We are trying to answer the moral question—the fundamental question of morals—the question of what is right and wrong, good and evil in conduct. I supposed there was no misunderstanding about that.

Sen. I guess there is no misunderstanding about it; but can't you state the question more definitely? Just what is it we are trying to find out?

Jun. We are trying to find out what men ought to do as they go through life. We are trying to make it possible for a man to know the right course of conduct from the wrong one in every contingency that may arise. The question might be put in this way, "What ought a man to do, not in this or that

contingency only, but in any or all contingencies?" Or in this way perhaps, "What is the difference between right and wrong conduct?"

Sen. Yes, but you admit we don't know what we mean by "ought" or "right" or "wrong," don't you?

Jun. I supposed we were trying to find out.

Sen. I presume we are, but until we do find out, questions which include these words are not very intelligible are they? If the meanings of the words are unknown the meanings of the questions are also unknown.

Jun. Well we have found that we know something about the meanings of the words, because we have discovered some things that we certainly do *not* mean by them. And I suppose we know as much about what we mean by the questions as what we mean by the words.

Sen. Just about. But do we know enough for our purpose?

Jun. We surely have been groping and fumbling about trying to find out.

Sen. True, and if we have made progress we can discover it by our ability to ask more clearly the question we are trying to answer. You will find if you read philosophy that the favorite pursuit of philosophers is to try to answer questions which have not been asked, and solve problems which have not been stated.

Jun. If that is so it is no wonder that philosophy is so often regarded as only another name for fu-

tility. And it seems you and I have been doing the same thing.

Sen. More or less; but there is a difference between philosophers in this respect. If they don't know the question has not been asked the case is hopeless. They revolve in a circle of words and get nowhere; but if they do know, the case is more hopeful, for they are then in a position to devote their efforts to finding out.

Jun. And have we found out?

Sen. I propose to show we have made progress. In our first session we asked the question very obscurely. To-day I want to ask it again, but with part of the obscurity cleared away. We have agreed, have we not, that the question of right and wrong, whatever it may be, is of interest to mankind?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And of great interest also?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Can you mention a question of greater interest?

Jun. Off-hand I should say I could not.

Sen. Reflect a moment and see if you cannot think of a question concerning conduct of greater interest to mankind than that of right and wrong—of what men ought and ought not to do?

Jun. I should say that all our teachers of morals, preachers and good and wise men generally, insist that there is no question of such great interest—nothing so important as this. They are emphatic

in asserting that it is more important for men to do right than anything else, and of course to do it they must know how to do it.

Sen. And the thing that tells them how to do it is some guide to conduct, some moral code or other?

Jun. Yes, to know how to do right and to know what rule, or code, or guide to follow in order to do it amount to the same thing.

Sen. And a right guide or code is one which, in some sense or other, is of a greater degree of interest to mankind than any other?

Jun. Yes, I should say there would be rather general agreement to that.

Sen. And I assume great interest and great degree of interest mean the same thing. To measure interest means to measure its degree.

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. Then we are agreed that another—a fourth—requirement of rightness in a moral code is that it shall be of maximum interest to mankind?

Jun. Yes, in some sense of the word interest, but there might be disagreement about the sense to be adopted.

Sen. But it would have to be some kind of intrinsic interest, would it not?

Jun. Yes, it could not be an interest confined to dead or unconscious things. Indeed such things have no interest in anything. Nothing is important to them.

Sen. Very well then. I am going to propose,

provisionally, the following definitions as sufficiently in accord with usage and the gropings of men to serve our present purpose:

A *right* act (or course of conduct) is one of maximum interest to mankind. A *wrong* act is one that is not right. In other words, it is an act of less than maximum interest to mankind. Assuming these meanings we can state the question we are trying to answer in some such form as this: "What acts (or courses of conduct) are of maximum interest to mankind?" "How shall we distinguish an act or course of action which is of maximum interest to mankind from one which is not?"

Jun. That, to be sure is a question which, in one sense at least, would be of greater interest to mankind than any other, but how would you measure the interest of acts—how would you tell a great from a small interest?

Sen. By results of course. An act is selected because it is adapted to produce results, is it not? It is a means to an end, and a right act is a means to a right end. If it is not adapted to produce results what is the object of selecting it? You would not brush your teeth if doing so did not result in cleaning them. You would not eat if eating gave no result in satisfaction or nourishment. You would not study if there was not promise of a result in the form of increased understanding, would you?

Jun. No. I suppose as a rule acts are selected because they will effect results, more or less cer-

tainly foreseen, but I believe some moralists claim exceptions to this rule.

Sen. What object, independent of results, are acts selected for?

Jun. To satisfy our conscience or our feelings of duty perhaps. Duty should be done independent of results. Have you not heard that men should do right even if the sky falls?

Sen. Well, that is one way of producing results. Would an act not adapted to satisfy our sense of duty satisfy it?

Jun. No, I suppose that must be admitted.

Sen. So even here results are what we are after. We are enjoined to select acts adapted to produce the satisfaction of our sense of duty, and that is as much a result as any other effect of a cause. But leaving aside for the present the degree of interest of duty and conscience, we may restate our question more clearly in this way:

“What course of action or conduct will attain a result of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind?”

Jun. In other words, you are not only after results, but intrinsically interesting results. You are after results in consciousness. And do you propose to measure the interest of acts by the interest of the results which they produce?

Sen. That is what I propose—by the sum total of the intrinsically interesting results they are presumably adapted to produce. That is what I mean by the intrinsic interest of mankind.

Jun. And the intrinsic interest of mankind is the combined interests of the individuals who compose mankind I suppose?

Sen. Certainly, and yesterday we showed that intrinsic interest is something which can be measured, so that great interests can be distinguished from small ones.

Jun. But that would leave the question still indefinite. Would you mean maximum desire, maximum aversion, maximum happiness, maximum unhappiness, maximum approbation or maximum disapprobation? And just what would you mean by mankind, and how would you combine the interest of one man with that of another?

Sen. The question of course is still indefinite, but it is more definite, more in focus, than when we started, and we shall soon sharpen the focus a good deal more. Anyway it is less indefinite than to talk vaguely about the moral question, or the question of good and evil, or right and wrong.

Jun. But perhaps moralists will say that this is not the question they are trying to answer at all, since, if they have not stated the question clearly they have not committed themselves.

Sen. Very likely they may, but if they do we can reply by pointing out that if it is not, then they are seeking the answer to a question of less interest than we are, since no interest can be greater than a maximum.

Jun. You mean that if they once admit the

“moral question” to be the supremely important question to mankind, they have got to come to this question or to one of these questions—since there are several combined in this one—or else contradict themselves?

Sen. It would seem so. At any rate we have included under this question all the questions of greatest interest to mankind, and if the “moral question” is something different, then so much the worse for the moral question. Whatever else may be said of it, it is certainly of subordinate interest to mankind.

Jun. Yes, but we are still uncertain of what question we are trying to ask. Sharpened as it is, the question as you put it is at least six questions, and capable of at least six answers, if not more.

Sen. To be sure, but a little patience will clear things up. Only let us stick to our rule of one issue at a time.

Jun. Part of the question seems to be definite enough—the first part. What is meant by a course of conduct attaining a result, is merely a familiar example of a cause producing an effect. We are simply asking how acts can be made the causes of effects, the means to ends.

Sen. Yes. But even here the question is not definite, since it may be asked, “Whose acts?”

Jun. Well, of course, I supposed it to be understood that we mean anybody’s and everybody’s acts. We are seeking a rule adapted to guide everybody that can use a guide.

Sen. Very well, we can agree to that; the things to be guided are everybody's acts, but the end to be attained, how about that? The main indefiniteness of the question is in the definition of the result or end to be effected—the maximum intrinsic interest of mankind. To render this definite we must be able to say with considerable precision: (1) what we mean by "intrinsic interest"; (2) what we mean by "maximum intrinsic interest"; and (3) what we mean by "mankind."

Jun. We have already made some progress in the first quest. We have rendered the meaning of "intrinsic interest" more definite than it was.

Sen. True, we have made a start, but clearing up the meaning of "maximum intrinsic interest" is rather a long job. So I propose to postpone it, and close our session to-day with an easier one—that of fixing the meaning of "mankind."

Jun. You propose to fix the meaning of one word or phrase at a time?

Sen. Yes, and as long as we do this the order of procedure is unimportant. So I am going to ask you, to begin with, whether "mankind" includes only the living?

Jun. It certainly does not include the dead, since they have no interest affectable by conduct, right or otherwise, but I should say it included more than the living, since present or future conduct may affect the unborn.

Sen. Would you say it included all whose in-

terests could be affected by conduct, whether living or to live?

Jun. I would be disposed to say yes to that question, at least provisionally, since it must be generally agreed that by doing right we serve the interest of everyone concerned better than by doing wrong.

Sen. Such a meaning would certainly give our inquiry the widest possible scope. It would make it of interest to more people than if we omitted certain classes. Besides if we were to ignore the interests of some and not ignore that of others, we would seem to be introducing arbitrary, that is, chance, distinctions into it, and we have agreed that we cannot meet the requirements of rightness in a moral code if chance is to be a determining factor. I therefore propose and stipulate that we mean by "mankind" all persons, living or to live whose interests presumably are affectable.

Jun. Affectable by what?

Sen. Affectable by conduct, of course; affectable by courses of conduct available at the time of selecting them. In other words, in choosing between given alternatives all interests should be considered which can be affected by our choice. No man's interest should be ignored because he is of a certain color or race or age, or because he is not born yet, or because he is foolish or bad, or because his nose or his ears have a peculiar shape. Intrinsic interest is something in consciousness. Its degree is not affected by the stature or color or character of the

person in whose sensorium it happens to be generated, nor in the year of our Lord in which the event occurs.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 12

The question: "What course of conduct will attain an end or result of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind?" is the question concerning conduct whose answer is of greatest intrinsic interest to mankind.

In this question:

Def. Conduct means everybody's conduct.

Def. Mankind means all persons living or to live whose intrinsic interests are affectable by alternatives at the time that choice is made between them.

Def. A right act means one of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

Def. A wrong act means any alternative of a right act. (Provisional.)

A (fourth) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall be of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind.

SESSION 13

Junior. I figure we have spent nearly two hours all told since we started our sessions, and we have not discovered the difference between right and wrong yet. Are we not rather slow?

Senior. When you were studying arithmetic, did you master the subject of fractions in an hour?

Jun. No.

Sen. And it took some application and thinking?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And how about factoring and percentage and compound proportion? You had to spend more than an hour in time and thought on those subjects, perhaps?

Jun. No doubt of it.

Sen. And you have admitted, I believe, that the subject of right and wrong is of greater importance, greater interest, than any other?

Jun. That has been admitted.

Sen. Well, if you can spare many hours to learn arithmetic, can you not spare more than two to inform yourself concerning a question of greater interest than any other?

Jun. But arithmetic is a practical subject. This right and wrong business is rather impractical and academic it seems to me.

Sen. It seems to you important but impractical?

Jun. Yes. After all it is not going to help me make money.

Sen. Neither is golf.

Jun. Ah, but golf gives me something better than money. It gives me fun. And in the end money is of no use unless we can get some fun out of it.

Sen. Do you regard fun as the most important thing in the world—more important even than money? If so, we may have a clue to the solution of our problem right here.

Jun. No, I suppose it must be admitted that to do right is more important than to have fun, though I hate to think the two things are incompatible.

Sen. Perhaps they are not. One advantage of finding out the nature of rightness is that it may resolve our doubts about this as about other matters. For example, you expressed doubt of the practical importance of a clear understanding of the nature of right conduct?

Jun. Yes, as compared with an understanding of fractions or percentage it seems to me rather impractical.

Sen. But to discover the nature of right conduct is to discover the end to which the world—mankind—is blindly seeking to adapt its means, and this would seem to be a practical quest, since if successful it would help the world to adapt its means

to its end—which it cannot do if it does not know what its end is.

Jun. That sounds very ambitious, not to say presumptuous; but in any event I doubt if any practical result would follow from clearing up this question. The world is not affected by such things. It goes its way uninfluenced by the reflections and advice of philosophers.

Sen. Well, you have opened up a big question. I will not attempt to dispute you, though I might. If you will think over the great names of antiquity you may recall those of certain sages and moralists who have influenced the world considerably. But I forbear to mention them, since I do not wish to suggest comparison between them and a couple of golf players. We have already side-tracked our discussion for more than two minutes, so I suggest we return to the main track. What had we decided at the close of yesterday's session?

Jun. We had agreed upon a fourth requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct, namely, that it shall be of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind.

Sen. That is to say, a right guide to conduct must point out a result attainable by human conduct of greater intrinsic interest to mankind than any other thus attainable?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And we have distinguished six kinds of intrinsic interest.

Jun. Yes. And if there are six kinds of in-

trinsic interest there must be six kinds of maximum intrinsic interest, and it is some sort of maximum intrinsic interest that we are seeking.

Sen. Well, if we are searching for something that has a maximum we are certainly searching for something that has degree; and it looks as if our next step would be to learn if we can in what units to measure it.

Jun. Yes. That would seem to be the next step.

Sen. And do we know exactly what we mean by "degree" as applied to intrinsic interest?

Jun. We agreed day before yesterday that it meant degree of departure from, or contrast with, indifference.

Sen. And is not such departure or contrast proportional to intensity?

Jun. Yes, I should say so.

Sen. And do you know what you mean by intensity of interest—intensity of desire or pleasure for instance?

Jun. I certainly know what I mean.

Sen. And can you tell anybody else?

Jun. I can if they are constituted as I am, but I believe I should have to exemplify the meaning, since the feeling to be expressed is unique—it is not a compound of other kinds of feelings.

Sen. Perhaps we might say that intensity of pain was the thing that a person would notice disagreeably increasing as a thumbscrew is progressively tightened, and that intensity of desire for water is

the characteristic of desire which increases as thirst increases.

Jun. Yes, these are examples of continuously varying intensities, but degrees of intensity can be compared without taking notice of progressive increase or decrease thereof. For instance the pleasure derived from music is more intense when we are in the mood for it than when we are not, and at certain moments during the selection than at others, and the aversion to a strong odor of garbage is more intense than that to a slight discordance of color.

Sen. And all kinds of intrinsic interest when present in consciousness are present in one or another degree of intensity are they?

Jun. Yes. At any given moment they are present in *some* given intensity.

Sen. Intensity then is measured by departure from or contrast with indifference at any given instant? It is a kind of degree in which the time during which it is felt does not enter as a factor?

Jun. No, time does not enter in gauging intensity of interest. It may increase or decrease in time or it may remain constant.

Sen. And are you satisfied that degree of intrinsic interest means intensity of intrinsic interest, and can mean nothing else?

Jun. I feel doubt about it. Intensity is certainly one meaning of degree, but I am not sure it is the only possible meaning.

Sen. Then I suggest that here is another mean-

ing that needs sharpening, and I am going to begin the sharpening process by asking you if indifference varies in degree. What would you mean by maximum indifference for instance?

Jun. I should mean the most intense indifference possible.

Sen. Does indifference vary in intensity then?

Jun. Perhaps I should say the most complete indifference possible.

Sen. And how would incomplete indifference differ from complete? Would it be distinguishable from it?

Jun. Why of course it would. Otherwise it would not be called incomplete.

Sen. But have we not agreed to call a state of consciousness distinguishable from indifference, a state of non-indifference?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And non-indifference is the same thing as intrinsic interest, is it not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that "incomplete indifference" is simply a confusing name for intrinsic interest?

Jun. Yes. I see what you mean.

Sen. And indifference and "complete indifference" mean the same thing. In other words, indifference does not vary in intensity?

Jun. I guess that is right. Indeed I should say it did not vary in degree at all.

Sen. Well, could you distinguish between being

indifferent for one minute and being indifferent for two minutes?

Jun. Yes, but degrees of duration of indifference are not degrees of intrinsic interest, because indifference is without intrinsic interest. To assert otherwise would be to assert that indifference is non-indifference.

Sen. For a feeling to have a degree of interest at all therefore it must have some intensity, however slight. Though we may not claim that degree of intensity is the only kind of degree of non-indifference it must be an essential element of all other kinds, since, in its absence, there can be nothing present in the mind but indifference.

Jun. It would certainly seem obvious that we cannot feel pain without feeling some intensity of pain, or desire, without feeling some intensity of desire, and similarly with the other kinds of non-indifference which have been distinguished. Intensity therefore must be an element of degree of intrinsic interest.

Sen. We have agreed that indifference can vary in duration but not in intensity, but how about non-indifference?

Jun. Non-indifference can vary in both. It is plain that happiness or aversion or approbation or any other kind of non-indifference can occupy the mind for longer or shorter periods of time.

Sen. Well, suppose we are suffering from a toothache whose intensity does not vary; is it a

matter of indifference to us whether it persists for a short or a long time?

Jun. No; it is by no means a matter of indifference.

Sen. Would you say the degree of the longer toothache was different from the shorter one?

Jun. I should certainly say a long toothache was more of a toothache than a short one.

Sen. Would it include more non-indifference?

Jun. I should say it would. An hour of pain or any other kind of non-indifference is surely more than a minute.

Sen. Well, if it includes more non-indifference it includes more intrinsic interest since they are the same thing.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But it does not include more intensity, since by our hypothesis, the intensity remains constant. Hence it must include more of something else.

Jun. It includes more duration, of course.

Sen. But we have already seen that duration alone cannot measure degree of intrinsic interest. If it could, indifference could vary in degree.

Jun. But when combined with intensity, duration becomes of interest it seems to me.

Sen. A long duration of intrinsic interest departs more from indifference than a short one?

Jun. In one way it does, though not in the same way that a great intensity departs more than a slight one.

Sen. It would appear then that knowledge both of the intensity and the duration of a given experience of intrinsic interest might come in handy as a means of ascertaining whether the experience was of "great" interest or "small"?

Jun. Yes, it would have a bearing on such a decision—intensity would in any event—and duration in some cases. Certainly both the intensity and the duration of a toothache have a bearing on its degree of interest.

Sen. And we know what we mean when we say one degree of duration is two, ten, or any other number of times, another degree, do we not?

Jun. Yes. Two minutes of duration is twice that of one, and ten hours five times that of two hours.

Sen. And do we know what we mean when intensities are involved? Can we speak of a toothache the pain of which is two or ten times as intense as that of another?

Jun. Such expressions are frequently used, and we know what we mean by them in a vague or rough way. They are rough numerical expressions intended to express comparison with the intensity of indifference which is zero.

Sen. Our measurement of intensity of interest is rough, then, much as our measurement of duration is rough when we gauge it by our feelings instead of by a clock?

Jun. Yes, I should say all psychical measure-

ments were rough as compared with many physical ones.

Sen. And would the intensities of other kinds of intrinsic interest, desire, aversion, and the rest, be measurable in the same rough and approximate way as those of pain?

Jun. I should say they would, yes.

Sen. Well, if rough measurements are the best we can get, we shall have to use them till we can get better, and as both intensity and duration appear to be important in gauging degrees of interest I am going to stipulate another definition. I am going to propose to measure amount or quantity of intrinsic interest by multiplying intensity by duration, so that the amount of a given feeling of interest will be proportional both to intensity *and* duration.

Jun. But I am not satisfied that that is what is properly meant by amount of intrinsic interest.

Sen. Are you satisfied of just what *is* properly meant?

Jun. No.

Sen. Well, I propose to stipulate this meaning since it is a useful one and does not conflict with any alternative meaning you are prepared to propose. I think I can see a way of clearing up our subject by its use, and so ask you to accept it and not raise a verbal issue by questioning whether it is "proper" or not.

Jun. If you can make good use of it, go ahead.

I will not deprive you of the chance by raising any verbal dispute about it. And when the intensity of a given experience of interest continually varies, as it usually does, I presume you would mean by its intensity its average intensity during the experience?

Sen. Yes. By the intensity of interest during a given interval or period of time I mean the average intensity during the period.

Jun. I think things are clear so far. And this makes indifference, as the neutral point of intrinsic interest, fall into its proper place. Its amount is zero as well as its intensity, since to multiply any degree of duration, no matter how great, by zero is to get a product of zero.

Sen. Yes, that is correct.

Jun. So far then we have stipulated two meanings of, and two methods of measuring, "degree" of intrinsic interest—(1) intensity and (2) intensity multiplied by duration, which we have agreed to call amount or quantity.

Sen. Yes. And to-morrow we will try and find out if there are any other meanings of, or methods of measuring, degree of interest which it will be useful to stipulate.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 13

Def. *Intensity of intrinsic interest* means a characteristic of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 13.

Def. Amount of intrinsic interest means the product of (average) intensity and duration.

Def. Quantity of intrinsic interest means amount.

Intrinsic interest can be measured by intensity or amount. (Provisional.)

Measurements of intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest are rough or approximate.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by duration alone.

SESSION 14

Senior. Yesterday we fixed upon two possible ways of measuring degrees of intrinsic interest—intensity, and amount. Do you think of any other ways in which the different kinds of intrinsic interest vary which might be used as a means of measurement?

Junior. Well, they all vary in frequency.

Sen. And would frequency help to measure degree, independent of intensity and duration? Frequency may be increased by interrupting a feeling. By merely interrupting a toothache ten or a hundred times without altering it in other respects you would not make it ten or a hundred times better or worse, would you? The frequency of a given feeling during a given time merely means the number of times it occurs in that interval, and this is dependent upon the number of times it is interrupted. You would not regard frequency of interruption as a useful means of measuring a feeling would you?

Jun. You assume, of course, that no pain of anticipation would be experienced during the interruptions?

Sen. Naturally I assume that. Otherwise the amount as well as the frequency would be changed.

Jun. I merely mentioned frequency as one of

several ways in which a feeling of interest might vary. I cannot see that it is well adapted to measure degree of interest. Frequency of interruption appears to constitute no part of my idea of degree of interest.

Sen. There are various other ways in which feelings can vary, of course. They can vary in time for instance. A given feeling of intrinsic interest might be felt on Tuesday instead of Thursday or *vice versa*, or at one time in the world's history rather than another.

Jun. But if it is exactly the same in all other respects I do not see that the date of its occurrence would be a matter bearing on its degree of interest.

Sen. And how about variation in space so to speak? Suppose it occurred in the sensorium of Sam Smith rather than John Jones, or *vice versa*, or in that of a black man instead of a white one? In other words, would it vary the "degree of interest" of a given feeling to merely transfer it from one man's sensorium to another?

Jun. If it remained exactly the same feeling in other respects the degree of its interest would be the same, of course. Indeed, if its interest varied I cannot see in what sense it could be called the "same" feeling. Surely feelings are not the "same" if the degree of their interest is "different."

Sen. Do any other modes of variation of intrinsic interest occur to you that might be useful in helping to measure it? For remember, we are feel-

ing around for a method of distinguishing great interests from small ones, and this involves measurement of some kind.

Jun. I should say a very important mode of variation has not been mentioned yet.

Sen. What is it?

Jun. Variation in kind. There are various kinds of desire and aversion, approbation and disapprobation, happiness and unhappiness.

Sen. And can we measure the degree of a feeling of interest by ascertaining its kind? Variation in degree is usually thought of as different from variation in kind. Are there greater kinds and lesser kinds of intrinsic interest?

Jun. Surely some are far more important than others. High and noble desires for instance are far more important than low and sordid ones, and the distinction between true happiness and mere pleasure cannot be ignored in a search for the distinction between right and wrong.

Sen. Let us pause a moment and see just what is being said. We have already divided intrinsic interest into six kinds, but it is evidently not these that you are referring to as "kinds."

Jun. No, I am not claiming for instance that happiness is of greater interest *per se* than desire, or *vice versa*. I am referring to kinds of those kinds—to kinds of happiness, or desire or approbation.

Sen. To avoid confusion then let us call the

things you are referring to "sorts" of interest, to distinguish them from the six classes to which the word "kind" has already been applied.

Jun. I will agree to that usage of words. And think it obvious that desire for food differs from desire for travel, though both are desires; that approbation for kindness differs from approbation for cleverness, though both are approbations; that pleasure in playing golf differs from pleasure in serving a friend, though both are pleasures; and so with the various sorts of the other kinds of intrinsic interest.

Sen. Yes, sorts of interest differ from one another; they vary; but is this variation of any service in measuring degree of interest? If you are told that one person is suffering from sorrow and another from a sore finger, can you tell which is the more unhappy of the two?

Jun. Not unless I know the relative degrees of sorrow and soreness.

Sen. And by degrees in this case you mean intensities or amounts?

Jun. Yes, I think I do.

Sen. So that knowing the sorts of pain did not give you knowledge of the degrees.

Jun. No. The sorts alone were insufficient.

Sen. And if you are informed that one person has a desire to eat and another person to sleep, can you tell which of the persons has the greater desire, and which the less?

Jun. Not unless I know something about the intensity or amount of the two desires.

Sen. So that in this case also, knowledge of sorts of interest alone gives no clue to degrees?

Jun. No.

Sen. And do you think that sorts of approbation, or aversion, or the other kinds of intrinsic interest would give you any better clue to degrees thereof than sorts of pain or desire?

Jun. I should think not.

Sen. But a moment ago you said you thought some kinds of interest were more important than others, and by kinds you meant what we have since agreed to call sorts. What did you mean by this statement? Did you mean one sort could *per se* have a greater degree of interest than another sort, and that the sort would determine the degree?

Jun. I claimed and still claim that high and noble sorts of desire or pleasure are more important, and therefore of a greater degree of interest, than low and sordid sorts.

Sen. Can you cite a concrete example which will illustrate this, because if you have in mind another method of measuring interest we want to know it. If interest can be measured otherwise than by intensity or amount it is necessary to our purpose to be informed of the fact.

Jun. And you want a concrete example of another method of measurement.

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Well, here is one. An inventor, let us say, feels a desire to make a great invention which will lighten the toil of humanity. He is also addicted to drink and feels a desire to get drunk. The first desire is high and noble and its gratification brings true happiness. The second is low and sordid and its gratification brings mere pleasure. These are two sorts of desire, and I claim that the first is a more important sort than the second.

Sen. More important you say?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And of greater interest?

Jun. Yes, of greater interest.

Sen. Of greater interest to mankind?

Jun. Yes, of greater interest to mankind. .

Sen. You must say this because you have in your mind some standard, either clearly recognized or otherwise, by which you distinguish a great interest from one less great?

Jun. I suppose so. If I did not have some standard in mind I would not express its judgment in words.

Sen. Well, what is the standard? Do you recognize clearly what it is?

Jun. Why should I mention the standard. I can see plainly that one sort of desire is more important than another. Are not noble things more important, more to be considered, more desirable, than sordid ones? You agree with me about this, don't you?

Sen. Yes, I think I do.

Jun. Then why do we need to consider it any further. We have agreed that sorts of desire, aversion, and the other kinds of intrinsic interest are factors to be considered in measuring them.

Sen. Still in this instance I think we ought to find out why we agree, if we really do agree. Let me ask you a question or two. You say noble things are more desirable than sordid ones, noble desires than sordid desires for instance?

Jun. Certainly I say that.

Sen. Are they also more desired?

Jun. Not necessarily. The inventor for instance may be more of a drunkard than an inventor and desire to drink more than he desires to invent.

Sen. When you say the inventor desires to drink *more* than he desires to invent do you mean that, on the average, his feelings of desire for drink are of greater intensity and duration than those of his feelings of desire to invent?

Jun. Yes, in a rough way that is what I mean, I suppose.

Sen. That is, the amount of his desire to drink is greater than the amount of his desire to invent?

Jun. According to our definition of yesterday that is my assumption.

Sen. And amount of desire would be one standard of interest, I take it?

Jun. It would be one standard, yes.

Sen. A standard of measurement of interest?

Jun. Yes, but intensity would be another, and

perhaps the more important, since intensity of desire in any given instance seems to be the determinant of conduct.

Sen. Well, without bothering about that matter now, it is safe to say that the standard of desire you have in mind is one either of amount or intensity?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And how about aversion?

Jun. Well, a man who desires to drink can hardly be said to have an aversion to doing it.

Sen. And do you assume your inventor to have an aversion to inventing?

Jun. Well, only as compared to drinking. He would have an aversion to it if it kept him from drinking.

Sen. But in this case aversion, roughly speaking, is the negative of desire and *vice versa*?

Jun. Roughly speaking, yes.

Sen. Would you say that, using the standard of desire (whether of intensity or amount) as a standard of intrinsic interest, inventing was of greater interest than drinking on the part of the inventor?

Jun. If he used his own desires as a standard it would be of less interest.

Sen. And thus he would differ from you on the question of the degree of interest of the two kinds of desire?

Jun. Yes, because he uses a different standard. He uses the standard of desire and I the standard of desirability.

Sen. But he has used a standard which employs only intensity or amount of desire to judge between sorts of desire has he not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that what he has in mind by "greater" and "lesser" desire is independent of the sort of desire and is dependent only on the factors of intensity or duration or both. In other words, one sort of desire is "greater" than another because it involves greater intensity or amount of desire?

Jun. Yes, I think I can agree to that.

Sen. Then you have agreed that degree of intrinsic interest cannot be measured by sorts of interest, but can be measured only by intensities or amounts thereof?

Jun. No, I have not generalized to that extent. All I have admitted is that degree of desire cannot be measured by sort of desire.

Sen. But you think something else of intrinsic interest *can* be measured by sort of desire?

Jun. Yes. At least you have not yet shown to the contrary.

Sen. Well, to-morrow we will try to find out what you have in mind.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 14

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by frequency of occurrence.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by time of occurrence.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by place or sensorium of occurrence.

Def. A sort of *intrinsic interest* means a sort or kind of desire or aversion, or approbation or disapprobation, or happiness or unhappiness, and is exemplified in Session 14.

SESSION 15

Senior. Yesterday we agreed that sorts of desire could not be used to measure degree of desire.

Junior. We agreed that this was so in the case of the desires of the person we were using as an example.

Sen. And is your mind constituted so very differently from his? Are you sure you are not pronouncing judgment between sorts of desire because they involve different intensities or amounts of desire, just as he is doing?

Jun. On the assumption you make I am. If I use the standard of desire I am; but I claim I am using, not the standard of desire, but that of desirability—which is quite a different thing. I do not claim noble things are always more desired than ignoble ones, but I do claim they are always more desirable.

Sen. I will not dispute that, but I note you use the phrase “more desirable.” From this I infer that there is a corresponding “less desirable”?

Jun. Yes, ignoble things are less desirable than noble ones.

Sen. This use of the terms “more” and “less,” however, is another implication of degree of some kind?

Jun. There are certainly different degrees of desirability.

Sen. But they do not necessarily correspond to degree of desire?

Jun. Not necessarily. I have emphasized that before.

Sen. The question I wish to raise is whether they resemble one another in being measured by degrees of intensity or amount or both?

Jun. Not of desire certainly, for that would mean that the standard of desire and of desirability were the same, and they are not.

Sen. But of something else perhaps. Let me ask you whether you *approve* most of noble or of ignoble things? To return to your concrete example, would you approve most the conduct of the inventor in getting drunk or in inventing?

Jun. I should approve most his conduct in inventing, of course. Indeed I should not approve his conduct in getting drunk at all. I should disapprove it.

Sen. Your approval of his getting drunk would be zero, would it?

Jun. It would be less than zero. I should disapprove it, I tell you.

Sen. Disapproval is an approval less than zero then. It is the negative of approval, is it?

Jun. In a sense it is.

Sen. And a negative quantity is less than a positive one I take it?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. We have already agreed that both kinds of intrinsic interest—indeed all kinds—vary both in intensity and duration?

Jun. We have agreed to that.

Sen. Now I take it you approve of noble things in a high degree?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And of less noble things in a less degree. That is, the nobler the thing the higher the degree of your approval or approbation?

Jun. Generally speaking that is so.

Sen. And when you say you approve noble things more than less noble ones, do you mean your feelings of approbation of the one are of greater intensity or duration, or both, than of the other?

Jun. Well, I never asked myself just that question, so I feel a little doubtful. I don't know that duration would have much to do with it, but the intensity of my approbation would be greater certainly.

Sen. The intensity of your approbation for the conduct of the inventor in inventing would be greater than for his conduct in getting drunk?

Jun. It surely would be.

Sen. And the intensity of your disapprobation would be greater for his getting drunk than for his inventing?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. But suppose it happened to be the other

way around—suppose you discovered that your degree of approval was greater for his drunken conduct than for the sober occupation of inventing, would your judgment of the desirability of the conduct be reversed or not?

Jun. But I cannot imagine myself approving of such an ignoble, sordid thing as drunkenness.

Sen. Still, some have approved of it. In antiquity the devotees of Bacchus did not disapprove of drunkenness. You know some people approve what others disapprove.

Jun. I know that.

Sen. Well now I am asking you to assume that you approve what you don't as a matter of fact approve. I ask it simply for the purpose of bringing about a clearer understanding of certain matters.

Jun. Well of course, on your assumption—on the assumption that I approve of drunkenness and disapprove of inventing,—I suppose I should say the former was more desirable than the latter.

Sen. That is, your degree of approval of ignoble conduct would be greater than of noble?

Jun. On your assumption, yes.

Sen. And your disapproval of noble conduct greater in degree than of ignoble?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And degrees both of approval and disapproval would be measured in intensities or amounts?

Jun. Intensities I should say.

Sen. Then it seems that the standard of desire

differs from that of desirability in that the one uses intensity of desire (or aversion) as a measure of interest, and the other that of approval (or disapproval).

Jun. Yes, I should say degree of approbation was a better test of desirability than degree of desire; since the standard of desirability tells us what *ought to be* desired, whereas the standard of desire only tells us what *is* desired.

Sen. You have said something very significant. We will return to the point later. Just now I wish to pursue the issue we are engaged in discussing—whether sorts of intrinsic interest—sorts of desire for instance—are factors in measuring degrees of interest, or whether they can be ignored in such measurement. This is a very important point to be decided, for remember that in seeking the right we are seeking a maximum or “greatest” interest of some kind, and hence it is important for us to know precisely what we mean by the words “great” and “small” as they apply to such things as intrinsic interests. Thus far we have found that sorts of interest, as illustrated by noble and ignoble sorts of desire, have been measured by degrees of intensity or duration or both. When their interest was measured by desire it turned out that it was intensity or amount of desire (or aversion) that appeared as the standard of measurement. When their interest was measured by desirability it turned out that the standard of measurement appeared to be intensity,

or perhaps amount, of approbation (or disapprobation).

Jun. Yes, on examination this seems to have been the case. Sorts of interest appear to be of interest only as they determine degree, either of intensity or amount, but I think perhaps we are on the wrong track in judging of desirability by the standard of approbation. Noble and ignoble things may be judged by another standard. For instance, to go back to the inventor who is called upon to decide between inventing and getting drunk. If he spends his time inventing he is likely to produce improved instrumentalities for the service of mankind, devices to lighten men's toil and provide them with means of enjoyment. In other words, his conduct in inventing is more desirable than his conduct in getting drunk because it increases the happiness of his fellow beings in greater degree. Here is another argument showing noble conduct to be more desirable than ignoble.

Sen. Yes, and what does it teach us? When you say it would diminish unhappiness you refer to unhappiness of various sorts.

Jun. Of various sorts, yes.

Sen. And when you speak of increasing happiness you refer to various sorts.

Jun. Yes. I have not undertaken to specify the particular sorts of happiness that may be increased.

Sen. So that when you speak of diminishing the

one and increasing the other you have not any particular sorts in mind?

Jun. No.

Sen. Then the sorts of course do not figure as factors of diminution or increase in your judgment?

Jun. I did not say that. It seems to me that some sorts of happiness are more enjoyable than others, and some sorts more unenjoyable than others. And the desirability of various sorts is also very different.

Sen. Let us consider only one issue at a time. Otherwise we shall fall into confusion. We are not inquiring whether sorts of interest give us a clue to degree thereof by giving us a clue to intensity or duration, but whether they can give such a clue *without* giving any clue to intensity or duration. You have said that a certain course of conduct would increase happiness and decrease unhappiness more than another course; and you were able to deliver this judgment without considering what sorts were to be increased or decreased. In other words, the increase and decrease was independent of sorts.

Jun. Yes, that is true.

Sen. Well, when you say that happiness might be increased by the inventions of the engineer do you not mean that the intensity or amount of happiness might be increased, and when you say unhappiness might be decreased do you not refer to intensity or amount of unhappiness?

Jun. Yes, I should say that was what I referred to, and in this case it seems to me both intensity and duration are factors in degree of interest.

Sen. Very well then; notice what we have discovered. We have selected a typical comparison of noble and ignoble sorts of desire. If degree of interest could depend upon sort of interest exclusively we should expect to find it so depending in this case. But on following up our judgments of degree, we always find it depending upon judgments of intensity or amount; so that it looks to me as if sorts of intrinsic interest, whether of desire, aversion, approbation, disapprobation, happiness or unhappiness, are not factors *per se* in measuring interest, but are factors only in so far as they may give a clue to intensities or amounts.

Jun. Yes, it seems on reflection to be safe to generalize to that effect, since the example we have examined is a typical one.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 15

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by sorts.

Def. *Desirable* means what ought to be desired.

Desirability cannot be measured by desire, but can be measured by approbation or happiness. (Provisional.)

SESSION 16

Senior. So far we have discussed the variation of intrinsic interest in intensity, duration, frequency, time, space and sort, and have discovered only two means of measuring it—by intensity, and by amount (intensity times duration). Do any other possibilities occur to you?

Junior. No others occur to me, but that does not mean that they might not occur to some one else.

Sen. This must be admitted, but if no other promising means of measurement occur to either of us it would seem as if they could not be very conspicuous or obvious, nor do I in consulting the works of moralists find other means implied or suggested.

Jun. Nor explicitly proposed?

Sen. No.

Jun. Then I suppose it may be assumed, provisionally at least, that we have exhausted the possibilities?

Sen. On these grounds then we may agree that intrinsic interest may be measured only by intensity or amount?

Jun. As no other means of measurement appear to be suggested it seems safe to agree to this.

Sen. Very well. And now to the next step. It is obvious is it not that we are not seeking any single

intensity or interest? It is necessary for us to consider not one but many states and intervals of interest?

Jun. Surely, if we are to consider the interests of all mankind we are concerned with a collective or combined interest.

Sen. Having decided on two methods of measuring intrinsic interest our next task is to learn how to combine separate items or intervals thereof, whether occurring in the same or different individuals. That is to say, we must try to discover what we *mean* by a combined or collective interest.

Jun. It would surely be useful to know what we mean.

Sen. Well, let us begin by asking how intensities are combined into a collective result or resultant. Suppose there is a house of two rooms of equal size, and the temperature (that is the heat intensity) of one of the rooms is 70° and the other is 80° , what would you say the temperature of the house was?

Jun. I should say its temperature was seventy-five degrees, since that would be its average temperature.

Sen. You would get the combined temperature by averaging the separate ones?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But why not combine them by adding them? Averaging magnitudes is one way of combining them, and adding them is another way.

Jun. But the sum of seventy and eighty is one

hundred and fifty, and surely the house could not be said to have a temperature of 150° . Besides, if each room had been divided into two it would by such a method of combining temperatures have increased the temperature to 300° which is absurd. If we are to combine temperatures by adding them then the temperature of a house increases in proportion to the number of thermometers read.

Sen. In the case of temperatures then averaging gives useful results, and adding useless or absurd ones?

Jun. That is obvious.

Sen. Suppose, however, each of the rooms had a volume of 1,000 cubic feet, and you were asked for the volume instead of the temperature of the house?

Jun. I should say its volume was 2,000 cubic feet because 1,000 plus 1,000 is 2,000.

Sen. But the average volume of the rooms is only 1,000 cubic feet.

Jun. Certainly, but the total volume is 2,000 and that is what is meant by the volume of the house. To try to obtain the combined or collective volume of the rooms by averaging would mean that two, ten or a hundred rooms of equal size would have a volume no larger than one, which is absurd.

Sen. So it seems you combine some kinds of magnitudes by averaging them and other kinds by adding them?

Jun. It seems so.

Sen. Now those magnitudes which are combined by averaging are generally called intensities, and those which are combined by adding are generally called quantities or amounts, and I think you will find we have followed this general practice in the names we have chosen for the magnitudes which measure intrinsic interest. For example if you feel a certain intensity of desire for a drink of water, let us say, and a couple of minutes later have another feeling of desire of the same intensity, as far as you can judge—what would you say your combined intensity of desire was—the average of the two intensities, or the sum of them?

Jun. The average of course. Otherwise we could multiply the intensity of desire indefinitely merely by multiplying frequency.

Sen. And now how about amounts of interest. If you had a toothache of a given intensity lasting an hour and later another hour's toothache of the same intensity say, could you accurately represent your feelings by averaging them?

Jun. No, because to average them would mean that two, or for that matter ten or a hundred hours, of toothache of a given intensity would be no worse than one, and anybody knows that is not the case. To merely record that the various hours of toothache averaged the same would leave unrepresented the influence of duration on intrinsic interest.

Sen. But suppose you added them. That would mean that two hours of toothache of a given inten-

sity, whether interrupted or not, would have twice the amount of pain interest that one would have.

Jun. Of course, that would be a more accurate and useful way to express the combined interest of the two hours.

Sen. I will not multiply instances, but you will find that collective intensities of intrinsic interest are represented by an average, whereas, collective amounts are represented by a sum, and this independent of whether the magnitudes combined are equal or unequal, or whether the number of separate items combined is great or small. The relation between them is analogous to that between power and energy—the unit of intensity for instance being analogous to a kilowatt of electric power, and the unit of quantity or amount to a kilowatt-hour of electrical energy.

Jun. I think I can perceive the analogy. Power represents the rate or intensity with which work is done, and energy the amount of work done by power in a given interval; but you do not propose to represent the several kinds of intrinsic interest by units do you?

Sen. Well, duration is represented by units.

Jun. Of minutes or hours you mean.

Sen. Yes. And there is no reason why intensities should not be if there were any object in it, but we can think clearly about the matter without bothering to formulate units, so, though it might be done, I do not propose to do it. The point I wish

to bring out by the discussion is that to measure two or more magnitudes it is necessary to combine them in some way or other, and that two or more intensities are combined and measured by averaging them, whereas two or more amounts are combined and measured by adding them.

Jun. I believe I understand this.

Sen. And the result of combining two or more magnitudes of interest in this way I propose to call a resultant.

Jun. Very well.

Sen. And the end or result we are seeking in our search for a guide to conduct is a resultant of this nature?

Jun. That is, it is an average of intensities of interest, or a sum of amounts of interest.

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Is there any way of telling which?

Sen. That must be decided by future discussion.

Jun. But another perplexity occurs to me at this point. We are seeking the interest of mankind of course?

Sen. That is agreed.

Jun. In that case the sum or average we seek must be made up of interests felt by many different persons. How are we to arrive at such resultants?

Sen. We have agreed already that a given feeling of interest is not altered in degree of interest merely because it occurs in one sensorium instead

of another. A feeling is what it *is* just the same as anything else.

Jun. Yes, I recall agreeing to that.

Sen. Well, is not this true of two, or ten, or any number of feelings as well as one? The average of two intensities of desire or pain or any other kind of interest is the same, whether they occur in the same sensorium or different ones, and so is the sum of two amounts.

Jun. Of course if the feelings themselves do not differ, I suppose it must be admitted that the average of their intensities or the sum of their amounts does not. But how is it possible for one person to know what the degree of interest of a feeling is which occurs in the sensorium of another person?

Sen. By inference. A person can observe his own feelings, but can only infer those of others.

Jun. But inference can easily be mistaken, can it not?

Sen. Now you are raising a new issue. We shall take it up later. Just at present we are not trying to ascertain how we know what feelings are actually felt, but what kinds of feelings we are called upon to know about. We are seeking an understanding of meanings—not a knowledge of facts. It is important to discriminate between knowing facts about a thing, and knowing the meaning of the thing. We may know the meaning without knowing the facts, but we cannot know the facts unless we know the meaning. Hence knowledge of meanings comes

first—and that is why Euclid and other men who use the scientific method give meanings to their words before they use them to establish theorems. I do not know the number of paving blocks in the streets of Manhattan Island, but I do know what I mean by the number of paving blocks in the streets of Manhattan Island. I know the meaning but not the fact. But I could not go to work to learn the fact if I did not know the meaning. I would not know what I was trying to find out. Here is where philosophy may profit from observing the practice of science. Meanings must be known first. At present we are engaged in discovering what we mean by the average or sum of the interests of mankind, so that later we may have a better chance of discovering the facts necessary to guide us in trying to make one or the other—or perhaps both—a maximum.

Jun. I think I understand the distinction and the importance of it. You are not trying just now to make clear how feelings are ascertained. You are merely pointing out that the average of the intensities or the sum of the amounts of two or more feelings of interest has the same meaning, whether the magnitudes averaged or combined occur in the same sensorium or different ones.

Sen. That is it exactly. The resultant of intensities or amounts of interest is independent of the distribution in space as well as in time of the sep-

arate items of interest which are combined to produce it.

Jun. So that by thinking of the sought-for end as a resultant we are able to think of the interest of mankind as readily as we would that of an individual?

Sen. Yes, it seems to me the meaning of the one is as plain as that of the other.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 16

Intrinsic interest can be measured only by intensity or amount.

Def. *Resultant* means the result of combining two or more magnitudes.

The result sought in a guide to conduct is a resultant of intensities or amounts of intrinsic interest.

The resultant of two or more intensities of intrinsic interest is obtained by averaging them, and is a measure of the combined or collective intensity.

The resultant of two or more amounts of intrinsic interest is obtained by adding them, and is a measure of the combined or collective amount.

The resultant of two or more intensities or amounts of interest is the same whether felt in the same or in different sensoria.

SESSION 17

Senior. Yesterday we discussed a couple of methods of combining magnitudes and attached the name "resultant" to the results of applying them. We started with the meaning and proceeded to the name.

Junior. That gives us a stipulated definition of the word resultant.

Sen. To-day I want first to ask you if you can think of any way of combining either intensities or amounts of interest—or indeed magnitudes of any kind—so as to obtain a resultant of zero?

Jun. But an interest of zero intensity or amount is only another name for indifference?

Jun. That is true.

Jun. I should say the only way of doing what you ask is to combine indifferences either by averaging or adding. As each separate item would be zero, both the average and sum would be zero, and this is the resultant you asked for, but zero can hardly be called a magnitude at all, so perhaps this does not comply with the conditions.

Sen. To answer that question would require sharpening the customary definition of the word "magnitude" but our problem does not require us to answer it. So let it pass. Can you think of any

other way of combining magnitudes to secure a resultant of zero?

Jun. I do not see how to average or add actual magnitudes no matter how small, without getting a resultant greater than zero.

Sen. That is true if all the magnitudes are positive, but if some are positive and some are negative we might by combining them get a resultant of zero it seems to me.

Jun. Do you propose to divide interest into a positive and a negative kind?

Sen. In past sessions we have several times suggested that there is a positive and a negative aspect to interest. For instance most of us have an interest in money, but our interest in owning is quite distinct from that in owing it. Assets interest us in a different way from liabilities.

Jun. But money has no intrinsic interest. It is not a state of consciousness.

Sen. No, but the analogy is helpful. For example you would like to have some one give you a thousand dollars, would you not?

Jun. That is a safe assumption.

Sen. In other words, you might feel a desire for such a gift?

Jun. I should certainly feel no aversion to it.

Sen. But would you like to have a thousand dollars stolen from you?

Jun. Obviously not.

Sen. This is something you would desire not to

have occur? You would have an aversion to its occurrence?

Jun. Very little doubt about it.

Sen. Well, suppose you were asked to combine two such desires. Let us suppose you were called upon to compare the desire for an addition to your wealth of a thousand dollars and also your desire for a subtraction from it of the same amount. Would not the one desire cancel the other so as to give a resultant of zero? In other words, your gain would make you indifferent to your loss, and your loss to your gain. To have both things happen would be equivalent to having neither of them happen; and to desire neither would be to experience indifference so far as desire is concerned.

Jun. I think I see your point, and if intensity of desire for money gains were always proportional to money gains, and intensity of aversion to money losses proportional to money losses, such a method of combining them might be feasible, but desires and aversions are feelings and not subject to the easy calculation applicable to money. For instance, I can easily imagine that a person might be willing to forfeit a thousand dollars, if by so doing he could obtain possession of an object of only a few cents' money value—a ring or trinket perhaps belonging to a lost wife or child.

Sen. You mean his desire for the ring would be greater than his aversion for the loss of the thousand?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. His desire to secure the one would be more than equivalent to his desire not to lose the other?

Jun. That would be another way of saying it.

Sen. More than equivalent in intensity or amount?

Jun. Both, I should say.

Sen. You feel sure that from such causes, people can have feelings bearing this relation to each other? Feelings that a desire can be "greater" than an aversion and *vice versa*?

Jun. Certainly. I have had such feelings myself.

Sen. Feelings of equivalence between desire and aversion?

Jun. Yes, but they are by no means always proportional to anything in the nature of money equivalents. I hope you are not trying to establish any proportionality between equivalence of desire and aversion and equivalence of material gain and loss?

Sen. I am not trying to establish proportionality—only existence. If one exists as much as the other I am satisfied—and this it seems you have already agreed to. You admit that there is such a thing as an aversion which is *equivalent* or more than equivalent to a desire and *vice versa*?

Jun. Yes. And I have cited you an example. Many others of course will occur to you also.

Sen. So that an aversion to an event or an act, and a desire that it shall not happen, are two ways of expressing the same thing?"

Jun. I should say so.

Sen. In that case we can reckon aversion as a sort of negative desire in the sense that degrees of one may be equivalent to those of the other, and tend to balance or cancel them as negative numbers may be equivalent to, and tend to balance, positive.

Jun. Yes; I should say aversion might have degrees which would cancel similar degrees of desire.

Sen. This is the relationship required to enable desire and aversion to be expressed in the same kind of unit, but one capable of a positive and a negative magnitude, so that by combining equivalent magnitudes of each a resultant of zero may be secured.

Jun. You mean I suppose that a desire that an event shall happen and a desire of equal intensity that it shall not happen would balance one another, just as an asset of \$100 is balanced by a liability of the same amount?

Sen. Yes. The average of the two desires, one positive and the other negative, is zero just as the sum of the positive and negative assets is zero—for liabilities are negative assets.

Jun. So that we may regard aversion as the negative of desire?

Sen. We recognize, and therefore may stipulate that it is, although ordinarily the word is employed only for negative desires of some considerable intensity.

Jun. But if desire and aversion can be expressed in units of the same kind they must be the same kind of interest, must they not? Two magnitudes which differ in kind cannot be averaged or added. We cannot average gallons with yards or add cubic feet to acres?

Sen. That depends upon the degree of sharpness in which the word "kind" is employed. By sufficiently sharpening its meaning a positive number may be regarded as a different *kind* of a number from a negative one. After all, words should be used to express what we find in our minds. There is nothing else for them to express, and our aim should be to make them as useful as possible for this purpose.

Jun. And do you regard it as more useful to call desire and aversion two kinds of interest or only one?

Sen. It will be more useful to regard them as two kinds of interest, as heretofore, but as the positive and negative aspects of a single standard of interest, which we may call the standard of desire. As feelings they may perhaps be distinct, but as measures of interest they are not independent of each other, because their intensities can be averaged and their amounts added.

Jun. And these processes of averaging and adding are algebraic—not merely arithmetical?

Sen. Yes. They are algebraic, because they recognize negative as well as positive magnitudes.

Jun. And how about approbation and disapprobation? Are they positive and negative aspects of a single standard also?

Sen. Such a question can only be answered by an appeal to the feelings themselves. On examining them, do you find that they are?

Jun. I could tell better if I could feel them at the same time, but we cannot approve and disapprove an act at the same time, can we?

Sen. It may not be common, but it appears to be possible. There are conflicts of desire and why not of approbation. We may for example on a hot day desire to go to a drug store to get a cool drink, but we dread the hot walk involved in going there. We feel a desire to go and also a desire not to go. There is a conflict of desire and the issue is usually decided by the relative intensities of the positive and negative desires at some moment of decision.

Jun. Conflicts of desire of that kind are familiar to everyone, I believe.

Sen. But are such conflicts confined to desire? For example, you approve of speaking the truth, no doubt?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And you disapprove of betraying the confidence of a friend?

Jun. Of course.

Sen. But it is easy to imagine a contingency when to speak the truth, or even to keep silent, will betray the confidence of a friend. Perhaps such a con-

tingency may have occurred in your own experience. In this case we are confronted with a dilemma—a conflict between approval and disapproval, or between two degrees of disapproval perhaps, and if the conflicting feelings are of the same intensity it makes decision very difficult.

Jun. Such conflicts have occurred in the experience of most persons I believe. Are you prepared to help people decide them?

Sen. No, I have nothing to offer at present. I merely call attention to their existence.

Jun. And you claim do you that there is something more involved than a conflict of desire? It seems to me approval involves desire and disapproval aversion.

Sen. Perhaps it might be shown that there is no approval without desire, but certainly there is desire without approval, and this suffices to distinguish them. Is it easy for example to distinguish a conflict between going or not going to the drug store on a hot day, from a conflict between lying and betraying a friend?

Jun. Conscience is plainly concerned in one, but not in the other.

Sen. And in these conflicts of conscience it seems clear that approbation and disapprobation are sufficiently alike in kind to appear as the negative each of the other, so that the same unit might be used to measure them both, being most conveniently taken as positive in the case of approbation and negative

in that of disapprobation. In other words, there is an equivalence between them just as there is between desire and aversion, a possibility of speaking of one as of greater or smaller degree than the other, and hence a possibility of a given intensity or amount of one balancing an equivalent intensity or amount of the other, so that a combination of the two is capable of being equivalent to an interest of zero, or indifference.

Jun. On consideration it seems to me that this is as plain in the case of approbation and disapprobation as it is in the case of desire and aversion.

Sen. Very well. Without further elaboration of the subject then we may agree that approbation and disapprobation constitute a single standard for measuring interest, disapprobation being the negative of approbation, and I propose to call this standard the standard of approbation.

Jun. I believe such a standard of interest may be agreed to as one distinguishable from the standard of desire.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 17

Def. *Equivalence* means the relation between two magnitudes whose average or sum is zero.

Equivalence is possible only between positive and negative magnitudes.

Equivalence is possible between intensities of

desire and aversion, and also between amounts thereof.

Desire and aversion provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, desire being taken as positive, and aversion as negative, interest.

Def. The *standard of desire* means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by desire and aversion.

Equivalence is possible between intensities of approbation and disapprobation, and also between amounts thereof.

Approbation and disapprobation provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, approbation being taken as positive, and disapprobation as negative, interest.

Def. The *standard of approbation* means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by approbation and disapprobation.

SESSION 18

Senior. The fact that desire and aversion, and also approval and disapproval may be associated together in pairs to form single standards of interest, suggests that happiness and unhappiness might be similarly associated to form a third standard.

Junior. You mean that there is a sense in which unhappiness may be regarded as the negative of happiness?

Sen. I suggest such an idea for consideration.

Jun. But surely they are completely distinct in kind. What greater distinction in kind can be found in consciousness than that between pleasure and pain, especially if their intensities are great?

Sen. Well, remember that desire for a thing is a very different kind of a feeling from aversion for it, and approbation from disapprobation; yet it is possible to express degrees of such different kinds of feelings in the same unit.

Jun. Yes, these feelings are different and yet there is certainly a significant relation between them.

Sen. And what is that relation? Is it not that intensities and amounts of desire and aversion, and also of approbation and disapprobation, can be com-

bined together so as to be equivalent to indifference?

Jun. They appear to be related in that manner, yes.

Sen. And is there not a similar relation between pleasure and pain?

Jun. You mean that happiness is preferable to indifference, whereas unhappiness is something to which indifference is preferable?

Sen. Well, that would be the case with a person whose preferences were determined exclusively by happiness and unhappiness.

Jun. And is it not sometimes claimed that the preferences of all persons are so determined?

Sen. It is so claimed but it would be very unsafe to so assume. Certainly they are not determined exclusively by amounts. But in order to bring out the relation of equivalence that exists between degrees of these two kinds of interest it will be useful to assume a being whose preference is determined exclusively by such degrees. If such a being were offered the opportunity to spend say half an hour in the enjoyment of a good meal he would prefer the experience to indifference would he not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And the average intensity of his pleasure during the meal would be of a definite, though perhaps not of an assignable, degree? .

Jun. It would be of some one degree or other I suppose, since it could not very well be of more than one.

Sen. But now suppose that in order to secure the enjoyment of the meal it were to be required that he suffer half an hour's pain of some kind—perhaps of indigestion. Would he accept the dinner on these conditions?

Jun. You mean would he prefer it to indifference? Would he desire the pleasure more than indifference if it involved suffering the pain?

Sen. That is what I mean.

Jun. It would depend on how severe the pain was. He would accept the conditions if the pain were very slight, but not if it were severe.

Sen. And between the very slight and the very severe pain there would be an intensity which would cause him to doubt if the game were worth the candle, would there not?

Jun. I suppose you are assuming that he is capable of gauging the two intensities at least roughly?

Sen. Yes, of course, I am assuming that.

Jun. Well, if a slight intensity of pain caused him to prefer the dinner with its accompanying indigestion to indifference, and a severe intensity caused him to prefer indifference, it is obvious that some intermediate intensity would constitute a turning point between the two decisions. There would be a neutral point somewhere.

Sen. And the intensity of pain at this neutral point would cause the combined feelings—one of pleasure in the dinner, the other of pain in the indigestion—to be the equivalent of indifference?

Jun. In a sense it would. At any rate I think I perceive what you mean by equivalence in intensity between pleasure and pain, for I have often decided my own conduct on just such grounds, and I believe it is a familiar experience to most people.

Sen. And if the indigestion were stipulated to last less than half an hour, our assumed being would be willing to bear a greater intensity of it rather than forego the dinner, would he not; whereas if it lasted more than half an hour, he would not be willing to bear an intensity as great?

Jun. That is true. The less the duration the greater the intensity which would be tolerated, and the greater the duration the less the tolerable intensity.

Sen. In other words, the preferences of such a being would be determined, not by intensities alone, but by both intensities and durations; that is, by amounts. A being who ignored the duration of pleasure or pain in deciding preferences determined by them would not resemble a reasonable human being, would he?

Jun. Perhaps not, but he would resemble many actual human beings who are willing to sacrifice the happiness of a lifetime to grasp the fleeting pleasure of the immediate moment. Such human beings may not be reasonable, but they are very common.

Sen. Well, we are not now engaged in deciding what is reasonable, but only in understanding what

is meant by equivalence in intensity or amount in the feelings of a being whose preferences are assumed to be determined exclusively by amount of happiness and unhappiness. By assuming such a being we can give a meaning to such equivalence by defining equivalent intensities of happiness and unhappiness to be those which, in experiences of equal duration, would produce an effect equivalent in his estimation to indifference. By thinking of the matter in this way you will, I believe, understand what is meant by saying that unhappiness is the negative of happiness.

Jun. It is easy to understand what is meant, since the analogy with the familiar relation of positive to negative intensities and quantities in mathematics and physics is obvious. It differs in no essential respect from the way physicists deal with positive and negative degrees of power and energy.

Sen. With this understanding, then, we may reduce happiness and unhappiness to a single standard of intrinsic interest which may be called the standard of happiness.

Jun. It seems then that what were apparently six separate and independent methods of measuring interest corresponding to the six kinds of interest distinguished in sessions nine and ten, have been by this relation of equivalence reduced to three.

Sen. Yes, the six kinds of interest are not so independent as they at first appeared. Between them they furnish only three distinct methods of measur-

ing intrinsic interest—three standards by which to judge of its degree—those of desire, approbation and happiness.

Jun. And are these the only standards for measuring intrinsic interest which are proposable?

Sen. I will not go so far as to say that. Others may be proposable. But I think it safe to say they are the only definite standards for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest which have been proposed.

Jun. And each standard measures interest by a unit of its own, distinct from the units of the other standards?

Sen. I should say so.

Jun. And do you regard these units as distinct in the way that units of length are distinct from units of time? If we should formulate a unit of approbation, for instance, would it be as distinct from a unit of happiness as a foot of length is from a minute of time?

Sen. It seems to me so. I cannot compare approbation with happiness or desire, for instance, as a means of measuring interest.

Jun. The three methods of making measurements of interest then are not comparable with each other, just as the three methods of making measurements in space are not comparable with each other. Units of desire, approbation and happiness are as distinct as units of length, surface and volume. Is this your position?

Sen. That is my present position.

Jun. But as I pointed out yesterday, happiness and unhappiness are very different kinds of feelings, and yet you propose to measure them in the same unit?

Sen. So is north a very different direction from south and up from down, yet distances in these directions can be measured in the same unit. It is possible to think of a combination of north and south distances which will neutralize one another—there is a possibility of equivalence between them. But I cannot think of a combination of intensities or amounts of approbation and happiness, or unhappiness and disapprobation, which will neutralize one another, or which will equal zero, any more than I can think of miles neutralizing hours, or some combination between them equalling zero.

Jun. Then when we speak of degree of intrinsic interest we may mean any one of three and only three things—degree as measured by the standard (1) of desire, (2) of approbation, or (3) of happiness.

Sen. That is what I mean when I speak of such degrees.

Jun. The meaning then is quite uncertain, since it can refer to any one of the standards, and these standards may measure amounts as well as intensities?

Sen. It is, to be sure, uncertain, but not so much so as when we started our discussion.

Jun. But I am not satisfied that these different standards cannot be compared with one another. We agreed in our eleventh session that different kinds of interest are very closely associated together in consciousness. They are hard to separate or abstract from one another.

Sen. Yes, and that makes the task of formulating means of measuring interest quite difficult. Still, if we are to solve the problem we have set ourselves it is something that must be done. If we are to speak of great and small degrees of interest and importance as vaguely as moralists generally do we shall get no further in moral logic than others—and that, as we have agreed, is not very far.

Jun. But I believe I can cite a case in which degrees represented by different standards of interest are balanced against one another.

Sen. If you can cite a typical case we should be able to learn something from it.

Jun. It seems to me instances occur very often.

Sen. That makes them all the more important.

Jun. Well, take the familiar case of resistance, or attempted resistance, to temptation. A person of good moral training is tempted to commit a sin. The temptation consists of a desire to commit it. This desire is in conflict with the moral sense of the person tempted. He disapproves committing the sin, so that a conflict arises between a feeling of desire and a feeling of disapproval. If the temptation is weak and the moral sense strong, that is, if

the intensity of the desire is weak and of the disapproval strong, resistance will be successful and the sin will be avoided, but if it is the other way round, if the temptation, the desire, is strong and the feeling of disapproval weak, resistance will not be successful and the sin will be committed. Here seems to me a balance between degrees of desire and disapproval in which conduct is determined by the relative degrees (apparently intensities) of the two.

Sen. This is an excellent example to instruct us. It seems adapted to teach several things. And first I am going to ask you whether disapproval and aversion are not generally associated? Disapproval of an act is generally accompanied by a desire that the act shall be avoided, is it not?

Jun. Yes, that is generally, perhaps always the case.

Sen. Then perhaps the example you cite is really a conflict of desire—the desire to commit the sin is balanced by a desire not to commit it—a desire so closely bound to the feeling of disapproval as to be unabstractable from it?

Jun. That of course may be possible. But do you claim that degrees of desire always determine acts?

Sen. I am unable to answer this question. It has occurred to me that the intensity of desire at the moment of decision may be the universal determinant of conduct, yet I am not satisfied that it is true.

Jun. But if it is true it would be a very important fact in morals would it not?

Sen. Yes, very important, but not as a means of settling the particular issue we are engaged in discussing. It would tell us something important about what *is*, but not about what *ought to be*. It would help us in selecting the means to be used in controlling conduct, but not in discovering the end to be attained by it. And this brings me to the second question I want to ask you in connection with the example you have cited. In that example you compare degree of desire with degree of disapproval by means of their influence in deciding conduct, do you not?

Jun. Yes. I have claimed that a tempted person will yield or not yield to temptation according to the relative intensities of desire and disapproval.

Sen. The intensities prevailing at the moment of decision?

Jun. Presumably.

Sen. Well, even assuming this is not a disguised case of conflict of desire, it can hardly have any bearing on the point at issue. It tells us perhaps how degrees of interest affect what men do, but not how they affect what men ought to do. The things balanced against one another are conduct-determining degrees as well as degrees of interest, but you have not shown that the one series is proportional to the other. Indeed it has not been shown that conduct is determined by degree of interest at all.

We have agreed that it ought to be, but not that it is.

Jun. You mean that degree of interest and degree of power to determine conduct may be two different things?

Sen. Except perhaps in the case of intensity of desire, they are certainly two different things—for men are constantly observed committing deeds against their own interests as well as that of mankind. Hence a unit of conduct-determining power may be very different from any unit of interest we have discussed, and equivalence in the one case cannot be compared with equivalence in the other. To balance units of interest the possibility of equivalence of interest must be shown and your example fails to show it. You have therefore not *by* and the unit of desire to be comparable with *the* of disapprobation, even though both may be shown to have influence in the determination of conduct.

Jun. You think it safe to assume then that the standards of desire, of approbation, and of happiness cannot be compared with one another as means of measuring interest, just as linear, square and cubic standards cannot be compared as means of measuring space?

Sen. I think it is safe to so assume until a way of comparing them is proposed.

Jun. And do you therefore conclude that the end we are seeking is either a maximum desire, a maximum approbation or a maximum happiness?

Sen. From anything we have shown so far it may be either one of the three, or all three at once, or perhaps some maximum resulting from combining the standards. We may be seeking some mixture or compound of interests or other.

Jun. You recognize mixed or compound standards then?

Sen. Have you not often heard it claimed that standards of morals are compound?

Jun. Then it would appear that standards of morals must be different from standards of interest. I do not see how you are to combine different units of interest into a resultant of maximum interest any more than you can combine yards, acres and quarts into a resultant of maximum space. Is it possible to judge the interest of mankind by a compound or mixed standard?

Sen. It is possible to appear to do so, and later we shall indicate how it is done.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 18

Equivalence is possible between intensities of happiness and unhappiness, and also between amounts thereof.

Happiness and unhappiness provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, happiness being taken as positive and unhappiness as negative interest.

Def. The *standard of happiness* means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by happiness and unhappiness.

The standards of desire, approbation, and happiness are the only proposed standards for measuring intensities or amounts of intrinsic interest.

These three standards of intrinsic interest correspond to three kinds of units of interest, no one of which is comparable with another.

Unless in the case of intensity of desire, there is no necessary relation between degree of power to determine conduct and degree of intrinsic interest.

SESSION 19

Senior. So far we are agreed that we are searching for results, that these results must be within consciousness and not merely in the external world, and that they must be intrinsically interesting results; not only interesting, but of the highest interest to all mankind.

Junior. Yes, we have agreed to these things?

Sen. We have also agreed that intrinsic interest is of six and only six kinds, that it is to be measured only by the intensity of one or more of those kinds, or by the intensity multiplied by the duration, which we have agreed to call amount of interest?

Jun. At any rate these are the only methods of measurement proposed.

Sen. And we have furthermore ascertained that the six kinds of interest are so related to each other that three different standards, or kinds of units, both of intensity and of amount, can be defined, capable among them of measuring any degree of intrinsic interest which can appear in the consciousness of man or of mankind?

Jun. That appears to be a fair review of our progress up to date. But it occurs to me that a dilemma awaits us just ahead. We are required to discover a code of maximum interest to mankind,

but already it appears that there are a number of such codes, so we shall soon be confronted with the difficulty of how to judge between them.

Sen. Perhaps you forget that to be of maximum interest is only one requirement of rightness. In the earlier stages of our inquiry we ran across three other requirements, and by applying the tests which they provide we may be able to judge which kind of maximum interest we are after. Remember that the code we seek must not (1) meet with unanimous and undoubting rejection, (2) be merely a way of making what *is*, the criterion of what *ought to be*, or (3) use chance as a means of guidance.

Jun. I remember now we agreed that the code we are seeking must meet these tests, and it is apparent at a glance that they will eliminate quite a few kinds of maximum interest.

Sen. In order to eliminate them systematically I want to hark back to the procedure we used in session seven. You remember we proposed various codes, and eliminated one after another by the tests at that time agreed upon. I suggest we revive this procedure, proposing one code of maximum interest after another until we have covered every code which in any possible sense can be said to be of greater interest to mankind than any other.

Jun. I begin to see your plan. You propose to test all possible kinds of maximum interest by one or more of these three requirements of rightness?

Sen. That is the plan, but it could not be put

into operation until the possible number of codes of maximum interest had been reduced within manageable limits. We now have means of measuring the interest of mankind and hence are able to so reduce them. It is already obvious that the number of codes of maximum interest is not going to be so very large.

Jun. Let's see, we must consider both intensity and amount of interest, so there will be two of desire, two of aversion, two of approbation, two of disapprobation, two of happiness and two of unhappiness—twelve in all—or perhaps you will not include negative maxima—which would reduce them to six.

Sen. We shall include and test all promising possibilities, positive or negative. And when we get down to more detailed discussion we may find that you have overlooked something in your enumeration. For one thing we must always keep in mind the possibility of codes of mixed interest.

Jun. Well, the inquiry may be more complex than it appears to be from this point. As a rule the more things are examined the more complex they get. But our goal seems nearer than at any time since we started, and I am anxious to move on to the next step.

Sen. All right. Let us resume the thread of our inquiry where we left it in our seventh session. At that time I believe a number of codes of conduct, a brickdust code, a soap code, a money code, etc.,

had been considered and pronounced unpromising because they proposed nothing of intrinsic interest as the end of conduct. So we interrupted our search for codes until we understood better what we meant by intrinsic interest.

Jun. We surely understand that better now, so can proceed with an improved chance of success.

Sen. Let me see. The last code I proposed for your consideration was that of wealth. The proposal was that all men should seek the greatest possible wealth as the end of conduct.

Jun. And we agreed that it would be rejected unanimously and undoubtingly on the ground that wealth was a material, unconscious thing.

Sen. And we agreed also that the thing we were after was something to be found in consciousness?

Jun. Yes, we agreed to that.

Sen. Well just to make a start I am going to propose indifference as an ideal to be sought. Indifference is to be found in consciousness. Why not render everyone indifferent? What do you think of a moral code which seeks as the end of conduct the maximum indifference among mankind?

Jun. That sounds very much like Nirvana the ideal sought by the Buddhists. A world of bricks would realize it completely, but it is of no intrinsic interest and so may be eliminated.

Sen. And I suppose it would be equally useless to propose the greatest possible amount of the sensation of redness, or the greatest possible noisi-

ness, or the most widespread sensation of onion smell, since these kinds of consciousness have no vital relation to non-indifference or intrinsic interest?

Jun. No, they would certainly be universally and undoubtably rejected.

Sen. Well I thought it best to suggest a few such codes so that we can tell better when we really begin to get warm.

Jun. You will not begin to get warm until you suggest some code expressible in terms either of desire, aversion, approbation, disapprobation, happiness or unhappiness.

Sen. Suppose then we begin with codes of desire and aversion. How does this one strike you? Men's acts should be directed to the maximum production of desire—to the greatest possible amount of desire among men?

Jun. You mean the mere feeling of desire, irrespective of whether it is to be gratified or not?

Sen. Yes, the feeling of desire itself. To make that feeling as constant and intense as possible would be one way of rendering interest a maximum. It would be one way of promoting the greatest possible departure from indifference.

Jun. It is an absurdity. Certainly no one seeks such an end of conduct as this.

Sen. But it is surely an end of great interest. No one would confuse it with indifference. For instance, it occurs to me that we could attain this end in a very high degree by providing everyone with

thumb-screws which could be applied to their fingers till the pain became very intense. This would produce a general, continual and intense desire to obtain relief, and so the ideal of maximum desire among mankind would approach realization. Of course better methods might be worked out later but this occurs to me as a good start. In fact, I rather think that, other things being equal, the greater the pain among men, the greater the desire—for relief.

Jun. We can reject this code without further inquiry.

Sen. You think we do not need to go into the matter elaborately then?

Jun. No, a glance is enough to eliminate this code. There would be no doubt or disagreement among men in rejecting it.

Sen. And suppose I had said maximum average intensity instead of maximum total amount?

Jun. That would be as absurd as the other.

Sen. And would maximum intensity or amount of aversion be a code-candidate with any chance of election among men?

Jun. Obviously not. Indeed a code of maximum desire for relief would be a code of maximum aversion for the thing from which relief was desired—since aversion is the negative of desire.

Sen. So that we have considered four codes which in some sense or other can be said to be of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind, two of

them of maximum intensity and two of maximum amount, and none of them meet with the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct?

Jun. That is correct.

Sen. Good, that is four codes based on intrinsic interest which we don't need to consider further.

Jun. But it seems to me quite obvious that you are a long way off the track. The interesting thing about a desire is its gratification, the thing desired—not the desire itself. What men desire is to have their desires disappear by being gratified.

Sen. The gratification of a desire is a very different thing from the desire itself?

Jun. Very different indeed.

Sen. Well I am going to ask you to postpone discussion of gratification until we have discussed another standard of interest for a few minutes. I want to investigate a few codes of maximum interest measurable by the standard of approbation. And to begin with I will suggest a code corresponding to the one I first proposed in the case of desire. Here it is: Men's acts should be directed to the maximum production of approbation—to the greatest possible amount of approbation among men.

Jun. And again you mean the mere feeling of approbation; you propose simply to generate approbation without trying to gratify it?

Sen. What do you mean by gratifying an approbation?

Jun. I mean doing, or having done the act approved, just as gratifying a desire is doing or having done the act desired. Of course we are speaking of desired and approved *acts* all along since the guidance of conduct is the theme of our discussion.

Sen. Certainly. But the code I propose looks to the mere production or generation of approbation, independent of all gratification thereof, as you define the word. I do not propose doing anything which is approved, but merely doing things which will produce a feeling of approbation. The code I propose simply seeks the greatest possible contrast with or departure from indifference in the way of constancy and intensity of approbation.

Jun. I can see no great object in merely getting men to feel approbation without any attempt to act in accordance with the feeling. In one sense perhaps this would be a maximum interest of some kind, but it is certainly not what men are seeking in groping for the right.

Sen. We do not need to go minutely into the subject then to be satisfied that this code is not what men are seeking?

Jun. Not at all. It is an absurdity. The way to promote this sort of interest would be to make men approve strongly of whatever was done, weak and vicious conduct included, since the easier it is to arouse a feeling of approbation the more we should have of it. No one would agree to such a

travesty of a moral system. Moreover it is true, both of desire and approbation, that the degree in which they are felt depends upon the degree of attention focused upon them, and it would be objectless to focus attention on such feelings, and do nothing to gratify them.

Sen. But suppose I should point out that to gratify an approbation is the very way to increase its amount, what would you say? Don't you feel a greater degree of approval when you observe an approved act done than when you do not?

Jun. Yes, I believe I generally do, but that would only be one way of increasing approbation. I have just suggested two other ways which would be at least as effective and they would suffice to render the code ridiculous. What interests men is not merely to approve things, but to have approved things done.

Sen. And if I had proposed the maximum total amount of disapprobation instead of approbation, what would you say?

Jun. It would be unanimously rejected by all men.

Sen. And would the maximum average intensity be any improvement on the maximum total amount?

Jun. None whatever.

Sen. All four of these codes—two of intensity and two of amount—would fail to meet the first requirement of rightness, would they?

Jun. Yes, just as the corresponding codes of maximum desire failed to meet it.

Sen. Then we can set these codes of approbation aside also?

Jun. I should certainly say so. They completely fail to meet the first requirement of rightness, and this is enough to eliminate them.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 19

The codes which propose the maximum average intensity or maximum total amount of desire or aversion of mankind as the end for all men to seek do not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

The codes which propose the maximum average intensity or maximum total amount of approbation or disapprobation of mankind as the end for all men to seek do not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. *Gratification of a desire* means the doing or causing to be done of the act desired.

Def. *Gratification of an approbation* means the doing or causing to be done of the act approved.

SESSION 20

Senior. Do the codes which we rejected yesterday seem to include all codes of desire and approbation which are worth considering?

Junior. I should say they included only those of little or no interest. I pointed out when you proposed them that they leave out entirely the most interesting things about desires and approbations—their gratification. Men are interested in their approbations just as they are in their desires. Having the things done which gratify them is what interests them.

Sen. And I suppose in the case of negative interests, aversions and disapprobations, the interest centers in *not* having acts done which arouse these feelings?

Jun. That is obvious.

Sen. And how would you propose to measure the interest of gratification?

Jun. By the satisfaction which it gives, of course.

Sen. And can we then define a satisfaction as the intrinsic interest yielded by the gratification of a desire or approbation?

Jun. That appears to me a useful definition as well as one which conforms pretty well to usage.

Sen. Satisfaction then must be expressed in

terms of desire, approbation or happiness, and hence can be measured in three kinds of units only?

Jun. Yes, these feelings, including their negatives, constitute the whole of intrinsic interest.

Sen. And by taking notice of a desire or approbation are we able to tell what will gratify it?

Jun. Each desire is an indication of its own gratification of course, and similarly with an approbation. If I desire to eat, I know that by eating I can gratify the desire, and if I approve of working I know that I can only gratify my approval by working.

Sen. Evidently then we may regard the relation of desires and approbations to conduct in two distinct aspects. They may be regarded (1) as objects or ends of conduct, or (2) as guides to objects or ends; that is to say, as satisfactions or as guides to satisfaction.

Jun. Yes, and yesterday we considered them as ends.

Sen. We regarded them as satisfactions in themselves?

Jun. Yes, and landed in an absurd position.

Sen. We cannot measure satisfaction by means of desire or approbation then?

Jun. I did not say that. I merely contended that as ends they are not of interest; it is as guides to ends that they are of interest if at all.

Sen. And how would you propose to use them as guides?

Jun. Well, one way would be to measure the degree of interest of a gratification by the degree of interest of the desire or approbation to be gratified.

Sen. You do not claim that these two degrees would be the same, do you?

Jun. No, but a proportionality may perhaps be assumed between them.

Sen. So that if a man wished to ascertain how much satisfaction there was to be secured by the gratification of a given desire, all he would need to do would be to discover how much he desired it—and similarly in the case of an approbation?

Jun. That would be one way of going about it.

Sen. And do you think it a promising way?

Jun. Off-hand I should say not, but I feel sure most people would never be satisfied that all codes with any chance of acceptance by men had been tested if this method of seeking interest received no attention.

Sen. I guess you are right about that, so I am going to formulate the most promising code of desire gratification I can think of. I shall call it the code of individual desire gratification. Here it is:

The right end of human conduct is to be attained by each person seeking the greatest possible satisfaction of his own desires (including his aversions)—always doing what he desires, and in case of conflict of desire always selecting the act or alternative which gratifies his desires in maximum degree.

Jun. You mean to use the immediate intensity of a desire as a guide to conduct? To gratify at each moment the individual desire of the moment?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. That would never do.

Sen. Why not?

Jun. Because to seek the gratification of their own desires is what men are constantly doing. Hence this code is obviously only an expression of what men want or wish. It is merely a way of making what men do a criterion of what they ought to do, and this we rejected in our fifth session. In the second place when men are associated together in society their desires conflict more or less so that the gratification of some would be accomplished only by preventing the gratification of others, and this would prevent averaging them to attain a resultant of maximum interest to mankind. The intensity of desire would not prevail, but merely the power of the individual to gratify his own.

Sen. Any other objections?

Jun. Certainly. The gratification of some desires is universally condemned. How for instance could righteousness be served by gratifying the desires of criminals and degenerates? Is it possible that merely because a man happens to feel like murdering or stealing or lying or betraying his friends, or torturing helpless children, it can be right for him to do so?

Sen. If you are not going to cramp men by restrictive rules and regulations you must not hamper them in doing these things any more than any others. Don't you believe in liberty and freedom?

Jun. I don't believe in carrying them too far.

Sen. But another man might. Another man might feel differently. He might want more freedom for mankind than you want, and if feelings are to be used at all as guides to codes of conduct, why should not his feelings be as safe a guide as yours?

Jun. Well, let us put feelings aside altogether then. Let us say this last criticism does not count. I call your attention to a fact—to the fact that this code fails to meet, not only the first and second, but the third, requirement of rightness, for are not the desires of men determined largely by chance? It seems to me they depend for the most part upon people's surroundings and rearing. In countries where liquor and tobacco are unknown, as among some Esquimaux tribes, there is no desire for such things. A woman may get a desire by looking into a milliner's window which she would not have got if she had not happened to look that way. Examples could be cited indefinitely. Individual desires determine individual gratifications. Hence as the desires are subject to chance, the code which uses them as a guide to conduct will be chance-determined also.

Sen. There seem to be quite a few objections to

this way of using the standard of desire as a guide to right conduct. Do you think they would suffice to convince most people?

Jun. Certainly. The code of individual desire gratification does not meet any of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Sen. Well, suppose we try another code of desire gratification. Here perhaps is a more promising one; to distinguish it from the last, I shall call it the code of total desire gratification :

Every man should so act that the aggregate satisfaction of the desires of all mankind shall be attained in maximum degree, satisfaction in all cases to be measured by means of the degree of interest of the desire to be gratified.

Jun. But men would have to curb many of their own desires and disregard many of their own aversions in order to follow this code.

Sen. Certainly, in the interest of the rest of mankind. Would not that be right? The stronger desires would thus prevail over the weaker, independent of their distribution among individuals. Do you not think this an improvement on the individual code of desire gratification?

Jun. It seems ridiculous. However, without splitting hairs about the thing and studying it out in detail I can see right away an objection to it that suffices to eliminate it.

Sen. And what is that?

Jun. When desires are sought as ends it is their future amounts or intensities which count?

Sen. Yes, when anything is sought as an end it must be in the future.

Jun. But when they are used as guides it is their past amounts or intensities which count?

Sen. Their past or present, yes.

Jun. But how are we going to use them when they change so? When a child I desired to shake rattles and play childish games; as a boy I desired to fish and hunt and get into mischief. Many of my past desires are now dead. How can these be used as guides to present action?

Sen. I cannot see how they can.

Jun. And other men are like myself in this particular. So that it seems to me this code must simmer down to using present desires as guides to present conduct, just as in the first code you proposed to-day.

Sen. It would surely be arbitrary to recognize one period of the past without recognizing others.

Jun. Hence amount would have nothing to do with it, and present intensity alone would determine present conduct?

Sen. That would appear to be so, since if amount is recognized duration is recognized, and if duration is recognized the past is recognized.

Jun. Well, how are you going to obtain an average of present immediate intensities of a given desire for all mankind and use it as a guide? If I

am called upon to choose this minute for instance between continuing our discussion and starting in on my game of golf, how am I going to use the average intensity of the desire of mankind as a guide? At this moment their desires are for an infinite number of things, and of every degree of intensity, and have no bearing whatever on any decision I am to make.

Sen. I don't see any way of doing it. About all you could do, it seems to me, would be to be guided by your own desires.

Jun. And that would be to come back to the individual code of desire gratification.

Sen. We are agreed then that the code of total desire gratification is as unacceptable as that of individual gratification?

Jun. Certainly. It fails to meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct. It would be promptly and undoubtingly rejected.

Sen. There is yet another clue afforded by desire. So far we have only inquired into conduct which is desired. Perhaps it would be better to inquire into conduct which is desirable.

Jun. That would seem a promising clue, since the desirable is that which ought to be desired, and hence if desire instead of being self-guided were to be guided by some code of desirability, it should become a safe guide to conduct.

Sen. And in session fifteen what standards did we discover to be criteria of desirability?

Jun. The standards of approbation and happiness.

Sen. So when men grope for that which is desirable they grope for one or the other of these standards, do they?

Jun. It seems so.

Sen. There is a significance in this which will become plain before we get through. To-morrow we will follow the clue which it furnishes, and proceed first to inquire what the standard of approbation can do for us.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 20

Def. *Satisfaction* means the intrinsic interest resulting from gratification.

Def. The *code of individual desire gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of individual desire as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified.

The code of individual desire gratification does not meet any of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of total desire gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate desires of mankind as a guide to

conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified.

The code of total desire gratification does not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

SESSION 21

Senior. Following up the clue suggested at our last session let us to-day test the rightness of conduct, not by the standard of desire, but by that of approbation.

Jun. It surely is deemed more desirable to gratify approbation than mere desire.

Sen. And of course we are to use approbation as a guide, not as an end?

Jun. Yes, just as we did yesterday in the case of desire.

Sen. But we discovered yesterday that to use the aggregate desires of mankind as a guide was impractical. Would it be any more practical to use the aggregate approbations?

Jun. I should say the same objections applied to a code of total approbation gratification as to one of total desire gratification. As a guide the code would reduce to one of present intensity, and the intensity of approbation of criminals, idiots, savages, pagans and freaks averaged in with the rest of mankind would be of no possible use as a guide to conduct, even if it were available when needed, which it is not.

Sen. But are we not often reminded that public

opinion should control conduct, particularly that of nations, and is it not a fact that conventional conduct, or that which is generally approved, is often set up as a standard for all to follow?

Jun. The public opinion, the general approval, which is set up as a standard in any particular place or by any particular group of people is a strictly local one. The sentiments of mankind as a whole do not count, but only those which agree more or less with those prevailing in the locality, or among the group. Texans do not care for the sentiments of the Tartars of Kamchatka, nor Tartars for the sentiments of Texans. Buddhists do not regard the moral code of Baptists, nor Baptists that of Buddhists.

Sen. What you say is true of course, but I thought best to mention it, since local sentiment would not necessarily be unanimously rejected as a guide to local conduct. You think then we can safely eliminate this code of total approbation gratification?"

Jun. Yes, it is fantastic and absurd. It would be unanimously and undoubtingly rejected. It fails to meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct. Right cannot be discovered by averaging intensities of approbation any more than truth can be discovered by averaging intensities of belief.

Sen. Do you think the individual's own approbation is a more promising guide than that of mankind?

Jun. For his own acts it is. At least that is the general opinion.

Sen. Let us test the code of individual approbation gratification then. Here it is:

The right end of human conduct is to be attained by each person seeking the greatest possible satisfaction of his own approbations (including his disapprobations)—always doing what he approves, and in case of conflicts of approval, always selecting the act or alternative which gratifies his approval in maximum degree.

Jun. By thunder, that comes the nearest to a right code of morals of any we have hit upon yet. I believe you have got it. But after all it is nothing new. Everybody would agree to it. Why do we have to go through all this discussion to arrive finally at a code that pretty much everyone knows about and agrees to?

Sen. It seems simple enough when you come to it, doesn't it? You say most people would agree that in general a right act is one that the person who commits the act approves of doing and a wrong act is one that he does not approve of doing or approves of less intensely?

Jun. Yes, I think there would be quite general agreement to that.

Sen. Yet if what we have identified in past talks as rules of general agreement are not mistakenly such there would seem to be a general disagreement with it also. For instance, is not this code a way of

making what *is* approved the criterion of what *ought to be* approved?

Jun. Well it would seem so, since after all the code merely tells a man to do what he *does* approve.

Sen. And never even suggests that it might differ from what he *ought to* approve?

Jun. No, I see no such suggestion in it.

Sen. Moreover, we found did we not, that a similar code founded on the standard of desire encountered the objection generally agreed upon that it was a code founded on chance and accident, since men's desires were often so determined?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And are not men's approbations and disapprobations as much the sport of circumstance as their desires? Are they not determined largely by the accidents of their education and the chance influences that happen to be imposed upon their minds, particularly in childhood? If a man happens to be reared in Sweden he quite generally approves the conduct that is approved there, whereas if he happens to be reared in the Cannibal Islands he approves of cannibalism and other practices there prevailing, and so with other places or circumstances. In other words, individual approbations are in large measure determined by chance, and if we use such approbations *per se* as tests of right we determine right by chance because we determine it by something which has itself been determined by chance.

We might as well select acts by the toss of a coin as we proposed in our seventh session.

Jun. Yes, I guess that must be admitted. Still there would surely be a lot of people who would agree to this code.

Sen. There seems then to be some sort of confusion here. We have hit upon a code that seems very promising, and yet there is something queer about it. However, you deem it worth careful attention, do you?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Well, if we are to refer to it often we should give it a name. Does an appropriate name for it occur to you?

Jun. Why it appears to me to be no more than the familiar code of conscience, for when a man says he approves of an act he means his conscience approves of it, and so with his disapproval.

Sen. A person always approves what his conscience approves and disapproves what it disapproves, then?

Jun. Certainly; without the feelings of approval and disapproval there would be no conscience. Conscience in fact seems to be a name for them.

Sen. And it is commonly asserted, is it not, that conscience is the best guide to right and wrong that we have?

Jun. That is a common assertion surely.

Sen. And is a man's conscience a test of the acts of others as well as of his own?

Jun. It is often used as such a test.

Sen. So all a man has to do to discover whether an act is right or wrong is to look into his own mind? If he finds he approves the act it is right. Otherwise it is wrong. That is very simple indeed.

Jun. Well, I hardly think it would be claimed that he could discover absolute right by that method. All he could discover would be what he thinks is right, or what is right to him.

Sen. Here are a couple of new terms. "Absolute right" is something we have not encountered before, and what is this that you call "right to him"? What relation do these things bear to plain right?

Jun. Really I hardly know myself, but the language is familiar. "Absolute right" appears to mean something or other that is unknown, and "right to him" is something or other that is always approved.

Sen. Rather vague, but a thing that is always approved is worth looking into. When you say an act seems right to you, and that you approve it, are you not, as a matter of fact, saying the same thing about it?

Jun. Yes, I should say I meant about the same thing. At least I would be at a loss to explain how I could disapprove an act that seemed right to me.

Sen. Then it is clear enough why a man always approves what he thinks is right or what is "right to him." It is because he always approves what he

approves. The phrase "right to him" is merely a synonym for approval.

Jun. I think very likely.

Sen. But what we are in search of is the nature of a right act, not a "right to me" or a "right to him" act. Now an act that conscience approves is a conscientious act. The question is whether there is general agreement in asserting that a conscientious act and a right act are always the same; whether conscience is a test of right.

Jun. It certainly is frequently asserted.

Sen. But it often happens does it not that an act which one man approves another disapproves?

Jun. This often happens.

Sen. Then if right merely means conscientious the same identical act may be both right and not right?

Jun. Yes, right to one man and wrong to another.

Sen. How can conduct be guided by such a contradictory code as that?

Jun. All that can be done is to direct each man to follow his own conscience, and that is precisely what the code we are considering does.

Sen. So that if a man approves the Golden Rule he ought to follow it, but if he does not he ought not to?

Jun. Yes, he must follow his conscience wherever it leads.

Sen. But if conformity to conscience is the great desideratum why can it not be secured as well by

making conscience conform to conduct as conduct to conscience?

Jun. Conformity to conscience is the requirement.

Sen. To get maximum conformity then it would seem best to teach men to approve whatever they wanted most to do—to take the path of least resistance, and follow their desires exclusively, since this is the easiest course for men to follow. They certainly would conform their conduct to a conscience which told them to do whatever they felt like doing more uniformly than to a conscience of any other kind. This would seem a practical corollary from the code of conscience, and would make the code of individual gratification of approval coincide with that of individual gratification of desire.

Jun. But no one would agree that such a procedure was right.

Sen. Here is another inconsistency then. It strongly suggests that men who claim conscience to be an ultimate guide to conduct are deceiving themselves in some way. There is a clearly recognized distinction between the desired and the desirable. Is a corresponding distinction recognized between the approved and the approvable?

Jun. I never heard of it. Desirable is a familiar word, but not approvable.

Sen. Yet it is in the dictionary and defined as "meriting approval."

Jun. Nevertheless it is seldom or never used.

Sen. There is a significant reason for this. Can you guess what it is?

Jun. I suppose if it is not used it is because people have no use for it.

Sen. Exactly. And they have no use for the word because they have none for the thought which the word is adapted to express. They make a distinction in thought between what is and what ought to be *desired*, and hence make one in language. That is why both "desire" and "desirable" are familiar words. But they make no distinction in thought between what is and what ought to be *approved*, and hence make none in language. That is why the word "approve" is familiar and the word "approvable" is not.

Jun. And yet I think people do make this distinction, especially when judging the acts of others. For instance, it would be generally admitted perhaps that cannibals approve of cannibalism and idolaters of worshipping idols, but it would not be admitted that these practices merit approval.

Sen. You mean they ought not to be approved?

Jun. Certainly they ought not.

Sen. Here is the contradiction cropping out again. Here are acts which are conscientious and therefore right. Yet they are pronounced not right also. They both ought and ought not to be done. Is it not plain that conscience itself is in need of a guide?

Jun. Well it is everywhere recognized that an

enlightened conscience is a better guide than an unenlightened one.

Sen. Enlightened by what? By itself?

Jun. Well I hardly know. Conscience is called an inner light or moral sense, a self-revealing source of knowledge. I think many would say it can be enlightened only by itself.

Sen. Then every conscience must be an enlightened one. If conscience can enlighten itself then one conscience is as good as another.

Jun. No. There would not be agreement to that proposition; but the more enlightened conscience might enlighten the less enlightened one.

Sen. And what would enlighten the more, or the most, enlightened conscience? Can such a conscience enlighten itself? If so how would you go to work to show that one or a few consciences have this peculiar property while all others lack it?

Jun. I guess after all I must be mistaken about conscience enlightening itself.

Sen. Then it must be enlightened by something else; by something that is not conscience at all. And what can that be?

Jun. The right code of morals I suppose.

Sen. That is, if conscience is itself guided by the right code, it is qualified to guide conduct?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. But if it is guided by a wrong code of morals—a code of desire for instance? What then?

Jun. It is clearly not qualified.

Sen. If this be so we have not discovered the object of our search in conscience. Far from being a guide to conduct *per se*, it is, like desire, itself in need of a guide.

Jun. It would seem so, and yet it certainly has high repute as a guide. All the parsons tell us to follow it. What can have caused such confusion?

Sen. There is a very definite cause for it, and I suggest we discuss it to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 21

Def. The *code of total approbation gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate approbations of mankind as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified.

The code of total approbation gratification does not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of individual approbation gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum gratification of individual approbation as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified.

Def. The *code of conscience* means the code of individual approbation gratification.

Def. Conscientiousness means the quality of acts which conform to the code of conscience.

Conscientiousness is not a criterion of rightness.

In order to serve as a guide to right conduct conscience requires a right code of conduct as a guide.

SESSION 22

Junior. Yesterday you said that the confusion and contradiction in men's minds about the use of conscience as a guide to conduct had a very definite cause and I should like to hear your explanation of the matter.

Senior. Well, we are all creatures of habit, and the confusion appears to arise from blindly following a mental habit. A precisely parallel confusion is uncovered when men grope for a guide to belief. In both cases it is a case of convictionism.

Jun. What do you mean by convictionism?

Sen. You know what a conviction is.

Jun. Yes, a belief is a conviction.

Sen. And is a belief a test of truth? Can men discover what is true by discovering what they believe?

Jun. I should say they could not.

Sen. Still you observe that men are continually trying to do it. If you ask them what is true they tell you what they believe, and this habit or practice of using belief as a guide to truth is so strong that even when groping for a guide to belief they take belief as a guide to that guide.

Jun. You mean they guide belief by itself.

Sen. Yes, they make conviction the test of conviction—the strong convictions being the test of the weak, and the deepest convictions being the test of all others. This practice of making conviction the test of conviction is what I mean by convictionism.

Jun. But if we cannot trust our deepest convictions what can we trust?

Sen. You acknowledged just now, did you not, that belief is not the test of truth?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And yet here you are in effect asking “If belief is not the test of truth what is the test?”

Jun. There does seem to be an inconsistency here; but our strongest beliefs would seem to be in a class by themselves. For instance one of my strongest beliefs is that two and two make four. Would you deny the truth of this belief?

Sen. No, but do you claim it is true because you believe it? If so it would be untrue if you disbelieved it.

Jun. No, I do not claim that it is true because I believe it, but if it were untrue I should not have such a firm conviction of its truth.

Sen. And do you find then that men’s deepest convictions of belief are always true? The Mohammedan is unalterably convinced that there is but one God and Mahomet is his prophet, but does that prove the proposition true?

Jun. No, and I acknowledge that conviction,

even deep conviction, is not a test of truth, but I am curious to have your answer as to what the test is.

Sen. Reason is the test of truth.

Jun. And what is reason?

Sen. It would take a long story to answer that question, but I can at once mention something that it is *not*. Reason is *not* conviction or convictional in its nature. Reason is observational in nature. Truth is to be tested by the code of probability and probability ultimately simmers down to the relative frequency of observation. To show this would require traversing the vast subject of the logic of belief. That would take us too far afield. But what I would emphasize here is that reason—science—tests belief by something that is not belief, and not of the nature of belief, namely, probability. It tests conviction by something that is not conviction, and until this is done conviction must remain unguided, for it cannot guide itself. In trying to do so it revolves in an eternal circle of convictionism.

Jun. And just what is the circle of convictionism?

Sen. In matters of belief—physical conviction—it is the circle which consists of seeking a code to guide belief, and then using belief as a guide to that code.

Jun. And you say there is a similar futility encountered when men seek to guide conduct?

Sen. There is a precisely parallel circle of con-

victionism. Approbations and disapprobations are moral convictions, just as beliefs and disbeliefs are physical ones, and just as belief is made the test of truth, so approbation is made the test of right, by the force of habit.

Jun. And what do you propose to substitute for this habit?

Sen. I would suggest that reason would be as appropriate in the one case as it has been found in the other—and reason is the reverse of convictionism. Just as it makes truth the test of belief, it makes right the test of approbation.

Jun. And is this moral convictionism at all common?

Sen. So common that not only the unthinking, but even moralists, with marvellous unanimity fall into it. They start out to discover a code of morals by which to guide conscience, and then—insist on using conscience as a guide to that code.

Jun. But do you mean to suggest that anyone should accept a code which is abhorrent to his conscience? That would be very shocking. Why you might suggest a code requiring the commission of murder, adultery and all kinds of sins and abominations and ask me to accept it.

Sen. Well, let us suppose I did propose such a code?

Jun. I certainly would not accept it under any consideration.

Sen. Why not?

Jun. Because it would be abhorrent to my sense of right and my feelings of moral responsibility.

Sen. But are not these "senses" and "feelings" you refer to another name for your conscience?

Jun. Perhaps so, and what if they are?

Sen. Can you tell then by the way you feel about a code whether it will guide men to an end of maximum interest to mankind, and if so can other men tell by the way they feel also?

Jun. I suppose not.

Sen. You see how easy it is to fall into the circle of convictionism. If you cannot ignore your conscience in seeking a code to guide it, your code is only a disguise for conscience, and you are assuming the criterion which you suppose yourself to be seeking. Not any man's feelings, but some standard of intrinsic interest is the test of what end is of greatest interest to mankind.

Jun. Then you propose to ignore conscience in order to discover a guide to right and wrong.

Sen. Yes, in order to discover a code to guide conscience it is necessary to completely ignore and repudiate conscience as a guide to that code. Otherwise you revolve in the futile circle of convictionism and get nowhere.

Jun. And how do you propose to escape from this circle?

Sen. By the same method used by science in escaping from the corresponding circle of belief. Discovering something that is not approbation or

of the nature of approbation by which to test it. Setting up a test of conviction which is completely independent of conviction. Thus may science be introduced into morals.

Jun. The code of conscience is a code of convictionism then—it is not a scientific code.

Sen. It is a code which proposes to test right by approval and hence is as unscientific as a code proposing to test truth by belief. By merely discovering that an act is conscientious we do not discover that it is right.

Jun. Well, then, here is another code of maximum interest to mankind which is not what we seem to be seeking.

Sen. But is it even of maximum interest to mankind? Is the result sought by conscience the mere doing of the acts approved—conscientious acts—or does it seek the intrinsic interest of mankind?

Jun. Conscience requires the doing of conscientious acts and the avoiding of unconscientious ones. It seeks no interest beyond the fulfilment of its own mandate. It ignores all standards of intrinsic interest but its own. No matter how painful the consequences or how little desired—the voice of conscience must be heeded.

Sen. Then is it a code of maximum interest at all? Does it even try to measure the end attained in units of intrinsic interest?

Jun. Only in such as may measure the feeling of approbation itself.

Sen. But each man is to be guided by the intensity of approbation which he feels himself, irrespective of the consequences to like feelings in others?

Jun. Of course. Each man is to be guided by his own feelings. There is no attempt to average or add the feelings of different individuals, as in the code of total gratification.

Sen. And the feelings of approbation of different people are often in conflict, are they not?

Jun. Assuredly.

Sen. So that the gratification of an approbation, like that of a desire, would often depend less on the intensity of the approbation to be gratified than on the power to gratify it?

Jun. This is as plain in the case of approbation as in that of desire.

Sen. Then factors other than interest may affect decision.

Jun. That is true. When power and interest conflict, power prevails.

Sen. And is required to prevail by the code itself.

Jun. Certainly. Each individual is required to seek the gratification of his own approbations only.

Sen. So that the interest of mankind as a whole is not sought in any sense.

Jun. No.

Sen. Then we are forced to a rather startling conclusion; we are forced to conclude that the code of conscience, the most promising code thus far proposed, the code which meets most completely

the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct—fails to meet any others. It turns out to be merely a way of making what *is* the criterion of what *ought to be*, it determines the righteousness of conduct by chance, and it is not a code of maximum interest to mankind in any sense whatever.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 22

Def. Conviction means belief or disbelief (physical conviction), and approbation or disapprobation (moral conviction).

Def. Convictionism means the practice of testing conviction by conviction.

Def. Physical convictionism means the practice of making belief (or disbelief) the test of truth.

Def. Moral convictionism means the practice of making approbation (or disapprobation) the test of right.

Def. The circle of convictionism means the process of testing codes for the guidance of conviction by means of the conviction which is to be guided.

The code of conscience originates in convictionism.

The code of conscience does not meet the second, the third, or the fourth requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

In order to discover a right code to guide conscience it is necessary to repudiate conscience as a guide to a right code.

SESSION 23

Senior. So far we have tried using degrees of desire and approbation to measure the interests of the most promising codes of conduct we could think of, but have found none which meet the requirements of a right code. And the standard of approbation has turned out to be as little adapted to test the righteousness of conduct as that of desire. Just as the one fails to distinguish the desirable from the desired, so the other fails to distinguish the approvable from the approved; but perhaps for the last session or two we have been following a wrong clue. We may be trying to measure a gratification by something not well adapted to measure it. For example, can we tell by the intensity or amount of a desire the degree of interest which will be felt in its gratification?

Junior. Very roughly, if at all. Realization of desire often fails to come up to anticipation, and then again it may exceed anticipation, but I think this was admitted in session twenty.

Sen. Still, I should like to go over the ground a little more thoroughly, for we do not wish to finally reject the standards of desire and approbation without satisfying ourselves that they are unsuited to the solution of our problem. Hence I wish to bring

out some further difficulties and distinctions which may help us in eliminating possible candidates for the code of righteousness we are seeking. For instance, we often desire happiness or relief from unhappiness, do we not?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And the satisfaction of such desires would be measured in terms of other kinds of interests, namely those of happiness or unhappiness?

Jun. Yes, that is obvious.

Sen. So that in such a case we should not use the standard of desire at all if we measured the satisfaction itself?

Jun. No.

Sen. But still another difficulty occurs to me. Does the rightness or wrongness of an act concern the interests of the person who acts exclusively, or are the interests of others to be considered also?

Jun. The interests of others must be considered, of course. Indeed of all mankind. Purely selfish acts which ignore and injure the interests of others are everywhere deemed wrong.

Sen. But if the intensity or amount of a desire is a poor test of its satisfaction when the satisfaction is confined to the person who acts, it would seem to be a yet poorer test of the satisfaction of others, especially of many others. For example, you desire, do you not, that the crops in China shall not fail this year and precipitate a famine in which millions will starve?

Jun. Certainly I desire it.

Sen. And is your desire very intense? Do you feel deeply when you feel the desire? Right now for instance you say you feel such a desire. Do you find yourself in a highly emotional state about it?

Jun. No.

Sen. Now imagine yourself at this moment to be intensely thirsty, with a glass of water here on the table. Would your feeling of desire for the water be close to or considerably removed from indifference?

Jun. My desire would depart quite distinctly from indifference.

Sen. Would it, as a feeling merely, be more or less intense than your desire for the prosperity of the crops in China?

Jun. As a feeling merely it would doubtless be more intense.

Sen. Yet to fail to gratify it would merely mean postponement in quenching your thirst, whereas failing to gratify your desire for the success of the Chinese crops would mean the starvation of millions of people. There is no comparison between the interests to be served by the gratification of the two desires is there?

Jun. Obviously not. One is infinitely more important than the other.

Sen. Yet for the satisfaction of less interest or importance you would feel the more intense desire

and for that of greater interest you would feel the less intense.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that there is no necessary connection or proportion between the intensity or amount of a desire and the interest to mankind of its gratification?

Jun. None whatever.

Sen. And the one thing cannot be measured by the other?

Jun. No.

Sen. And is this not as true of an approbation as it is of a desire?

Jun. Perhaps it is.

Sen. For example, witnessing a drama on the stage may often excite feelings of intense sympathy or antipathy and corresponding feelings of approbation and disapprobation, and yet the gratification of these feelings would be of no interest to mankind at all, whereas the dreadful distress of multitudes due to poverty, pestilence and war may excite feelings far less intense because not presented to the mind in appealing scenes of pathos.

Jun. That is true, and it shows what poor guides to real human interest feelings of sympathy and antipathy may be.

Sen. Is it not obvious then that we must measure satisfaction by something in the satisfaction itself, and not in the desire or approbation which it is adapted to satisfy?

Jun. It would certainly seem so.

Sen. And is it not equally obvious that the only things in satisfaction which can measure interest are feelings distinguishable from indifference?

Jun. Yes. Satisfaction is measured only in intrinsic interest.

Sen. But in our nineteenth session we formulated codes which sought to make desire and approbation ends of, instead of guides to, the conduct of men and discovered them to be entirely unsatisfactory.

Jun. None of them met the first requirement of rightness.

Sen. So it seems these feelings provide neither a guide to, nor an object of, conduct which seeks an end of maximum interest to mankind. Attempts either to average or add the desires or approbations of mankind arrive at a result no more acceptable as an end than as a guide to an end.

Jun. In either case the result is an absurdity.

Sen. It seems plain, therefore, that the end of greatest interest to mankind cannot be expressed in units, either of desire or approbation, and hence we can eliminate the standards of desire and approbation as means of measuring that end. These feelings are apparently not satisfactions themselves nor are they guides to satisfaction.

Jun. But you have not shown that men never desire nor approve approbation. Nor have you shown that they never desire or approve desire.

Sen. You mean desire or approve them for themselves, irrespective of their satisfactions?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. No. We have not shown this; but there is no need of entering on the rather tedious process of showing it, since even if they occasionally did such a thing, it would throw no light on our problem. As satisfactions they would surely constitute a very small fragment of the satisfactions of mankind, and indeed it can, I think, be shown that they constitute no part of it all, but I do not wish to take the time to demonstrate so trivial and puzzling a matter.

Jun. But if the standards of desire and approbation are eliminated there is nothing left by which to measure intrinsic interest but the standard of happiness.

Sen. That is true, and I think it safe to conclude that the standard of happiness is the one we must depend on to measure the end we are seeking, but to help us see this more clearly I wish to bring out a distinction between intrinsic interests that we have not sufficiently emphasized before.

Jun. And this distinction will throw light on the nature of a satisfaction?

Sen. I rather think it will. We have already agreed, have we not, that the interest of desire and approbation seems to have reference to something other than themselves?

Jun. Yes, to their satisfaction. It is not the feeling itself but the satisfaction that is the end sought,

and the interest of this end is what lends interest to the feeling.

Sen. These feelings then are not self-regarding, but are mental attitudes toward something else of more final interest—desire toward the thing desired, approval toward the thing approved.

Jun. Certainly they are interesting attitudes of mind—they are perceptions of potential gratification and their interest seems borrowed, as it were, from the potentiality of their gratification.

Sen. Desire is always for the thing desired and approval for the thing approved?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Now how about happiness. Is it a self-regarding feeling or is it an attitude toward a gratification? Is its interest borrowed in any sense? Desire we are agreed is an attitude toward something desired and approval toward something approved, but have you heard it said that happiness is an attitude toward something happy or unhappiness an attitude toward something unhappy? Are happiness or unhappiness *for* things happy or unhappy?

Jun. I have never heard such expressions, and it is quite clear from a direct inspection of consciousness that happiness and unhappiness are self-regarding—their interest is in themselves—they are not attitudes toward a gratification or satisfaction. In fact, at least one of them, happiness, is itself a satisfaction.

Sen. So we may say that desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation, are interesting attitudes, whereas happiness and unhappiness are not.

Jun. Yes, I think the distinction is sufficiently clear. The main interest of desire and approbation is for something else, whereas the exclusive interest of happiness and unhappiness is in themselves.

Sen. In order to be able to refer to this distinction, then, I am going to call happiness and unhappiness ultimate interests, and all other kinds of intrinsic interest I shall call non-ultimate. And I propose to define ultimate interests as states of, or changes in, consciousness, which remain unaltered in interest if everything else in the world should promise to, and in fact, become and remain non-existent, whereas non-ultimate interests are interests in something else—a gratification or satisfaction, and cannot exist but for the perceived potentiality of gratification, since there is no such thing as desire or approbation *for* nothing any more than there is such a thing as happiness *for* something. Of course, the best way to perceive the distinction is to inspect consciousness itself, because this ultimate or self-interesting characteristic of happiness and unhappiness cannot be expressed in terms of anything else. To inspect these feelings, however, is to exemplify the meaning of ultimate interest. Perhaps the best way to bring out the distinction in words is to contrast the various classes of interest. Thus of the three classes, proximate interest is of importance

because of what it is a means to, non-ultimate intrinsic interest is of importance because of its relation to a satisfaction, and ultimate interest is of importance because of what it *is*.

Jun. This distinction appears clear. It divides intrinsic interests into two classes, ultimate and non-ultimate. And are happiness and unhappiness the only ultimate interests?

Sen. No, there are others. For example if a state, either of happiness or unhappiness, is increased or decreased in intensity or duration, this would be a matter of interest, even if everything else in the world promised to become and remain, and in fact did become and remain, non-existent, would it not?

Jun. Yes, I can see that it would.

Sen. So that we can also conclude that changes in the intensity or duration of happiness and unhappiness are ends of ultimate interest also.

Jun. And are there any other things of ultimate interest than those we have mentioned?

Sen. Can you discover any others in your consciousness?

Jun. I cannot think of any off-hand.

Sen. Well; this is not the first time I have considered the question, so I need not give an off-hand judgment; and I think it is safe to say that there is nothing else in consciousness, and therefore in the world, of ultimate interest except happiness (positive or negative) and changes in its amount.

Jun. And are you prepared to assert that the end of right conduct which men are groping for is an end of ultimate interest?

Sen. Yes, it seems safe to claim that it is an end expressible in terms of ultimate interest. You will recall that in our seventh session we were groping for something which we were disposed to call final or ultimate? At any rate, all our efforts to express the end in terms of non-ultimate interest have failed although we have tried out the most promising codes of that character we could think of.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 23

The interest of a desire or approbation is not a means of measurement of its satisfaction.

Neither desires nor approbations are guides to, nor ends of, the right conduct of men.

Neither the standard of desire nor that of approbation can be used to measure the end of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind.

Desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are interesting attitudes toward a gratification. Happiness and unhappiness are not.

Def. *Ultimate interest* is a kind of intrinsic interest which would remain unaltered if everything else in the universe should promise to, and in fact,

become and remain non-existent, and is exemplified in Session 23.

Happiness and unhappiness are of ultimate interest.

Desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are of non-ultimate interest.

Changes in amount of happiness and unhappiness are of ultimate interest.

Happiness and unhappiness and changes in amount thereof are the only known things of ultimate interest.

SESSION 24

Senior. From now on I rather guess we may have an easier road to follow, since we have reduced the three possible standards to one. You are convinced I trust that ultimate interest is what men are groping for in their search for an end of maximum interest to mankind. Mere material things or indifference or even non-ultimate intrinsic interest will not do.

Junior. I am disposed to agree with you, but the difficulty of clearly separating one kind of interest from another leaves me still in doubt. You remember you did not take time to show that desire or approbation might not be themselves satisfactions.

Sen. Well, suppose we think of the matter in this way then. In seeking a right guide to conduct men are seeking a guide to conscience, are they not?

Jun. Yes, I think I see that clearly.

Sen. And conscience cannot be guided by any code which uses the standard of desire as a test of rightness?

Jun. That point also seems clearly established. Mere desire is a very poor guide to conduct.

Sen. And it has also been shown that conscience cannot guide itself?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And of all codes which use the standard of approbation as a test, the code of conscience is the most promising?

Jun. Certainly no other which has the least promise seems discoverable.

Sen. From which it appears plain that all codes which use the standard of approbation as a test are also eliminated as guides to conscience.

Jun. This appears plain.

Sen. And we have agreed that there are only three standards by which intrinsic interest can be measured?

Jun. Those of desire, approbation and happiness are all we have been able to identify.

Sen. And some sort of maximum intrinsic interest is the object of our search is it not?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Then the only standard left which can be adapted to the guidance of conscience must be that of happiness.

Jun. This appears clear, and is an easier way to think about the matter than the way you went about it yesterday.

Sen. I think most people would find it so, yet it is well to view the matter from various aspects.

Jun. But it occurs to me that this way of thinking is altogether too easy and cut-and-dried. It is not sufficiently mixed up to be profound. Anything as plain as this must be superficial.

Sen. Well, I could easily mix it up so as to create

an impression of profundity. Nothing is easier. But it has been done so often that there seems no use in doing it once more. Perhaps you are mistaking confusion for profundity.

Jun. How about mixed codes? I want to keep reminding you of such codes. Perhaps we can find some profundity among them.

Sen. We shall see how profound they are a little later. I still think best to postpone consideration of them.

Jun. Then it looks as if our next step is to examine codes, the interest of which is to be measured by the standard of happiness.

Sen. And it is obvious, is it not, that in measuring happiness, either positive or negative, units of amount, and not merely those of intensity, must be used? To attempt to measure the interest of happiness by intensity alone can get us nowhere?

Jun. No, if intensity alone could measure the interest of pleasure and pain it would mean that a toothache of given intensity would be of the same interest whether it lasted a year or a minute. The discussion in session seventeen made it quite plain that the interest of happiness is proportional both to intensity and duration and hence can only be measured by amount, which is the product of the two.

Sen. This being understood, and it being understood likewise that happiness is an end and not an attitude, I shall propose codes corresponding to

those of satisfaction, only I shall measure the interest of the satisfaction by itself, and not by some other interest assumed, erroneously, to be proportional to it. And first I will propose the individual type of code as follows:

The conduct of every man should be directed exclusively to the realization of the maximum amount of happiness for himself alone, irrespective of the effect upon other individuals.

Jun. There would be no agreement to such a code as this. All thinking men would reject it without hesitation. It is purely selfish and obviously would not be to the maximum interest of mankind, since like the corresponding codes of desire and approbation, it would not be the magnitude of the interest which would prevail, but the ability of men to secure their own. With the conflict of interest which exists it would be a measure of self-assertion and persistence rather than interest.

Sen. If it seeks less than a maximum of interest it does not fulfil the conditions of our quest?

Jun. We have agreed that it does not. Besides it is obvious that to tell men to seek their own happiness amounts to much the same thing as telling them to seek their own desires. The origin of the code is only too obvious. To seek their own happiness is what men constantly do, so to tell them to do it merely amounts to telling them that what they do is a criterion of what they ought to do, and a code

which does this fails to meet the second requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Sen. So that this code meets neither the second nor the fourth requirement of rightness to say nothing of the first.

Jun. It fails to meet all three.

Sen. And how about men seeking the happiness of their own family exclusively, or their own city, or state, or country?

Jun. Such codes would be improvements on the purely individual code, and the last mentioned resembles closely the popular code of patriotism, but obviously none of these codes fulfils the conditions we have laid down, since there are conflicts of interest between families and nations as there are between individuals.

Sen. And do you think the maximum unhappiness of mankind is worth considering as an end of human conduct? A code of intrinsic interest proposing such an end is among the possibilities. And it would be a code of maximum interest in one sense and of ultimate interest also. It would be a code of maximum negative interest.

Jun. Of course it would be rejected unanimously and undoubtingly.

Sen. It would not meet the first requirement of rightness then?

Jun. Obviously not.

Sen. I have only mentioned these codes to make sure that we overlook nothing. In our testing of

successive codes it is well to clear the ground as we go. The obvious code of happiness is that which seeks the greatest total happiness of mankind. I therefore propose the following:

The conduct of every man should be directed exclusively to the production of the maximum amount of happiness of mankind.

Jun. This code has a familiar sound and is certainly the most promising you have suggested, unless it be the code of conscience. There would be a large measure of agreement with it, especially as a glittering generality. Whether it would stand the criticisms of the moralists is another matter. However, this code and the code of conscience are the only two of any promise you have proposed since you started with the coin-tossing and brickdust codes in our seventh talk. And it seems to conform more closely to the conditions of our quest than the code of conscience, since obviously it seeks an end of maximum interest to mankind and of ultimate interest at that.

Sen. At any rate it would seem of sufficient interest to merit careful examination?

Jun. Yes, but of course there are many objections to it. One that occurs at once is this. How are men going to discover what acts among those available will be in the maximum interest of mankind? If that question cannot be answered the code is obviously useless since there is no way of applying it.

Sen. Would you say it was possible to give men directions how to make soap?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And how to shoe horses?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And how to raise cabbages or produce other forms of wealth?

Jun. Directions for doing all these things are available.

Sen. And how do men learn how to do such things?

Jun. By experience, of course.

Sen. The soap maker from experience in soap making, the horse shoer from experience in horse shoeing, etc?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And how are men able to learn how to make soap and shoe horses by experience? Is it not because experience provides them with evidence of how such things are to be done?

Jun. If it failed to provide evidence it could not teach much.

Sen. That is why experience in soap making does not teach men to shoe horses or in horse shoeing to make soap, is it not?

Jun. Yes, each particular kind of experience provides evidence of a particular kind.

Sen. Now for evidence to be of any use in guiding conduct it must be evidence of something. The evidence useful to the soap maker is evidence of

how to make soap, and that useful to the horse shoer is evidence of how to shoe horses.

Jun. That is obvious.

Sen. So that the first thing for a man to do who starts out to do something is to find out what is to be done?

Jun. There is no disagreement about that.

Sen. The soap maker could not adapt his means to the making of soap if he did not know he was trying to make soap, nor the horse shoer to shoeing horses if he did not know he was to shoe them?

Jun. All this is plain.

Sen. Now it is generally conceded, is it not, that the conduct of reasonable men and nations should be guided by reason?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And reason is guided by evidence, is it not?

Jun. Yes, because without any evidence reason would have nothing to work with.

Sen. Hence when a moralist urges men to be reasonable and use evidence to direct their conduct in seeking the right end of life, they are entitled at the outset to inquire: Evidence of *what*?

Jun. Evidence of what conduct will lead to such end, of course.

Sen. And they cannot discover what evidence will help them in such a quest if they do not know what the end is, can they?

Jun. No more than the soap maker or the horse shoer in a similar situation.

Sen. In other words, in order to adapt means to an end we must know what the end is?

Jun. To be sure.

Sen. So the first thing to do in seeking to achieve the right end is to discover what that end is?

Jun. That is obvious, and I take it that it is in the hope of making some such discovery that we have gone to so much trouble in discussing these matters.

Sen. Very well. Now for the present we are suggesting that the right end for all men to seek is the greatest total happiness of mankind, and you raise the question. How are they to know what conduct will achieve it?

Jun. Yes, I raised that question.

Sen. And my answer is—by the evidence. The rules for guiding men to the greatest happiness of mankind are not different in general nature from rules followed by reasonable soap makers, horse shoers or farmers for achieving the ends of such callings, and are derived from experience in precisely the same manner, namely, by the evidence which experience affords—the evidence that certain causes will produce happiness, certain others unhappiness as effects—and in general by all evidence that throws light on the relation between happiness and its causes. Men should use evidence in guiding their conduct to ultimate, as consistently as to proximate, ends; and to achieve those ends they must recognize and employ the law of causa-

tion. Maximum happiness among men is to be achieved by setting in operation the causes which will tend most to produce happiness, and by blocking the causes which tend to produce unhappiness.

Jun. That is you would propose going about the production of happiness in the reasonable, common sense way that men go about producing soap or cabbages?

Sen. Certainly. And you will agree, will you not, that science can be applied to the problem of producing the maximum soap or maximum cabbage crop, or even the maximum wealth possible for mankind to produce?

Jun. Of course, everyone would agree to that.

Sen. Very well then; it is permissible to propose that science shall be applied to the maximum production of happiness, and that it shall use evidence in achieving that end precisely as it would use it in achieving the end of maximum money or wealth.

Jun. And how is evidence used in seeking money or wealth?

Sen. That is a subject we can discuss to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 24

The standard of happiness is the only standard which can provide a right code to guide conscience.

Units of amount of happiness are the only units which can measure the happiness of men or of mankind.

Def. The *code of individual happiness* means the code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for himself alone.

The code of individual happiness does not meet the first, the second, or the fourth requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of total happiness* means the code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for mankind.

Evidence is the thing used by science as a guide in adapting means to ends.

Evidence can be used as a guide to the maximum happiness of mankind as it can to any other end.

SESSION 25

Senior. When an investor starts out to make money he is seeking the maximum amount he can make, is he not?

Junior. Consistently with safety, yes.

Sen. Not being infallible he never can be completely certain about his investments can he?

Jun. Of course he always runs some risk, but caution will minimize it.

Sen. And caution is the proper use of reason in estimating the evidence of risk, is it not?

Jun. Yes, evidence helps in estimating degrees of risk.

Sen. And how does an investor or speculator go about using evidence to guide his conduct in money making? Does he not consider the probability of losing as well as the probability of winning?

Jun. Of course there is always some chance of losing as well as of winning.

Sen. And he considers also how much he will win if he wins and how much he will lose if he loses?

Jun. It would seem reasonable to take account of both these things.

Sen. And when he is seeking to decide which of several ventures or courses of conduct adapted to

make money is the best, he considers all these factors, does he not—he considers both the probability of winning and the amount to be won, and the probability of losing and the amount to be lost?

Jun. Obviously the best thing is a combination in which the amount to be won is high and the chance of winning is high also.

Sen. And if he cannot get both these things, what then?

Jun. He makes the best compromise between them that he can.

Sen. And in general you would admit, would you not, that the greater the chance of gain and the smaller the chance of loss the better the investment or speculation?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. And the greater the amount to be gained if the venture turns out favorably, and the less the amount to be lost if it turns out unfavorably, the better the venture?

Jun. This is obvious.

Sen. Whereas if the chance of losing is great, or the amount to be lost is great, even if the chance of losing is not great, the venture begins to look dubious. If a man's whole fortune were at stake, for instance, he would not care to risk it, even if the chance of losing it were slight?

Jun. A reasonable man would avoid it—unless of course there was no alternative.

Sen. And it is all a matter of alternatives any-

way, is it not, since if a man's money is not in one place it is in another?

Jun. Yes, it has got to be somewhere.

Sen. Well, without going into the mathematics of the thing, I refer you to any elementary work on the method of applying the theory of probabilities to estimating "expectations" of gain or loss in trying to get money, or trying to get anything else, which may vary in magnitude. From the rules there given a method may readily be worked out for estimating the presumption of gain (or loss) by the selection of different alternatives.

Jun. And you say this presumption is calculated in the same way whatever the nature of the thing to be gained or lost?

Sen. In the same way, whether money, or soap, or cabbages, or pig iron, or labor or happiness is the end sought; as long as it is something capable of varying in degree.

Jun. And is the rule too complex to be expressed in ordinary language?

Sen. No, it is not very complicated: it is called a use-judgment, and may be expressed as follows:

In any act or course of action the presumption of gain (or loss) in amount of the thing sought to be gained is equal to the probable amount to be lost multiplied by the probability of losing it, subtracted from the probable amount to be gained multiplied by the probability of gaining it.

Jun. So that if several alternative courses of

action are open to the speculator or investor for instance he can calculate the presumption of gain (or loss) of each by applying the rule?

Sen. Yes, and by comparing the different presumptions so calculated he can distinguish the good ones from the bad, and the alternative with the highest presumption of gain (or lowest presumption of loss, if all alternatives involve a loss) will be the "best" or most advantageous from the point of view of money making.

Jun. And this rule you say applies to happiness as well as money?

Sen. Certainly, the proof of it is independent of the kind of unit in which the thing to be sought is measured. Gallons of water and tons of iron follow the same rule. It is most often used in connection with money making because money is so universally sought after. But there are more important things in the world than money, and this process remains just as reasonable, just as scientific, when applied to gaining happiness for mankind as to gaining money for an individual.

Jun. But are you not trying to mix mathematics and morals? Most people would say this could not be done.

Sen. The rule is only a mathematical expression of a process used every day by every cautious and reasonable man. The multiplication table is a similar mathematical expression of common sense. It is only a clear, accurate, and scientific

way of saying what every man will admit is the common sense method of applying means to ends, when the end is something capable of varying in magnitude. The principles of investment which we discussed at the beginning of our talk to-day are every-day applications of it. It is a way of so combining probabilities that they will give the best results in the long run, and in the largest proportion of cases. Hence it can be used as a constant and consistent rule of conduct.

Jun. But does this not introduce uncertainty into morals, and approximate too closely the rules of gamblers and speculators?

Sen. It does not introduce uncertainty into morals because uncertainty is already there. Man is not infallible and hence is denied certainty as a guide in any event. Why then should he not use probability, just as it would be used in seeking money or wealth? Indeed there is no other reasonable thing to be done. Man is forced to take chances with circumstances. He must do the best he can amid the uncertainties of life. Whether he likes it or not he is a speculator or gambler with fate, and the best he can do is to use as reasonably as possible the evidence which is available to him. By means of this evidence he is able to estimate the probable effect of his conduct—its tendency to successfully produce money or soap or cabbages or happiness. I shall therefore suggest a special name for the presumption of happiness of a proposed act

or course of action, whether of an individual or group of individuals. I propose to call it the *utility* or *usefulness* of the act. So that the utility of an act is a measure of its tendency to increase happiness among men, whether the increase is small and local or vast and universal. In other words, the utility of an act is its presumption of happiness to mankind, the presumption to be estimated by means of the evidence available at the time the selection or rejection of the act is to be decided upon.

Jun. Then the end sought by useful conduct is the happiness of mankind, and the means to that end are selected by applying the theory of probability as well as the evidence available at the time of acting permits?

Sen. Precisely so. And of course if we are seeking maximum happiness we shall on every occasion in life select the act whose presumption of happiness, or utility, is a maximum, just as we should if we were seeking maximum money or soap or wealth. When we have done this we have done the best we can with the evidence and the alternatives available to us. And when we have done the best we can we have come as near as we can to doing right, have we not?

Jun. That would be generally conceded. No one can come nearer to doing right than he *can* come.

Sen. Very well, then, it will accord fairly well with usage to call acts of maximum utility *right*

acts and alternatives to them not right (or *wrong*) acts. And furthermore, still adhering more or less to usage, I propose to mean by an act that *ought to* (or *should*) be done neither more nor less than a right act, and one that *ought not to* (or *should not*) be done, nothing more mysterious than a wrong act.

Jun. And can you at this stage define what you mean by the reason for an act?

Sen. Yes. The reason for an act is the evidence that it is right, and all portions of the evidence are portions of the reason.

Jun. Then the only reasonable act is a right one?

Sen. Yes. We mean by the reason for an act the reason which justifies us in selecting it, and nothing can justify the selection of an act except its rightness.

Jun. But as a matter of fact acts are often selected on other grounds.

Sen. Selected but not justified. We must not confuse the cause of an act with the reason for it. That would be to confound the physical reason or explanation, with the moral reason or justification, and it is the moral reason that I have just defined. All acts have causes, but that does not mean that all acts are reasonable.

Jun. But if I can show that I have accomplished the end I aimed at by an act, no matter what the end may be, have I not shown that I acted reasonably?

Sen. No, not in the meaning most usefully em-

ployed in the logic of conduct. All you have shown is that you have successfully adapted your means to your end. You have selected an adaptive act, but it is not a reasonable one unless the end is that of utility. A reasonable act requires a reasonable end as well as a reasonable means. A reasonable act is adaptive, but an adaptive act is not necessarily reasonable. To successfully set fire to a house or a city is to act adaptively, but not reasonably.

Jun. You are getting down at last to the stipulation of some very important definitions.

Sen. Yes. And I am going to ask that you accept the meanings given, at least during this discussion. For the words utility, right, wrong, reasonable, etc., have been and are used in many senses, and we must be able to assign them to one if they are to serve us in thinking clearly about the subject we are discussing. Technical terms are coined to distinguish meanings which untechnical terms are unable to distinguish, and in its technical meaning a reason for an act is a reason why it is right. In an untechnical discussion such as this we trust to the context to indicate when such terms are used technically and when they are not. This of course is a procedure which involves danger of misunderstanding, but with care this danger may be reduced quite low.

Jun. And have you any more technical meaning for the word "useful" to suggest than that implied in your definition of degree of usefulness?

Sen. I rather think it will be useful to propose one, and I therefore stipulate that a useful act shall mean one whose utility is greater than doing nothing at all, or doing as near nothing as possible; while to an act which is not useful the word harmful may be assigned.

Jun. But if these are your meanings an act may be useful and yet be wrong.

Sen. Yes, it will be wrong if it is not as useful as it ought to be, though it will be better than a harmful act. Should you discover a couple of children drowning and rescue only one, when by a little more effort you could rescue both, your course of conduct would be useful and yet wrong, since though you did better than nothing at all, you failed to be as useful as you might have been. You did not select the alternative of maximum utility and hence did not do right.

Jun. But there might be occasions when inactivity or doing as near nothing as possible would be the procedure of maximum utility. If this were not so it would mean we ought never to go to sleep.

Sen. That is true, and for such contingencies the meaning may be usefully extended to include the act of minimum activity, which would thus become the only useful act.

Jun. And what do you call the code of conduct based on the method of guidance we are discussing?

Sen. I propose to call it the code or theory of

utility, and the end it seeks the end of utility. It simply proposes that men on all occasions do right and avoid doing wrong. In other words, that they make it a rule of life to always select the alternative of maximum utility.

Jun. And do you propose to use the word "utilitarian" to designate an advocate of the code of utility?

Sen. I hate to use the word because of the confusing and misleading implications which have grown up around it, but I can think of no alternative which would not involve even greater inconvenience. In using it I obviously give it a special meaning, related to that which Bentham had in mind but not identical with it. By a utilitarian I mean one who advocates the code of utility, not because he approves of it, but because it is the code of maximum ultimate interest to mankind; in other words, one who recognizes that it rests, like the code of probability, on a non-convictional foundation.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 25

Def. A *use-judgment* means the process of establishing a presumption of happiness by means of the following rule of probability:

The presumption (of gain or loss) of happiness from any act is equal to the probable amount to be lost by selecting said act multiplied by the probability of losing it, subtracted from the probable

amount to be gained multiplied by the probability of gaining it.

Def. The *utility of an act* means its presumption of happiness to mankind as estimated by a use-judgment which determines presumptions by means of the evidence available at the time the selection or rejection of the act is to be decided.

Def. The *usefulness of an act* means the utility of the act.

Def. A *right act* means one of maximum utility.

Def. A *wrong act* means one of less than maximum utility.

Def. An *act that ought to be done* means a right act.

Def. A *useful act* means one whose utility is greater than an act of minimum activity, except when said act is of greater utility than any alternative, in which contingency the act of minimum activity is the only useful one.

Def. A *harmful act* means one which is not useful.

Def. The *reason for an act* means the evidence that it is right.

Def. The *code of utility* means the code of con-

duct which proposes that all men on all occasions shall do right.

Def. The *end of utility* means the end sought by the code of utility.

Def. The *right end* means the end of utility.

Def. A *utilitarian* means one who, on non-convictional grounds, advocates the code of utility as a guide to human conduct.

SESSION 26

Junior. Have you now expressed the code of maximum happiness in a form satisfactory for testing?

Senior. Yes. The code of utility results from applying the theory of probability to the production of happiness just as it might be applied to the production of wealth, and as every code is for the use of fallible men, who must perforce be guided by presumption for lack of certainty, this is its most convenient form.

Jun. And you think better of it as a solution of the problem we set out to seek than of codes previously proposed?

Sen. Yes. I judge it more worthy of close inspection and criticism than any alternative I can propose.

Jun. That is good, for I am prepared to give it a thorough test.

Sen. The more thorough the better.

Jun. Well, to subject it to the most comprehensive criticism we can give it—that of general agreement—this test it does not meet as well as the code of conscience. While the pursuit of usefulness would meet with great favor as a general proposition there are many who would reject it.

Sen. This may be admitted without condemnation of the code. Remember we are using general agreement as a clue and not as a final test. It is significant that we get as much general agreement as we do. It is to be noted that, as an offset to general agreement with the code of conscience, we discovered general disagreement. In other words, this advantage was nullified by inconsistency.

Jun. This, it is true, we discovered, and concluded that conscience to be a safe means of guidance, itself requires a guide.

Sen. And I am proposing the code of utility as such a guide. While it does not meet with unanimous acceptance, it does not on the other hand, meet with unanimous and undoubting rejection, and hence meets the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct. While all thinking men may by no means be sure that it is what they are groping for when they grope for rightness of conduct, they are not perfectly clear that it is not.

Jun. That is true. It passes the first test. It would not, like the code of maximum unhappiness, be unanimously and undoubtingly rejected. But how about the second test? Is it merely a method of making what *is* the criterion of what *ought to be*?

Sen. Obviously it is not. The code of utility is a highly artificial code and its end one which does not occur to the unthinking mind. The use-judgment to be sure, like the syllogism, is a universal mental process; it is reason applied to the attain-

ment of ends ; but the end of utility to which the code of utility applies it is not an end generally, or even commonly, sought. A code like that of conscience obviously makes what *is* approved the test of what *ought to be*, but the code of utility conforms to no common habit or impulse of man. It does not make anything he commonly does the test of what he ought to do.

Jun. But he commonly seeks his own happiness does he not? This is certainly a common human impulse.

Sen. Yes. Man has an impulse to seek his own happiness and commonly and naturally does it, just as he commonly and naturally seeks the gratification of his own desires and approbations, but to seek the happiness of all mankind reverses the procedure followed in the individual codes of desire, approbation and happiness. It makes something that man does not commonly or naturally do, the criterion of what he ought to do, and hence this test, so fatal to certain other codes, is completely met by the code of utility.

Jun. It seems clear that the pursuit of utility as you define it is not anything that men habitually do. Hence the code of utility meets the second requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct. But can it meet the third? How does it stand the test of accidental determination? Is it not as much a matter of chance what will give happiness to man as what he may desire or approve? Indeed, are not

all these interests connected together? Surely the things that will produce happiness are in large measure determined by man's experiences and environment, especially in youth. Habits must be considered if happiness is to be successfully produced, and these are notoriously the sport of local circumstances, varying from place to place and from generation to generation.

Sen. It is a question in what sense conduct adapted to produce an effect of interest in itself can be called accidental. Happiness is such an effect, whereas desire and approbation are not. The *causes* of happiness may sometimes be a matter of accident but the *interest* of happiness is not. That is one reason why it is so important to distinguish between happiness and its causes. Many things are true of the one that are not true of the other. The interest of happiness or unhappiness is independent of what causes it. For example, consider the pain caused by a thumb-screw. An equal pain might be caused by the use of acid or hot iron, but the interest a person would have in being relieved from the pain would be independent of which cause produced it.

Jun. Yes, but the conduct adapted to relieve it would not, and the code we seek is a code of conduct. The practical rules of that code would have to vary in accordance with variation in the cause. Acts adapted to release a thumb-screw for example would not be adapted to neutralize acid.

Sen. This is only a recognition of the distinction

between happiness and its causes. The conduct varies because it must vary in order to secure an effect of ultimate interest. Thus it is not accidental, but determined by its relation to an end the interest of which is further removed from the accidental than any which can be imagined. A code of conduct which directs men to burn incense before a certain kind of idol has been determined by some chance circumstances in the transformation of human customs and institutions and would have had no interest to men if these chance circumstances had not occurred; but a code which directs men to seek the happiness of mankind through whatever means it may most successfully be sought, has been determined, not by chance, but by certain properties of human consciousness itself, and would not vary a particle in interest no matter what changes occurred in human customs, convictions or institutions. A code whose interest is independent of such changes can hardly be said to be accidental. The causes of happiness may sometimes be accidental, but the code which seeks it certainly is not.

Jun. But we discovered in session twenty-three that ultimate interests usually and perhaps always constitute satisfaction, and we found that satisfactions were determined by chance when the desires or approbations which they gratified were so determined.

Sen. True, but utility does not seek happiness because it is the satisfaction of desire or of any

other attitude of mind, but because it is what it is. It is happiness as an interest, not as a satisfaction, that is sought by utility. Happiness felt by a being who does not know enough to desire it is just as much happiness as that which is ardently desired. Remember, degree of ultimate interest is independent of everything else in the world in the sense pointed out in session twenty-three. To regard it as an effect which satisfies a desire or approbation neither increases nor decreases its importance. Happiness, whether positive or negative, may be caused by accident or it may for all we know have accidental effects, but its interest is not accidental. We have only to observe it to realize that fact. It may be produced by chance but to use its degree of interest as a guide to conduct is not to use chance as a guide.

Jun. Come to look into the matter, the things I cited as due to accident were *causes* of happiness. It would indeed be difficult to give any definite meaning to the statement that happiness itself is accidental, but it is sometimes produced accidentally.

Sen. Certainly, and unless some code like that of utility guides men's conduct, it will only too often be left to that mode of production. It is the purpose of the code of utility to take the production of happiness out of the category of things left to chance. By so doing it takes conduct itself out of that category, guiding it by reason instead of by conviction.

Jun. It would seem then that the code of utility meets the test of freedom from chance determination as well as that of maximum interest. This to be sure places it in a unique position among moral codes so far as we have examined them. It meets all four of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Sen. Yes, and I venture to assert, after a good deal of search of the literature of ethics, that it is the only code proposed, and presumably the only code proposable which does meet them.

Jun. But you do not maintain, do you, that you and I are the first to discover or discuss it?

Sen. By no means. The code of utility, in one or another degree of definiteness of expression, is as old as human speculation on the subject of morals. Indeed it is the only code which has survived in human attention since the days of Aristotle. Moral codes are subject to fads; in all times they fluctuate like the fashions, and our times are no exception; but the code of happiness has survived the fluctuations of the ages, and this is a fact of unique significance, not to be ignored.

Jun. Then in proposing it we are proposing nothing new.

Sen. No, not new except in the mode of its expression as the application of a use-judgment. But if we can clear away its vagueness, indicate the invalidity of all alternative codes, and show that, as a code of conduct it rests on a foundation as firm

as that upon which rests the recognized code of belief, we shall have more to show for our wasted time than some others.

Jun. And by the recognized code of belief you mean the code of probability?

Sen. Yes—and I think we shall find that utility provides a guide to conduct as acceptable to reasonable men as that which probability provides to belief.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 26

The code of utility does not meet with unanimous and undoubting rejection from men.

It is not a method of making what *is* a criterion of what *ought to be*.

It is not determined by chance or accident.

It is of maximum ultimate interest to mankind.

It is the only code proposed (and presumably proposable) which meets all four of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

SESSION 27

Junior. While it is interesting to discover that the code of utility meets the four requirements of rightness that we have been heretofore using as tests, you realize of course that these are not the only tests which can be applied. You must be aware that many objections have been raised to the code of utility—at least in the forms heretofore familiar.

Senior. Of course I realize there are many objections to the code, but have you compared them with the objections to its alternatives?

Jun. No doubt there are objections to all codes, but if you definitely propose that of utility as a guide to human conduct it would seem wise to examine at least the more common and serious objections that may be urged against it.

Sen. That seems to be wise, and I am going to ask you to attack it as forcefully as you can, and if you overlook any criticisms I will do my best to remind you of them.

Jun. Very well; but in urging objections I shall not always express my own views, but will give those of others as well as my own, just to see how you will answer them.

Sen. I hope you will exhaust all serious objections, or at any rate proceed until you have shown the code is certainly not what we are seeking.

Jun. Well, to begin with some very practical objections, it is notorious that people's ideas of happiness are not the same. What is happiness to one person may be unhappiness to another. How can happiness be successfully sought under such conditions?

Sen. You cannot mean that what *is* happiness to one person *is not* happiness to another. That would be a contradiction in terms. Surely happiness, like everything else, *is* what it *is*. You mean what *causes* happiness in one person may *cause* unhappiness in another. For example, eating raw blubber would probably cause happiness to an Esquimaux but unhappiness to one of us. Or a concert which would give a music lover great pleasure would be a dreadful bore to one who did not care for music.

Jun. Yes, I guess I was referring to causes of happiness. But the objection holds just the same. How are we to make a success of picking out causes which will produce happiness when they are just as likely to produce unhappiness?

Sen. I should say we should have to be guided by evidence just as in any other case of discovering the relation between cause and effect.

Jun. But how is the evidence going to tell us? We cannot feel any happiness except our own.

How are we to tell what other people feel under given circumstances?

Sen. Well, do you think it would be a kind thing to do to put hot coals down a person's neck or to throw acid in his face?

Jun. Obviously not.

Sen. Why not?

Jun. Well, is it kind to torture people?

Sen. Torture them? I did not mention such a thing. I merely suggested searing their epidermis by heat or acid.

Jun. But is it not clear that this would cause torture?

Sen. How do you know it would? You say the only feelings we know anything about are our own, and that there is no way of inferring from cause to effect in the case of other people. For all we know then, branding a person with hot irons or acid, and entertaining him with the thumb-screw or other instruments of the torture chamber, might be the very things that he would hugely enjoy.

Jun. Oh well, of course, that is absurd; that is carrying the thing too far.

Sen. Then you admit that we *can* infer from cause to effect when happiness or unhappiness is the effect?

Jun. We can in the cases you cited. But these are mere physical causes, and of course they produce well known sensations; but in the case of the inner feelings, the emotions and the more refined and

spiritual kinds of happiness or unhappiness, things are more hidden and inaccessible to inference.

Sen. If a person is cross-eyed or club-footed, do you go out of your way to mention it to him?

Jun. Of course not; that would be unkind.

Sen. If he has just lost a wife or child, do you make a practice of harping on his loss and reminding him of the shaky evidence for immortality?

Jun. That would be a heartless thing to do.

Sen. Unkind, heartless, why? You say in these matters of the inner feelings and emotions there is no way of telling what will cause pain and what pleasure. We know nothing about it, so how is it possible to tell whether we are unkind or heartless or not? You may be giving exquisite pleasure to the cripple by harping on his defect, and true joy to the man who has lost his wife by reminding him of his loss, and rubbing it in.

Jun. Of course, this is obviously absurd. We can tell in such cases as these when we are giving pain.

Sen. I am glad you admit it, for these are the cases in which just now you maintained we could not tell. As a matter of fact, if a person will only stop to think a moment, he must see that this objection against the code of utility is unsound. There is plenty of evidence as to what causes will result in happiness and what in unhappiness among normal men, and this evidence can be, and in fact is, continually used to guide men's conduct. The state-

ment that we cannot tell what causes will produce happiness and what unhappiness simply is not true, and the fact of its falsity is recognized in our everyday conduct.

Jun. Well, we cannot *always* tell. It is impossible to be *sure* in every case.

Sen. Certainly we cannot always be sure, but we can follow the evidence and act on the presumption it establishes, and this is what the code of utility requires and all it requires.

Jun. But do you mean to say that in deciding such a vital question as right and wrong we can afford to take chances and be satisfied with anything less than certainty? The old adage says, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead."

Sen. Well, I have tried to show in previous talks that we rely on presumptions only because we are denied a better guide. If you have an infallible guide to right, show it to me and I will be only too glad to follow it. We are forced to accept the fallible guide of probability in seeking money or wealth or knowledge, and so far as I can discover, we must seek happiness in the same way. Are you prepared to offer an alternative? If so you must be omniscient or a son of omniscience.

Jun. Of course I recognize the fact that no one is infallible and hence I have no alternative to probability to offer as a guide to life; but surely it is a very common saying that everyone knows the

difference between right and wrong. What is the explanation of this widespread idea?

Sen. In our first session you may remember that on this point we recognized two very common and diametrically opposed views. First, that everyone knows the difference between right and wrong. Second, that no one can ever know it. Now in neither case does the person who propounds these views have a clear idea of what he means by right and wrong, but in both cases he is groping for something. The man who propounds the first view is groping for the code of conscience and (perhaps unconsciously) hitting it. The man who propounds the second view is groping for the code of utility and missing it, but he is near enough to enable us to see what he was feeling for.

Jun. And you regard this as the explanation of this curious divergence of view?

Sen. Well, it is at least an explanation which fits the facts. If right means conscientious and wrong unconscientious, then anyone by merely looking into his own consciousness can tell the difference between right and wrong, since by direct inspection of his mind it is easy for him to tell what he approves and what he disapproves. Hence if conscience is the test of right and wrong, everyone knows the difference between the two. On the other hand, if right means that which will tend to the greatest happiness, and wrong means that which will not, and we require nothing less than certainty as a

guide in telling us which is right and which is wrong, then no one can ever know the difference between the two, since no one can ever achieve omniscience.

Jun. The code of utility takes neither of these positions, then?

Sen. It takes neither of them. And hence it avoids the difficulties of both. According to the code of utility to "know" what course of conduct will lead to the greatest happiness means the same as to "know" what course of conduct will lead to the greatest wealth or the greatest potato crop. The word is used in its commonest meaning. It does not imply certainty or infallibility to the utilitarian any more than to the economist or the agriculturist or the blacksmith.

Jun. That is, the utilitarian goes about seeking the causes which will produce happiness in the same way that he goes about seeking the causes which will produce potatoes or soap or wealth or knowledge or anything else that causes are competent to produce.

Sen. Exactly. And there is no more reason why men should confuse happiness with the causes of happiness than soap with the causes of soap, or why they should require infallibility as a guide to producing happiness any more than they require it as a guide to producing soap.

Jun. I think this point is now fairly clear, but

another criticism occurs to me that is often brought against propositions to produce happiness.

Sen. What is it?

Jun. Assume men were successful in producing happiness with maximum effectiveness, what then? Would not people get terribly tired of it all? Variety is the spice of life. We can have too much even of a good thing. The result of success in seeking the end of happiness would merely be satiety and the world would be a place of infinite boredom.

Sen. You mean if men are too happy they will be miserable?

Jun. No, of course I don't mean that.

Sen. But you said it.

Jun. No. I said if they were happy too long they would be miserable.

Sen. Even if they continued happy?

Jun. Of course not, but they would not continue happy.

Sen. Then you are assuming them to be unsuccessful in their quest for happiness, which is contrary to your hypothesis that they were successful. You are assuming a contradiction.

Jun. Well what do I mean? I know I am trying to say something. You know perfectly well people get tired of happiness. You don't want to do one thing all the time. If you eat too long you get tired of eating. If you drink too long you get tired of drinking; and I suspect that even if you kiss your sweetheart too often you may get tired of kissing

her, though as a philosopher I can only theorize about this.

Sen. And for a similar reason the prospect of playing a harp in Heaven for eternity does not attract you?

Jun. No. That is what I say. Happiness continued too long becomes a bore.

Sen. That is what you say but it is not what you mean. What you mean is that a given *cause* of happiness if continued in operation too long becomes a bore. That is, it ceases to be a cause of happiness and becomes a cause of indifference or even of unhappiness. This is another example of confusing happiness with its causes. Happiness is the one thing that people never get tired of; but they confound it with its causes—eating or drinking, or kissing or playing a harp—and so they mistake the thing they are tired of. They are tired of the cause for the very reason that it has ceased to be a cause of happiness. Hence they say exactly the opposite of what they mean. They *say* they don't like happiness when they *mean* they don't like unhappiness.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 27

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that what is happiness to some is unhappiness to others is unsound. It rests upon confusion of happiness with its causes.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that the causes of happiness are unascertainable is unsound. It rests upon confusion of knowledge with certainty.

Those who claim that everyone knows the difference between right and wrong identify right with conscientious and wrong with unconscientious.

Those who claim that no one knows the difference between right and wrong are groping for the code of utility, but missing it because they confound knowledge with certainty.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that too much happiness becomes tiresome is unsound. It rests upon confusion of happiness with its causes.

SESSION 28

Junior. I notice you are in the habit of comparing the production of happiness with the production of such material things as soap and potatoes.

Senior. Yes, I make the comparison because all successful processes of production are but special cases of a single process—that of adapting means to ends.

Jun. But are you not neglecting a very vital difference in the means employed? To produce happiness, one of the essential means is human nature with all its complexity and caprice. Indeed human nature is your principal raw material so to speak, and it is not a thing you can count on as you can count on the raw materials from which pig iron and soap are produced. Dead things like iron ore have a uniformity not to be found in human beings.

Sen. Do you mean that human nature is not as uniform as the materials which the farmer, the miner, the manufacturer and the engineer deal with?

Jun. That is certainly the general opinion.

Sen. Suppose you offered ten thousand normal persons the alternative of bathing in boiling oil or on a Florida beach, how many would choose the oil?

Jun. None, but of course you are choosing an extreme case.

Sen. Suppose you should offer the same ten thousand their choice of dining on potatoes or grass? How many would choose the grass?

Jun. There would be the same uniformity of response, of course, but again your example is extreme.

Sen. Well, suppose you offer ten thousand job hunters two jobs of the same kind of work—one at ten per cent more pay than the other. How many would select the lower wage?

Jun. None of them, of course.

Sen. There seems considerable uniformity in human nature in these respects then. And suppose you should offer an average ten thousand their choice of getting a living by collecting garbage or cutting coupons. Do you think there would be general agreement in the choice?

Jun. I guess cutting coupons would be the choice of the ten thousand.

Sen. You seem to think human nature very uniform indeed. Can we not find some choice in which they would differ? Suppose we offered our ten thousand the choice of spending a couple of hours at the theatre or the same time hoeing corn. Would there be the same uniformity of choice?

Jun. No, I think a few would rather hoe corn, but most would prefer the theatre.

Sen. How many would choose the theatre, do you think?

Jun. Well considerably more than ninety per cent I should judge.

Sen. Well, at last we have discovered a departure from uniformity, but only a slight one at that. And yet we have been dealing with human nature all the time. Now suppose we should select at random ten thousand batches of iron ore just as they come from the mine. What is the chance that they would all behave alike in the blast furnace?

Jun. I don't know.

Sen. Well the chance would be practically nothing at all. Iron ore is altogether too variable a thing to admit of uniform prediction such as we made in the cases of human nature that we cited. Certain batches could be treated alike and certain others could not. A great diversity in proportions of coke, limestone, etc., would be required among ten thousand batches. And when you consider the lack of uniformity in the animals, plants and soils which the farmer deals with, and the variability of the raw materials which the manufacturer handles, you will find that, for practical purposes, human nature is, on the average, no more variable, perhaps even less so, at least in those respects which are most important in utility. There may be great variation in individual tastes,—some like music, some do not; some like onions, others do not, and so forth,—but when it comes to far-reaching choices

such as those between competence or poverty, liberty or tyranny, enlightenment or ignorance, good health or bad, there is a high degree of uniformity; and even when there is a lack of uniformity in what men like, there is a far less lack in what they ought to like, which, after all, is the important thing, since the aim of applied utility is to convert what *is* into what *ought to be*, not only in the matter of what people like but in all other matters. Indeed, the difficulty in dealing with human nature is not because it lacks uniformity—in most important respects there is no such lack—it is because its uniformity is, in certain respects, altogether too great. The uniformity with which it rejects reason in the realm of morals is, in fact, the greatest present obstacle to its progress.

Jun. well, then, here is a difficulty that you admit, and it is a difficulty with human nature.

Sen. Yes, but the difficulty arises from too much uniformity, not too little. Not from diversity but from the lack of it.

Jun. It is not less serious for that. If people are to reject the use of reason in morals—if for instance they cannot be made to accept the code of utility—what is the use of bothering about it? It is bound to be utterly useless if no one will consent to apply it. An ignored code of morals, no matter how reasonable, is of no practical use in the world.

Sen. That is true. But just here comes in a

very useful property of human nature—its changeableness—the very property which you have cited as an objection to the code of utility. Human habits though quite persistent and stable are not absolutely unchangeable. Remember that human nature or human habit rejected reason in the realms of cosmology and medicine and psychology, and even of physics and chemistry for thousands of years, and so made no progress in material civilization; but eventually, among certain peoples, human nature—or rather human habits—changed, and reason was accepted, the result being the civilization that we see about us. If human habits can change so much as to accept reason in material matters they can change further and accept reason in moral matters.

Jun. I must say I do not see any signs of it. The human race is just as stupid and blundering in perverting science to-day as it was a thousand years ago, perhaps more so. Its moral muddle is as complete as in the time of the Pharaohs.

Sen. I do not agree with this. The spirit of science is already beginning to spread from material to moral matters and to ameliorate the condition of mankind. As yet perhaps the results may be slight and obscure, but when once the trickling stream breaks through the ancient dam of custom and prejudice it will sweep it away with amazing speed. This is what it did in the material realm. Remember that in the last one hundred and fifty years the world has advanced materially more than

in the half million years of human existence that preceded it. This result was achieved by the application of reason to material things, and what reason can do once it can do again. I venture to guess that in spite of present appearances we shall have in the next hundred and fifty years a moral transformation as great as that which reason has produced in material conditions in the last one hundred and fifty.

Jun. You are certainly an optimist. But we are getting off the track. We are not here to prophesy but to criticize. I want to recall your attention to the obstacles offered by human nature to any scientific production of happiness such as you evidently hope for. Let us not delude ourselves with false hopes. To apply utility you must deal with human nature, and despite what you say of its uniformity—it is a hard thing to deal with. Do you mean to claim for instance that the science of human nature is not more complex and difficult than such sciences as physics and chemistry which deal with dead matter, and upon which the common branches of engineering have reared the structure of modern civilization? Very few people would agree with you.

Sen. The science of human nature is not so far advanced as physics or chemistry toward mathematical expression, which is the ideal of all sciences, and no doubt it is more complex; indeed it may turn out eventually to be merely a more complex physics and chemistry. But in its present stage it is not more difficult than other sciences; complexity does

not necessarily imply difficulty. Indeed no science can be said to be more difficult than another, since in any science it is easy to propound problems without number which go to the limit of difficulty—and even beyond it to insolubility.

Jun. You mean that the science of arithmetic for instance is as difficult as that of human nature.

Sen. In any science it is a simple matter to pick out problems that are easy and others that are difficult. Some problems of human nature are more difficult than some in arithmetic and some in arithmetic are more difficult than some in human nature. For instance here is one in arithmetic: What are the factors of the number 978,636? And here is one in human nature: Will a ten-cent store in a city get more trade on a main street than on a side street, or will it not? Which of these problems is the more difficult to solve?

Jun. The arithmetical problem is obviously the more difficult, but you have selected a special example.

Sen. Certainly, but it illustrates the impracticability of comparing the difficulty of two sciences. When all sciences can supply problems which go to the limit of difficulty, just what is meant by asserting one to be more difficult than another? There is no sharp line between the sciences. Some of the problems of the science of human nature are arithmetical. Man applies his industry and intelligence to the problems which confront him and,

other things being equal, he solves them in proportion to their inherent difficulty. He leaves unsolved the more difficult problems of physics and chemistry just as he does those of human nature, but the more effort and intelligence he applies to a problem the better the chance that he will solve it, irrespective of whether it is a problem in arithmetic or in human nature. The number of problems left unsolved by virtue of their difficulty is infinite in all sciences. Indeed I know of no useful sense in which it can be said that one science is more difficult than another.

Jun. Well, it would be tedious to argue this matter at length, but I suppose before you are through you will illustrate how the uniformities of human nature are to be made the basis of rules to guide human conduct, and so perhaps dispose of this objection by showing that it does not apply in the concrete.

Sen. We shall encounter some illustrations of this character, but to go into that subject in any detail is beyond the scope of our present discussion. We are engaged in seeking the end to be attained. The various means of attaining it would be too vast a subject to tackle just at present. It would include the totality of useful conduct. But there is another way of disposing of the objection which is worth suggesting.

Jun. And what is that?

Sen. The objection is, as I understand it, that

we should not seek the end of utility, because we have to seek it through human nature, and this is something very uncertain and difficult to deal with and refractory in directing to a given end.

Jun. That is the substance of the objection.

Sen. If you live in Seattle would it be easier for you to reach New York or San Francisco?

Jun. San Francisco would be much nearer and easier to reach, of course.

Sen. And suppose it was important for you to go to New York, and I wished to raise an objection to your going there. Would it not be reasonable for me to point out that the difficulty of going to New York would be greater than that of going to San Francisco—hence you had better go to the latter place?

Jun. But on your assumption I have no object in going there.

Sen. True, but think how much easier it is.

Jun. I understand that, but it is better for me to take a difficult route to a goal which is important to me than an easy route to one that is not.

Sen. Well, what is true of you is true of mankind. They must either seek the goal of greatest utility or some other goal. It is better for them to seek the goal of most importance to them even if difficult, than a goal of no importance even if easy. Misery for instance is a very easy goal to seek. A man may sit quietly in his easy chair and by zealously applying a pair of pliers or a hammer to

various portions of his anatomy produce pain enough in a day to compensate for a year of ordinary happiness. If absence of difficulty is a recommendation here is a goal worth seeking.

Jun. Of course, if you compare an end of the greatest interest with one of none at all or of negative interest, this way of disposing of the objection has much force; but if the end of utility is very difficult and an end almost as good is easy, would it not be reasonable to select the easier goal?

Sen. For instance the goal of making those about you happy, or of serving the happiness of your city or nation might be attainable, whereas that of serving all mankind might not? In that case you say the less ambitious aim would be preferable to the more ambitious?

Jun. Certainly. For is it not better to try for a smaller good that can be attained than for a larger one that cannot?

Sen. It certainly is better and follows from the meaning of the word "better" required by the code of utility—that is, it is more useful. What you overlook is that by using probability as our guide we are doing all that can be done to meet such a situation as you suggest, for it is only by means of evidence that we can tell whether an object is attainable or not. When we work for the happiness of our family, city or nation, and in so doing produce all the happiness we can, we are obviously following the code of utility. We are doing the

most useful thing attainable and hence doing right. It is only when we sacrifice the greater happiness to the lesser—the interest of mankind or our country to that of ourselves or family, that we are selecting the less useful alternative and hence doing wrong.

Jun. Well this puts a rather different face on the matter. But when we speak of increasing the happiness of mankind, we are likely to think of the end as something very ambitious and remote, something that might be affected by the conduct of great statesmen or states, but something to which the humble efforts of the ordinary man cannot contribute.

Sen. To think so would be to misunderstand the matter. The happiness of mankind is merely the aggregate happiness felt by the individuals who constitute mankind. Hence whenever a man contributes to the happiness of his neighbors or his family or even of himself he is contributing to the sum total which is the end of utility. And as you say, it is conduct of this kind only which is accessible to most men. That is why application of the code of utility in personal relations is so important. Indeed it is one of the strong points of this code that it applies as well to the humblest act of the humblest individual as it does to the most comprehensive policy of a society of nations. The housewife washing dishes, or the boy picking blueberries may be selecting the most useful conduct available just as truly as the statesman laboring on a plan to promote

the peace of mankind. In any case to make the best use of the opportunity available is all that anyone can do. According to the code of utility the issue of right and wrong is raised in every choice of every reasoning being.

Jun. The code of utility applies to all acts then?

Sen. Yes, to all voluntary acts.

Jun. And does it contemplate remote consequences of acts as well as immediate ones?

Sen. From the mere statement of the code it is clear that it contemplates all consequences the probability of which can be in any degree estimated, whether immediate or remote.

Jun. That is a subject which I wish to pursue to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 28

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that human nature is too uncertain and a science thereof too difficult to permit the application of science to morals is unsound. It rests upon misapprehension of the properties of human nature and the power of science.

No one science is more difficult than another.

The code of utility applies to all voluntary acts, from the trivial conduct of individuals to the most comprehensive policies of society.

SESSION 29

Junior. You said yesterday that the code of utility makes no distinction between immediate and remote consequences.

Senior. It makes none based on their degree of remoteness alone.

Jun. The distribution of happiness in time is a matter of indifference then?

Sen. That is correct. It is a matter of indifference. Our own consciousness affords conclusive evidence that the degree of interest of happiness is determined by its amount alone. This we pointed out in our twenty-fourth session.

Jun. But have you not noticed that people almost always prefer immediate happiness to remote, whereas in the case of unhappiness their desire generally is to postpone it?

Sen. Yes, I have observed that.

Jun. Well, does that not show that distribution in time is an important factor in men's decisions when happiness is concerned?

Sen. Yes, it does.

Jun. Why then do you ignore the fact in formulating the code of utility?

Sen. For a reason I have often emphasized before. I am not trying to express what *is*, but what

ought to be. The fact that men's decisions *are* often determined by considerations of distribution in time affords no proof that they *should be* so determined. A drunkard may decide to injure his health and bring his family to want in order to secure the immediate enjoyment of intoxication, but that does not prove that he ought to so decide. A man may prefer to suffer toothache for weeks because he dreads the pain of having his tooth out, but that is no proof that he ought to prefer it. Your citations are confined to what *is*, and we long ago decided that what *is* is no test of what *ought to be*. It is not men's preferences, but their interests that we are seeking.

Jun. But is there not a good reason why immediate pleasures are to be preferred to remote ones? If we neglect immediate joys that are within our reach to go seeking some remote bliss which may never after all eventuate, are we not likely to end by getting nothing at all? Surely a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Sen. If we were as certain of the two birds in the bush as we are of the one in the hand, which would be worth the more?

Jun. Well, if we are certain of them, two are better than one of course.

Sen. How much better?

Jun. Two would be twice as good as one I suppose.

Sen. So that it is the uncertainty of getting the

birds in the bush that depreciates their value?

Jun. Yes, that is it.

Sen. And when this uncertainty is equalized the usefulness of the birds depends only on their number, two being twice as desirable as one?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Here is an excellent illustration of a use-judgment, each bird corresponding to an equal amount of good (or happiness). When the probabilities are equal we have only to consider their numbers (amounts); whereas when the probability of getting them is unequal we have to consider the degree of probability as well as the amounts. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush because we estimate the probability of getting the two in the bush as no more than an even one, whereas we are sure of the one in the hand.

Jun. And are we not more sure of an immediate happiness than a remote one?

Sen. As a general thing we are, and that is the reason and the only reason why, other things being equal, immediate results are to be preferred to remote ones.

Jun. You recognize distribution in time then as a factor in utility?

Sen. Only in the degree in which it is a factor in probability. By guiding conduct by probability we give all considerations of distribution in time the weight which by the evidence they deserve, just as we give weight to any other consideration that

affects probability. Hence we do not need to consider distribution in time as a separate factor in determining the utility of acts. It is completely allowed for under the general rule requiring that probability shall be the guide to happiness. Near the end of yesterday's session we encountered a special example of the way that probability properly enters into our judgment of conduct, and here we have encountered a second one. This shows the importance of formulating the code of greatest happiness with the factor of probability included.

Jun. Well, both these examples of the application of probability are generally understood. People seem to recognize them by a sort of instinct. It is merely common sense.

Sen. Certainly, and this is a fact of great significance. It is a part of the evidence that utility is what men are really groping for in their search for a guide to conduct. They recognize more or less vaguely the separate factors which should be employed, but to include them all in a single standard requires more time and analysis than most men will or can give to the subject.

Jun. And are there many such signs that men are groping for utility?

Sen. Before we are through I think you will admit that there are many.

Jun. How can you tell that it is utility they are groping for?

Sen. Did you ever examine a target at which riflemen had been firing?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Could you tell what they were aiming at?

Jun. Yes. They were aiming at the bull's-eye.

Sen. How could you tell that it was the bull's-eye they were aiming at?

Jun. Well, if for no other reason, I could tell by the way the shots were grouped around it.

Sen. And how are they generally grouped?

Jun. Most of the shots don't hit it, but they hit all around it, and are more crowded toward the centre than on the edges. Even if a man were ignorant of the object of target shooting he would have to be a poor guesser if he could not guess from the distribution of the shots what the riflemen had been shooting at.

Sen. I hope as we proceed you will keep that idea of the shots around the bull's-eye in mind, for I think we are going to find something very much like it in the groping efforts men make to discover a guide to conduct. We have noticed a couple of shots already and have indicated reasons for thinking they were not entirely random ones.

Jun. But I am not going to bring up arguments for utility. I propose on the contrary to offer objections against it.

Sen. I know it, but I venture to predict that many of the objections against it will on examination turn out to be arguments for it. They will be

shots which will not, to be sure, hit the bull's-eye of utility, but they will be so grouped around it that he must be a poor guesser who cannot see what is being groped for.

Jun. But surely it is very unlikely that objections against a proposition should turn out to be arguments for it.

Sen. Perhaps so, but in this case we can judge better after we have made the trial than before.

Jun. But if men have such a natural set or instinct toward utility as you say they have, why have they not long ago recognized what they were after and agreed upon it without question?

Sen. Because something very definite has prevented them from doing so.

Jun. And shall we be able to find out what that something is?

Sen. I think we shall be able to put our finger upon it with great exactitude.

Jun. You seem to regard men's search for righteousness as a kind of target practice then?

Sen. Yes, with utility as the bull's-eye.

Jun. And do you claim that men have consciously aimed at it, as they do at a bull's-eye?

Sen. No, they have not seen clearly or consciously what they were firing at, but have aimed through a fog which, while keeping most shots from hitting the bull's-eye, has been insufficient to prevent practically all of them hitting fairly near it.

Jun. And what is the nature of the fog that obscures men's moral insight in this way?

Sen. We shall discover that as we proceed in our examination.

Jun. Very well. But now to follow up the matter of distribution a little further. Utility you say ignores the distribution of happiness in time. How about its distribution in relation to number? Does it ignore that also? Do not numbers count? Is it not better to render a large number of persons happy than a small number?

Sen. The number of persons affected is a matter of indifference except as number may affect total amount.

Jun. You do not agree with the founder of utilitarianism then—Jeremy Bentham? He asserted that the end to be sought by conduct was the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Sen. There are several particulars in which I do not agree with Bentham. Whether I agree with the statement you quote I cannot say, since it is ambiguous. In other words, I do not understand what he is saying, and hence can neither agree nor disagree with him.

Jun. But surely this statement is familiar to you. It is a very well known statement and is often in the mouths of orators and statesmen.

Sen. Often in their mouths, yes, and generally misquoted, taking the form of "the greatest good of the greatest number," but though often in their

mouths it is never in their heads since it expresses no definite meaning. Words in the mouth do not necessarily imply meaning in the head.

Jun. Why it seems to be clear, and is in fact a rule favored by many as a guide to the conduct of men.

Sen. If it is clear, tell me which it means—the greatest amount of happiness among men, or the greatest number of men that are happy?

Jun. Are not these two things equivalent? Don't they amount to the same thing?

Sen. No, they are two separate things. An illustration will make this plain. Assume two groups of men, A and B. Group A consists of ten men possessing \$10,000 among them. Group B consists of one hundred men possessing \$1000 among them. A is the group that has the greatest amount of money, but B is the group that has the greatest number of men that have money. Now just for illustration let money stand for happiness and you will see the difference in the two things. To speak of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is as ambiguous as to speak of the greatest money of the greatest number.

Jun. And which of these two aims is that of utility—the greatest total happiness, or the greatest number of happy persons?

Sen. The first is the aim of utility—the greatest totality of happiness, irrespective of the number involved.

Jun. But you will agree, will you not, that other things being equal, the greater the number of happy persons the better?

Sen. Certainly, because if people are happy the more there are the greater the output of happiness, but on the other hand, if they are unhappy the fewer there are the better, and none at all is the best number.

Jun. Of course in this comparison you are ignoring men as possible means of happiness to others or to future generations?

Sen. That goes without saying. The qualification "other things being equal" takes care of that. Unhappy individuals or even whole groups, classes or generations of unhappy individuals, may be very useful if they are sufficiently effective means to the happiness of others.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 29

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the distribution of happiness in time is unsound. It rests upon misapprehension of the relation of probability to utility.

Recognition that trivial objects which are highly probable may be preferable to ambitious objects which are highly doubtful, and that immediate results are likely to be more useful than remote ones, originates in an endeavor to apply probability to

conduct, and illustrates a common mode of groping for the code of utility.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the number of individuals affected is unsound. It rests upon confusion respecting the relation between number of individuals affected and amount of happiness felt.

The phrase "greatest happiness of the greatest number" is of uncertain meaning. It is not a correct expression of the end of utility.

SESSION 30

Junior. Yesterday we discussed a couple of points concerning the distribution of happiness—distribution as to nearness and remoteness in time, and as to small or large numbers of persons involved, and concluded in both cases that distribution was a matter of indifference. To-day I should like to take up what might be called distribution in space—that is distribution among the members of mankind. Does utility require an equal or approximately equal distribution among men, or is it, like distribution in time, a matter of indifference?

Senior. It is a matter of indifference. The end sought is the greatest possible happiness of mankind irrespective of distribution. This is inferable from what was said in session twenty-five.

Jun. And is inequality as much a matter of indifference as equality?

Sen. Yes. Totality is the end sought and the only end.

Jun. Do you mean to claim that if there is a group of one hundred persons in a community it is just as well to have the whole of the happiness in that community concentrated in a single member as to have it distributed equally among the one hundred?

Sen. Yes, if the amount is the same in both cases.

Jun. Why, that seems to me a horrible idea. It is unjust. It is unfair. It is abominable.

Sen. It seems so to me also.

Jun. And yet you stand for a code of morals that requires such a system of unfairness and discrimination? I should think you would be ashamed of yourself.

Sen. Why, you almost make me feel like a scoundrel. I believe I am a scoundrel, for here I am claiming that a thing which is horrible, abominable, unfair and unjust is also right. Would anyone agree with me in this?

Jun. Of course not. No one would agree with you.

Sen. Well, I don't want to be in a minority, and indeed I will admit frankly that I feel as strongly opposed to inequality in the distribution of happiness as you do.

Jun. I am glad you agree with me about the matter.

Sen. I certainly agree with you. I cannot think of one man hogging all the happiness in a community without strong feelings of dislike and disapprobation. The question is what conclusion to draw from these feelings? Do you think we ought to repudiate at once the code of morals that excites them?

Jun. That would seem the most natural thing to do.

Sen. Well, I am almost persuaded to do it. But stop a moment. On what grounds would you say that we repudiated the code of utility if we decide to do it?

Jun. Why, on the ground that it requires something intolerable, abominable and unfair.

Sen. And how did we discover that it was intolerable, abominable and unfair?

Jun. Well, we both feel the same way about it, don't we? There is no dispute about it? You have already agreed with me in the matter.

Sen. Yes, certainly I have agreed with you. We are to repudiate it then because of the way we feel about it? We both discover that we disapprove of it?

Jun. Well, you don't disapprove of a thing that is right, do you?

Sen. It seems to me we have raised this issue before, and that we were by no means agreed that disapproval proved a thing to be wrong. It only proved it to be disapproved. In our twenty-first talk we went over this matter, and concluded that the code of conscience was not necessarily the code of right.

Jun. Do you mean to say that this purely intellectual consideration is causing you to change your mind about this question? You are not prepared to approve what is unfair and unjust, are you?

Sen. No, I have not changed my mind. I still disapprove it, but I have not yet seen the proof

that I ought to disapprove it, and I am beginning to hesitate about making what I *do* disapprove the criterion of what I *ought to* disapprove. After all, if we are to reject the approbation and disapprobation of *others* as guides to conduct, as all of us are willing to do, on what principle of consistency do we accept *our own*? Is the world waiting open-mouthed to learn how you and I feel about these things?

Jun. I begin to see your drift. Some of our former conversations are coming back to me. But in a concrete case like this where our feelings are involved it is fearfully hard to make the distinction between what we *do*, and what we *ought to*, disapprove.

Sen. Yes, it is hard, but if you and I are entitled to ignore the distinction, so is everyone else, the pagan, the cannibal, the misanthrope and the enemy of society. Perhaps after all we had better cool down a bit, and set an example by overlooking our own feelings and consulting our reason. We may find things are not so bad as they seem to be.

Jun. That is certainly reasonable advice, but do you mean to say we cannot find a reason why an equal distribution of happiness is better than an unequal distribution?

Sen. Let us compare a few examples of different kinds of distribution and see what can be learned from them. For convenience let us assume a community of a hundred equally deserving persons and

to begin with I will ask you to compare the two following alternatives. First, an alternative involving a high degree of happiness confined entirely to one individual, the other ninety-nine being in an indifferent state; and second, an alternative involving a high degree of unhappiness equally distributed among all members of the community. Which of these two alternatives would you say was the "better"? If by your decision you could realize the one or the other, which would it be "right" for you to choose?

Jun. The first one, of course.

Sen. But wait a minute. You are claiming an alternative of very unfair and unequal distribution to be better than one of equal distribution. You are supporting the code of utility.

Jun. Yes, I am doing so in this example because the equal distribution is one not of happiness but of unhappiness.

Sen. Happiness should be equally distributed but not unhappiness. Is that it?

Jun. Well, come to think of it, I don't know why one or a few men should be called upon to bear all the misery in a community either. I guess I must be mistaken in thinking there is any difference between happiness and unhappiness in this respect. After all one is merely the negative of the other.

Sen. You think that if there must be misery it is best to spread it out as much as possible then?

Jun. It seems hard to decide either way. The

best I can make out of it is that some compromise should be made. It is not right to tolerate too much misery or to interfere too much with happiness in order to get equality of distribution, but some sort of balance should be struck between amount and distribution.

Sen. But there are all degrees both of amount and of inequality in distribution. How is one to be balanced against the other? We found we could not balance amount against number. The same difficulty arises in the case of distribution.

Jun. Nevertheless I think some compromise should be made. Otherwise the bulk of a community might be left in a miserable state in order that a few might revel in rapture.

Sen. But remember happiness is negative as well as positive and in the world as we know it the negative variety probably predominates. So in the long run is it not as broad as it is long? You are only looking on one aspect of the question. Consider the advantages to the bulk of a community in confining the misery that is to be borne to a few. It leaves the great majority free to enjoy themselves.

Jun. It certainly is a perplexing question. When you first announced the indifference of the code of utility to distribution of happiness I felt very strongly that we had found a fatal defect in the code, but the more I think of it the more doubtful I become.

Sen. Suppose we drop the question of how we

“feel” about it and examine a concrete example to see if a compromise is practical. Assume the two following alternatives to be open to our choice:

(1) A community of a hundred persons all of whom are equally happy to an average degree differing only slightly from indifference, and (2) the same community in which ninety members are ten times as happy as in (1), the other ten being in a condition of indifference. Which of these alternatives is the “better”?

Jun. I should say the second was the better because, though the distribution is not quite equal, the quantity is so much greater as to more than compensate.

Sen. Well, your decision agrees with the code of utility which judges by quantity alone. Now I am going to ask you to imagine the first alternative to remain as given, but the second to be varied, so that only 89, 88, 87 and so forth of the one hundred members of the community are ten times as happy as in (1), the remainder being indifferent, and I am going to ask you at what number you would say the compromise ought to be made? As the numbers diminish of course the total quantity grows less and the inequality greater. What is the number which would swing alternative (2) from a “right” act over to a “wrong” one? Of course this is only a hypothetical example cited to make a principle clear. You say the number ninety leaves the second alternative the “right” one. What num-

ber would make it the "wrong" one? Would it be eighty or fifty or forty, or ten, or what number?

Jun. Well, I cannot say off-hand. I should hardly know what to say, but it seems to me it would be a good deal less than ninety.

Sen. Would it be as small as one?

Jun. No, I should say not. One person, even if ten times as happy as before could not compensate for the deprivation of happiness in the other ninety-nine.

Sen. Have you any principle to propose other than that of utility which can decide the question?

Jun. No, I have no principle. I only have a sort of feeling, and that does not give me any clear information about the matter.

Sen. Well, the code of utility supplies us with a reason instead of a feeling, and decides the matter by a calculation involving quantity alone. Thus if the quantity of happiness felt by the community in alternative (1) is represented by ten units, the quantities represented by the community in alternative (2) would be as follows:

If the number of happy members were ninety, the total quantity of happiness would be ninety units, if it were eighty it would be eighty units, if seventy it would be seventy, and so on down to ten, when the number of units of happiness would be the same in alternative (2) as in alternative (1). This would mean that no useful choice could be made between them, but if the number of happy persons in alterna-

tive (2) were eleven or more, alternative (2) would be the right one, whereas if it were nine or less would be the wrong one, because it would involve the less total happiness. As in this hypothetical case the quantities of happiness to be obtained are assumed to be certain, we can ignore the question of probability, and by this simplification perceive more clearly the way in which utility decides between alternatives whose relative probabilities need not be considered.

Jun. It seems a very cold and calculating way to decide.

Sen. Well, have you any warm and emotional way of deciding which will give results of greater interest to mankind?

Jun. I have no hard and fast principle.

Sen. Perhaps you have a fast and loose principle then? Such a principle will be just as satisfactory as a hard and fast one if it will yield a good or better result for mankind.

Jun. But the trouble with utility is that it doesn't give impulse and emotion and generous feeling and all that sort of thing any part in the service of mankind.

Sen. Yes, it does; it gives them a greater part than ever by guiding them into right channels of service. Unguided, they go sprawling about causing joy and misery indiscriminately. It has long been recognized that good intentions may be so mis-

guided as to achieve results no better than bacon ones.

Jun. Well I suppose I must admit that I can perceive no way of compromising between distribution and quantity of happiness, so for the present will concede your contention that distribution is a matter of indifference, but I should like to examine the point more closely before conceding it unconditionally.

Sen. Perhaps another way of looking at the matter may clear things up. I suggest that you imagine a being in whose sensorium is registered or reflected each and every feeling of happiness of mankind as it occurs. The happiness of such a being and the happiness of mankind would obviously be identical and hence when we speak of the happiness of mankind we speak of the happiness of an imaginary individual so constituted as to reflect in his own individual feelings the manifold experiences of happiness and unhappiness which in mankind are felt separately.

Jun. That seems to be a clarifying way of viewing the matter. The happiness-interest of such an individual would obviously be the same as that of mankind; so that whatever would affect the amount felt by the one would affect the amount felt by the other, and whatever would not affect the one would not affect the other.

Sen. Now is it not clear that such a being would

be indifferent to the distribution of happiness among men?

Jun. Yes, because it would make no difference to him in any event. He is bound to get all of it anyway, whether positive or negative, and it makes no difference from which individual among mankind it comes.

Sen. Well, if distribution is indifferent to a being whose interests are identical with those of mankind, it must be indifferent to mankind, must it not?

Jun. That would seem to follow, since to deny it would be to deny that the two interests are identical.

Sen. Well, does that way of looking at the matter show any more clearly the difficulty of compromising between totality and distribution?

Jun. It makes things clearer perhaps; but I still have a feeling there is something amiss here, and that further groping might reveal it.

Sen. Of course, we have not been over the ground exhaustively. There is not time for that, but take my word for it, there is no principle of compromise. There is, however, a significant explanation of the feeling in favor of equality in the distribution of happiness found so commonly among men, and I think it will reveal to you the thing that is amiss, but perhaps we better postpone discussion of it until to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 30

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores distribution of happiness among individuals is unsound. It rests upon a confusion of means with ends explained in Session 31.

Equality in distribution of happiness is not an end of intrinsic interest to mankind.

SESSION 31

Junior. Notwithstanding the difficulties that my criticism met with yesterday I still regard the indifference of utility to the question of distribution the greatest objection to it we have yet encountered. It is a feature of that code which I distinctly dislike.

Senior. So do I, but unless we make our dislikes the test of right and wrong we have not made good our objection. Yet after all the matter is a highly academic one. It is never likely to arise in any concrete application of the code.

Jun. Why not?

Sen. Let me give you a parallel. Suppose you wish to raise as large a crop of grain as you can on your farm of one hundred acres; how much of the farm would you plant to grain?

Jun. As much as possible, of course.

Sen. The more acres that were engaged in raising grain the greater the crop?

Jun. Obviously.

Sen. But suppose it could be shown that by confining your efforts to one acre you could raise thereon more grain than you could by cultivating the whole one hundred? Would it not be the part of wisdom to confine your crop to one acre?

Jun. On your assumption it would.

Sen. And if, with the same effort you could grow more grain in a flower-pot, it would be best to neglect the farm and use the flower-pot?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But as a matter of fact how much chance do you think there would be to raise as much grain on one acre or in a flower-pot as on one hundred acres?

Jun. No chance at all.

Sen. Discussion of the question of whether it was best to do it *if it could be done* would be a very academic question, would it not?

Jun. It would.

Sen. Discussion of the question of raising a maximum crop of happiness by lavishing attention and effort on one or a few members of a community when the whole community is available to raise a crop in is equally academic. It might be best to do it *if it could be done*, but the chance that it could be done is nothing at all. For practical purposes the raising of a large happiness crop requires large numbers of individuals and widespread happiness among them, but in order to clearly understand the nature of utility its relation to numbers and distribution is worth clearing up.

Jun. But is not the very general predilection for equality in the distribution of happiness a matter of some significance?

Sen. Yes, it is by no means a random shot. It

is not a bull's-eye, but it is well within the target. It arises (partly at least) from a confusion we have encountered before—that of happiness with its causes; for, as things actually are in our world, utility does require at least approximate equality in the distribution of the causes of, or means to, happiness—such means for instance as wealth, education and opportunity.

Jun. But after all, does not the value of wealth and knowledge simmer down to that of opportunity? How much value to a man would they be if they did not increase his opportunity for happiness?

Sen. Not very much, I apprehend. It is opportunity for happiness, including the power to recognize opportunity when it appears, that should be equally distributed, and it is because wealth and education are means to such opportunity that their widespread distribution is required by utility.

Jun. You mean that these are the things from which happiness springs, and so in order to produce a large crop of happiness they should be widely distributed.

Sen. Exactly. They correspond to fertilizer which is a means to the growth of grain. We cannot get much of a crop by piling it in heaps, but by spreading it widely and evenly we make it as effective and useful as possible. The means to happiness must be distributed on the same principle if the crop of happiness is to be made a maximum, and this is what men are groping for when they focus their

approbation on equality in the distribution of happiness. Of happiness itself the only requirement is that its amount shall be as great as possible; but of its causes, equality in distribution is required, because this is the condition of achieving an effect which is great.

Jun. This illuminates the relation of equality to utility, but I have another objection to bring against the latter code on grounds of distribution. It is generally agreed that good men are more deserving of happiness than bad men, and bad men more deserving of unhappiness than good ones. How do you defend the code of utility from the charge of failing to recognize this important principle of distribution?

Sen. It is true that the code of utility makes no distinction between bad men and good as primary agents for producing happiness. It seeks to make both of them happy, so far as this is consistent with promoting the happiness of mankind. But if the happiness of either interferes with that of mankind then it must be sacrificed, irrespective of whether the man is good or bad.

Jun. Such a doctrine seems to me very offensive. I cannot reconcile it with my sense of justice and I should hate to see it carried into practice.

Sen. Is happiness present in the sensorium of a bad man any different from that present in the sensorium of a good man?

Jun. No, it is not different in nature, since hap-

piness, like everything else, is what it is; but its presence in the sensorium of a good man would satisfy the demands of justice better than in that of a bad one.

Sen. And this thing you call justice. Is it a rule or principle of conduct?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And is it better for mankind that justice should be done than that it should not be done?

Jun. Everyone would agree that justice in the world is better for mankind than injustice.

Sen. And by "better" would you mean what the utilitarian means, namely, "more useful"?

Jun. No, I could hardly mean that. Otherwise I should have to agree with the code of utility that the distribution of happiness as between good men and bad men was a matter of indifference.

Sen. What then do you mean by "better"? By what standard of "better" are you judging the code of utility?

Jun. Let me see. Off-hand I do not know that I can say.

Sen. Is it by the standard of desire or of approbation? These are the only standards other than that of happiness which are of any interest to mankind.

Jun. Well, I know that I approve of justice and disapprove of injustice.

Sen. And in the absence of these feelings of approval and disapproval would your present objec-

tion against the code of utility have occurred to you?

Jun. I don't know about that.

Sen. But you will admit will you not that if those feelings alone are the basis of your objection that it is not a valid one? There is no need is there of repeating the arguments against making what *is* approved the test of what *ought to be* which we have been over so many times before?

Jun. No, I guess I shall have to admit once for all that conscientiousness is not righteousness, though I find myself continually falling into the habit of confusing them.

Sen. This habit is chronic among all people, and you and I are no exceptions.

Jun. But leaving conscience to one side I believe I can give you a reason why happiness should be so distributed that the good man gets a larger share of it than the bad one.

Sen. And by a good man do you mean one who tends to serve his fellows and make them happy; and by a bad man one who tends to do them dis-service and make them unhappy?

Jun. Well, yes, I suppose that would be a rough general way of distinguishing between good men and bad.

Sen. All right. Now what reason do you propose to give why the good man should receive more happiness than the bad one?

Jun. Because if goodness is rewarded with happiness, goodness will be encouraged and increased

and the more there is of goodness the more men will tend to serve their fellows, whereas if badness is punished by unhappiness, badness will be discouraged and diminished, and the less there will be of it to torment mankind.

Sen. I see you are now arguing from the code of utility. You are giving a real reason for the faith that is in you, and as you are justifying utility yourself, I need not lift my voice in its defense. You have put in a nutshell the utilitarian theory of reward and punishment.

Jun. Then this distribution of happiness is recognized by utility?

Sen. It is recognized as a means but not as an end. With human nature constituted as it is, such practices tend to increase the totality of happiness and any practice which will do that is useful. But if men were so constituted that to punish goodness increased it, and to reward badness diminished it, utility would recognize an exactly opposite distribution of happiness as desirable.

Jun. In other words, happiness and unhappiness can be used as means.

Sen. Certainly they, or the promise of them, may be used to increase the total happiness of mankind, but in using them caution is required. There is little danger of making reward too great, but if punishment is made too severe it may defeat its own end, causing more misery than it cures. When unhappiness is used as a means the smallest amount which

will accomplish the object is, for obvious reasons, the most useful amount.

Jun. But do not very wicked men deserve punishment irrespective of any useful effect it may have in the future?

Sen. No. Men deserve that which it is most useful that they should receive, and if making criminals happy would discourage crime then they would deserve happiness. There is no element of revenge or retaliation in the utilitarian theory of punishment. It is used merely to improve conduct, either that of the evil-doer himself, or those disposed to evil-doing who may take warning from his sufferings. Praise may be useful not only as a means of encouraging useful conduct but as a direct cause of happiness in the person praised, but blame is of no use whatever unless it has some useful effect on conduct.

Jun. That is, happiness *per se* may be both a means and an end, whereas unhappiness *per se* may be a means but cannot be an end?

Sen. Not an ultimate end—an end sought for itself—no.

Jun. This discussion I think has made the relation of justice to utility plain. Justice is a means and not an end.

Sen. Certainly, and it is a very useful means; so to set up justice in the distribution of happiness as an end in itself while a mistake is not a haphazard mistake. It is not a random shot, but is merely

another example of an attempt to hit the bull's-eye of utility, which misses it, but comes near enough to reveal the object aimed at.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 31

Equality in distribution of the means to happiness is a condition essential to success in attaining the end.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores discrimination in the distribution of happiness between good and bad individuals is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

Rewarding good (i.e. useful) individuals with happiness, and punishing bad (i.e. harmful) individuals with unhappiness is a means, not an end.

SESSION 32

Senior. What objection against utility have you in mind this morning?

Junior. I have a good many, but I will begin with a common one. I am going to ask you to explain your neglect of the question of motive. Utility completely ignores it, dealing only with the question of end. Now it is very commonly contended that the rightness or wrongness of an act depends wholly upon the motive which prompts it. A good motive means a good or right act, and a bad motive means a bad or wrong act.

Sen. So that the rightness or wrongness of an act is determined by the motives which cause or prompt it?

Jun. Yes. An act prompted by a good motive is a right act and one prompted by a bad motive is a wrong one.

Sen. And this irrespective of the effect of the act on persons other than the actor. An act which plunges the world into misery is right if done from good intentions while an act which exalts it to the highest happiness is wrong if done with bad intentions.

Jun. Yes, that is the position exactly. The con-

tion is that rightness depends on something "higher" than the mere calculation of effects.

Sen. And how do men discover which of two motives is the "higher."

Jun. By the moral sense within them I suppose.

Sen. And this "moral sense" within each person which tells him what is right—is it anything but his conscience under another name?

Jun. Well, yes, I suppose it is his conscience. At least we may assume so for the sake of the argument.

Sen. In that case it cannot tell him what is right, but only what is conscientious. By a good motive he means a conscientious motive and by a bad motive he means an unconscientious one; so that the source of this criticism of utility is revealed very plainly. It is merely the code of conscience disguised in the phraseology of motive. It is a verbal variation of the discredited standard of approbation.

Jun. Well I suppose no one would call a motive good which offends his conscience, or bad which does not offend it; but is this all there is to the question?

Sen. No, I suspect it is not. I rather guess that if we go a little further into the matter we shall find there is, at least generally or often, something underneath these feelings of approbation, but I think we shall find, as in past instances, that the something constitutes not a criticism, but a confirmation of the code of utility.

Jun. And how would you show that?

Sen. A motive is a desire, is it not?

Jun. I should say it was, yes.

Sen. Would the desire to cheat a person be considered a good motive?

Jun. No, it would be a bad one.

Sen. Or to degrade a person?

Jun. No.

Sen. Or otherwise to injure people and make them miserable?

Jun. No.

Sen. And good motives are such as tend to make men do kind or helpful acts, acts which give pleasure or relieve distress, are they not?

Jun. Yes, this is their general character.

Sen. As a general thing bad motives are selfish and good ones unselfish?

Jun. That is a distinction between them which holds in many cases—perhaps most.

Sen. If our consciences were groping completely at random, selfish motives would be deemed good and unselfish ones bad as often as not, but as we seldom or never find this to be the case, but in all or almost all, instances discover that useful motives such as tend to promote happiness are judged to be good, and harmful motives which have a contrary tendency are judged to be bad, a presumption is created that the code of utility is the real objective sought. The obscurity which surrounds the subject, however, results in mistaking a cause

(motive) for the natural effect of that cause (usefulness). Hence in this apparent objection against the code of happiness we have stumbled on another presumption in its favor. We have discovered another shot-hole too near the bull's-eye of utility to be considered a mere coincidence.

Jun. I think a candid view of the matter must result in acknowledging that motives are not ultimate tests of acts, but nevertheless, even according to your own statement of the case, they occupy an important place in morals. Heretofore you have seemed to belittle conscience as a factor in conduct, but to-day it seems to me you have—perhaps unconsciously—acknowledged its usefulness.

Sen. I have not intended to belittle the function of conscience in morals. I have only tried to correct a common misunderstanding of what its function is. It is not, as commonly supposed, a guide to conduct at all, unless it has been itself guided aright by something else; and as to being a guide to codes of conduct, it has not the slightest qualification for such a task, since it is itself a thing to be guided by a code. Conscience in fact is not a guide but a goad. It is a motive, an emotional impulse, to act or refrain from acting. Whether it is useful or not depends upon the code which guides the impulse. Conscience guided by a code of asceticism, or any code which aims at making people miserable, is not a useful but a harmful thing, whereas guided by the code of utility it is very useful, because it impels

men to do what is right, even when their animal impulses or self-directed desires might lead them to do wrong. When sufficiently developed it enables men to put their duty to serve others before their desire to serve themselves, and this is obviously a vastly useful function to perform.

Jun. You do not object to the goad then? You only object to having it mistaken for a guide?

Sen. That is the point exactly. Men continually mistake the goad for the guide, and thus are likely to permit their conduct to be determined by the merest accidents. Gunpowder is a good thing to impel a projectile but a poor thing to guide it, and what gunpowder is to projectiles, conscience is to conduct. It is an impelling motive, and can no more properly take the place of reason as a guide to the conduct to which it impels men, than the gunpowder which drives a projectile can take the place of the gunner who directs it.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 32

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores motive as a factor in right conduct is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

Conscience is a goad, but not a guide. It is useful or not according to the code which guides it.

SESSION 33

Junior. I think I understand now your general method of meeting the various objections to utility, but to-day I am going to propose one which, whatever its weakness may prove to be, is held by many thoughtful and high-minded men.

Senior. Then I suspect it will prove to be a shot nearer the bull's-eye than usual.

Jun. It is contended by many that the ideal goal of human conduct, the true end of man, is the development of character, the bringing out of all men's potentialities and powers, a process of self-realization in each individual, and that happiness is a mere by-product, an unimportant incident of this process.

Sen. By what standard is the interest of this ideal measured? By that of desire, approbation or happiness? You will remember that there are no others.

Jun. It is certainly not mere desire or happiness that high-minded men judge by, and hence I suppose it must be by approbation.

Sen. And what code of approbation is proposed in applying the standard? Is it the code of total approbation?

Jun. Certainly not. No one proposes that code.

Sen. It is safe to say then that this is only another variation of the code of conscience. It is proposed by men who approve of it personally and because they approve of it.

Jun. Of course they would not advocate it if they did not approve of it.

Sen. And if all men were incapable of approbation and disapprobation what interest would it have to mankind?

Jun. Only the interest that its relation to the remaining standards—those of desire and happiness—would give it, of course.

Sen. Very well. The origin and interest of the code of character considered as an ultimate end of conduct then is obvious. It has the weakness of all variations of the code of conscience. But considered as a proximate code—a fragmentary view of the code of utility—it is of greater importance.

Jun. Do you think you can show it is such a fragmentary view?

Sen. I can create quite a presumption to that effect. You say the advocates of this view believe in bringing out all humanity's potentialities and powers—achieving the complete self-realization of each individual?

Jun. This is their language.

Sen. Human nature is a much mixed thing. All, or most, men have in their characters potentialities of meanness, cupidity, cowardice, malice, brutality

and general selfishness. Is it proposed to realize and develop these potentialities to the utmost?

Jun. By no means. No one would wish to cultivate such traits as these.

Sen. But they are traits of character, potential or active in human beings. If all the possibilities of human nature are to be cultivated and developed, why neglect these?

Jun. Of course it is the good traits of human nature which are to be cultivated. Bad traits like those you have mentioned should be discouraged and suppressed.

Sen. And what are some of the good traits?

Jun. Unselfishness, generosity, self-control, industry, honesty and intelligence are some of them.

Sen. And which would be the happier—a community in which the good traits were cultivated and encouraged or one in which the bad traits were caused to prevail?

Jun. A community in which the good traits of character prevailed would be much the happier.

Sen. In other words, when we come to sift this code of character or self-realization down, it turns out that not all the potentialities of human nature are to be cultivated, but only the useful ones. To point out the significance of this is superfluous. It is not a mere coincidence. The shot is too near the bull's-eye of utility for that. It is another groping effort to reach utility, frustrated as usual by the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation which

clutter all our minds, and in this case have succeeded in reversing the relation of means and ends, and causing happiness to appear as a by-product of character development instead of the justification for it. Such a code if consistently applied would justify converting the world into a scene of illimitable agony if thereby the tastes in character of the advocates of the code were gratified, tastes which might be largely determined by the merest accident. This code may be rejected on the grounds which invalidate all other variations of the code of conscience, but it serves to illustrate anew how easy it is for a confirmation of the code of utility to assume the disguise of a criticism.

Jun. You do not however maintain that the difference between a virtuous and a vicious character is not important in morals?

Sen. It is very important, but its importance is derived from its relation to usefulness. We have already emphasized that happiness and unhappiness are the raw materials of importance. Virtue and vice are important therefore because they affect happiness, not because happiness affects them. A virtuous community is more likely to be happy than a vicious one. That is why virtue is to be preferred to vice.

Jun. But surely you recognize the distinction between true happiness and mere pleasure; between the higher, spiritual forms of happiness which are desirable, and the lower animal forms which are

merely desired. Some forms of vice may give men great pleasure of a low animal kind, but you do not class such pleasures with the higher spiritual forms of happiness such as result for instance from serving humanity in some exalted and unselfish manner.

Sen. If you are raising the issue of sorts of happiness as ultimate determinants of conduct, it is plain that utility recognizes no such thing—quantity is all that finally counts in utility. You remember we discussed this issue in our fourteenth session.

Jun. Then utility takes no account of the distinction between higher and lower forms of happiness—between true happiness and mere pleasure?

Sen. I take it that by “true happiness” you mean those kinds of happiness which you approve, and by “mere pleasure” those kinds which you disapprove? If so the distinction can be ignored on grounds already threshed out more than once.

Jun. I suppose I do approve of the one and disapprove of the other, but if I can give a reason for my sentiments I can justify them, can I not?

Sen. Certainly. A sufficient reason is a means, and the only means, of justifying any rule of conduct.

Jun. Well, consider vicious conduct for instance, like drunkenness, gluttony or incontinence. These may lead to short-time pleasures of high intensity, but in the long run are they not ruinous to happi-

ness? Is it not true that where vice abounds misery abounds?

Sen. I should say the evidence indicated that it was true, and therefore you have given a good reason why vice should be avoided and virtue encouraged, but you will notice you are only repeating the argument I myself presented a minute ago. Your reason is derived from the code of utility, and is therefore valid. Indeed if it had not been so derived the question would at once arise what you mean by a "reason" for an act or rule of action, and the attempt to answer this question would have led you into the difficulties that all alternatives to the code of utility encounter. As your own argument indicates, it is not the pleasure derived from vice, but the pain, that supplies the reason why it should be avoided.

Jun. Sorts of happiness then are recognized by the utilitarian, and virtue is acknowledged to be better than vice?

Sen. Sorts of happiness are recognized, only as sorts may affect quantity, and virtue in conduct is better than vice only because it is more useful. In other words, these things are judged just like pins, or pies, or shoes, or housekeeping appliances, or anything else—by their utility. They are not ultimate determinants of conduct, but proximate ones.

Jun. Then you would not consider the distinctions between higher and lower pleasures and between virtue and vice as fortuitous and futile?

Sen. No; their relation to utility is not a coincidence. They are variations of the distinction between good character and bad, and hence constitute another shot at the mark of utility proclaiming by its position on the target the central importance of the code of usefulness.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 33

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the distinction between good character and bad, between virtue and vice, and between higher and lower sorts of happiness is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

The code of "self-realization" is a variation of the code of character development and has the same origin.

SESSION 34

Junior. I notice your position differs materially from that of Bentham. He claims that the pursuit of happiness is the only motive that actuates mankind and that all conduct is determined by it.

Senior. Yes, that was his position; but he was both vague and mistaken. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between intensity and quantity of happiness before his position becomes even intelligible, and he does not clearly distinguish. On reviewing human conduct can anyone maintain that it is at all times determined by a calculation or attempted calculation of the amount of happiness to be secured as the result of it? Such calculation is only one of the processes of thought that influence action. There are many others, and sometimes one and sometimes another prevails. Think of the many acts caused by sudden passions—of fear or anger for instance—and the still greater number determined by mere habit. Calculation of happiness ought to be the determinant of conduct, but that does not mean that it is.

Jun. Of course the calculation you refer to concerns the happiness of mankind, but Bentham claims that each individual seeks only his own.

Sen. He claims, but does not prove it. Calculation is a rather late, sophisticated and rare process in the control of conduct. Instincts or impulses in the young and habits in the old are the commonest determinants of conduct among men.

Jun. You do not think that there is any one thing that determines acts then?

Sen. Well, I suppose it might be claimed that willing is the cause of all voluntary acts. At least the feeling of volition always immediately precedes them, but volition may be affected by many influences. Perhaps, as suggested in our eighteenth session, the intensity of desire immediately preceding an act really determines it; but this leaves unjudged the question of what determines that intensity—sometimes it may be a process of calculation, sometimes not. It may be a single motive or a mixture of motives.

Jun. But do you not at least admit with Bentham that a man's conduct is always dictated by consideration of his own interest exclusively?

Sen. His interest as measured by what standard—that of desire, approbation or happiness?

Jun. Well, these interests are usually not distinguished from one another.

Sen. Then how can it be claimed that considerations of happiness for instance are the exclusive determinants of conduct, when the kinds of units by which happiness is to be measured have not even been distinguished from those which measure de-

sire or approbation? It would be like trying to measure a magnitude in space without distinguishing between linear measure, square measure and cubic measure.

Jun. Well, suppose we assume that one or another standard is employed, just as we could assume that in measuring a magnitude in space one or another unit was used. The question is, do you admit that a person always seeks his own interest (no matter which unit of interest is used) and not that of others?

Sen. You probably have in mind the familiar claim that all acts are selfish ones, and that even unselfishness is only a form of selfishness, enlightened or otherwise. We have encountered it before in slightly different forms, but in this form it obviously has a direct bearing on the issue of utility, since the end proposed by the code of utility is the happiness of mankind. Now how is this to be secured if each individual seeks only his own happiness—or at any rate his own interest of one kind or another? I deny that this has been proved—and indeed how could it be proved when the different standards of interest have not even been distinguished by those who seek to prove it?

Jun. Well, at any rate, you will admit will you not that a man's expectation of what will make him happiest, even if not the exclusive determinant of his acts, is a very common one?

Sen. It is quite common, especially among mature and intelligent people.

Jun. Well how are you going to get such people to seek the end of utility? You may ask them to, but how are you going to answer if they reply by saying—"Why should I seek the happiness of mankind? What has mankind done for me?"

Sen. In our twenty-fifth talk what meaning did we agree to attach to the word "should"?

Jun. We agreed that an act that should be done is only another name for the most useful act available.

Sen. If this meaning is employed in your question, then to ask "Why should I seek the end of utility?" is only another way of asking, "Why should I do what I should do?"—a question which answers itself.

Jun. Well of course I was not using the word "should" in the sense we agreed upon. I was simply putting the question in the form that I have often heard it put.

Sen. And in that form what meaning was attached to the word "should," do you suppose?

Jun. I don't know, but the question really intended is better expressed thus: "What inducement is offered me for seeking the end of utility?"

Sen. That is quite a different question, but do you imply by it that we cannot get men to seek the right without offering them a bribe? Do you claim selfish motives are the only ones that can be suc-

cessfully appealed to? Are you now expressing agreement with Bentham on this point?

Jun. No, selfish motives are not the only ones that influence men perhaps, but they are very common ones, and I fear you will not get far in achieving the end of utility if you ignore this fact of human nature. Bentham considered this motive so universal that he proposed to appeal to no other. Do you propose to appeal only to unselfish motives?

Sen. The question of motive is hardly within the scope of our original inquiry since it is concerned not with ascertaining the end of conduct, but with the means of achieving the end. However, as you raise the question I will answer it by saying that the end of useful action is to be sought by appealing in each case to the motive which can be appealed to most successfully—in other words the motive which it is most useful to appeal to, whether selfish or unselfish, habitual or impulsive, reasonable or unreasonable. If selfishness is to be appealed to then the general methods of reward and punishment are employed; if unselfish motives are available what can appeal to them more than an invitation to serve mankind; if habit will accomplish our purpose, then all we need to do is refrain from disturbing it; if impulse can be most usefully used we need not hesitate to arouse it; if reasoning will induce men to do right then offer them good reasons for doing it; if men are only accessible to unreasonable arguments then offer them bad reasons. Anything to be

useful. It is the right end we are after, and there is no reason why we should be deterred from utilizing any motive or mixture of motives which will secure it.

Jun. Even a bad motive?

Sen. In what sense is a motive "bad" which achieves the right?

Jun. Well, some motives and acts are considered bad in themselves irrespective of what end they achieve. A malicious intent for instance is a bad motive and an act like lying or stealing is a bad act, even if by some strange chance it should be the most useful alternative available.

Sen. A "bad" motive or act is either "bad" according to the code of conscience merely, in which case the question of its righteousness is not even raised, or it is a motive or act which, in the generality of cases, is not useful. Lying and stealing are examples of such acts. But to all subordinate rules of utility such as "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness"—there may be occasional exceptions, and in the case of these exceptions the "bad" motive or act becomes a good one. It is certainly by definition a right one if it leads to the right end.

Jun. I see you are asserting that the end justifies the means. That is generally deemed a wrong doctrine.

Sen. What does justify a means if not the end?

Jun. Ends may justify some means, but it is gen-

erally held that there are some means not justified by any end.

Sen. Well, what do you mean by justify?

Jun. To justify an act is to show that it is consistent with justice.

Sen. And what is justice?

Jun. It is the quality common to just acts.

Sen. And is a just act a right one?

Jun. It would be generally agreed that it was.

Sen. If these are your meanings the question of whether the end justifies the means or not is very easily answered. It is clear that not all ends justify the means, but only the right end. In other words, the end of utility justifies all means, and no other end justifies any means.

Jun. This is a very simple answer to a much mooted question, but it would be hard to get people to agree to it, I fear.

Sen. It is a corollary of the code of utility and hence agrees with that code. Whether it agrees with any particular variation of the code of conscience will, of course, be a matter of accident. Convictionism is the chief cause of disagreement with the code of utility, and he who employs convictionism as a guide will find that convictions are poor substitutes for reasons as justifications of means, since those which one man's convictions justify, another's will condemn.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 34

Motives are not always self-interested.

The goodness or badness of motives is a function of their utility.

The code of utility requires appeal to the most useful motive or motives available.

The end justifies the means if it is the end of utility, but not otherwise.

SESSION 35

Junior. To-day I want to discuss a very serious and common objection to the code of utility. It seems to be opposed to codes which arise from religious belief. Religious people say that right is not a question of usefulness, but is determined by the will of God.

Senior. And by God they mean a being deemed to be supreme in the universe, who has a will, and whose will may be known to men?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. But is it not true that different people appeal to the will of different gods? Brahmins to their gods, Mohammedans to theirs, Jews to theirs, and Christians to theirs? And are there not many pagan gods whose wills conflict? When a man refers to the will of God which god does he refer to?

Jun. His own god, of course. He has no interest in the gods of others. Indeed, unless he is a gross pagan he even denies their existence.

Sen. And is it not true that each man regards as right the rules of conduct laid down by the god of whom he approves?

Jun. Of course each man approves of his own God and of his commandments.

Sen. And if he did not approve of his commandments, would he proclaim them to be right?

Jun. Obviously not. But are you not getting things reversed? The devout man approves of God's commandments because they express God's will. He places God's will before his own—he says, not *my* will, but *thy* will be done. He submits his own convictions to those of God.

Sen. But hold on a minute. Is it not you who are reversing things? You have just said that not *any* god, but only the one in whom he has confidence can secure a religious man's submission.

Jun. Well yes, that is true enough.

Sen. And he approves of permitting such a god to be his guide. Indeed if he did not approve of it he would refuse to be guided by him.

Jun. I think we must admit that all religious men, no matter what their religion, approve of guidance by their own god.

Sen. In other words, before a man permits his conscience to be ruled by the will of God, the will of God must secure the sanction of his conscience. He imposes judgment on God before he submits to God's judgment on him.

Jun. I do not suppose any man will serve a god when it is against his conscience to serve him—that would be to violate his own conscience.

Sen. Here then we encounter a familiar form of the circle of convictionism. The code of God's will is but a form of the code of conscience and naturally

shares the invalidity of that code. Each man's conscience is his god, and what it wills is determined in chief measure by chance. The Mohammedan follows the will of Allah for the same reason that the Jew follows that of Jehovah and the Christian that of Christ, because his conscience tells him to, and what his conscience tells him has been determined by the accidents of his education.

Jun. And do the codes of utility and Christianity conflict?

Sen. That would be a difficult question to answer, since just what constitutes Christianity is in dispute, but the central principles of Christianity are in close agreement with the code of utility.

Jun. You refer to the Golden Rule?

Sen. Yes, and the Sermon on the Mount. They are concrete rules for making the world happy and a world which would follow them would be a happy world. For instance, consider the Golden Rule. It is normal for men to wish to be made happy, is it not?

Jun. Surely.

Sen. Hence to require a man to do to others what he wishes others would do to him, is a very simple way of suggesting that he try to make others happy, is it not?

Jun. Obviously it is.

Sen. And in the command "Love thy neighbor as thyself" there is an even closer approximation to utility since the degree in which a man should

subordinate his own interest to others is expressed. He is not to love his neighbor more than himself, nor less; but "as" himself. That is to say, in seeking to produce happiness do not discriminate between individuals—do not, for instance, favor a particular one because he happens to be yourself. This is the familiar doctrine of utility that right depends upon the quantity and not the distribution of happiness.

Jun. Do you regard the fundamentals of Christianity and utility to be identical?

Sen. The difference appears to be merely in the rigor and universality of the language, which is greater in the case of utility. Christianity is utility applied concretely to personal conduct, and it is significant that in this respect most religious codes of morals are alike. So you see we have here another approximation which cannot be regarded as a mere coincidence. The moral codes of all great religions are related too closely to utility to be explained by chance. They are shots too near the bull's-eye to be attributed to accident.

Jun. You regard religious codes as gropings for utility then?

Sen. How else do you explain these fundamental agreements! They are codes of convictionism and share this characteristic with other codes of the same class.

Jun. It would indeed be unfortunate if obedience to God's will involved the misery of mankind.

Sen. Yet if the codes of religion bore no relation to that of utility there is no reason why it should not. But it is this very groping for utility which guarantees it against such a misfortune.

Jun. You mean that groping for God is really groping for utility.

Sen. Well; I will suggest a comparison which you will agree is significant. What are the dominant characteristics of God, would you say?

Jun. Perfect love for mankind, combined with perfect wisdom and power.

Sen. And what are the dominant characteristics of the most useful being conceivable?

Jun. I suggest that you give them.

Sen. Maximum desire to make mankind happy, combined with maximum knowledge and power to bring that desire to fulfilment.

Jun. There seems to be a resemblance here.

Sen. There is more than a resemblance, there is an identity. God turns out to be the name of the most useful being conceivable. We discover more than a coincidence when we discover that the characteristics almost everywhere attributed to God are neither more nor less than those of the being of maximum utility. Here is another shot, which if it does not hit the bull's-eye, hits the edge of it.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 35

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it is contrary to religious codes is unsound. It rests upon confusion of convictions with reasons.

The Christian code of morals and that of most great religious systems is a restricted application of the code of utility.

SESSION 36

Junior. Up to now we have been considering the commoner and less subtle objections to utility, but the philosophers have serious objections and it is time some of them were proposed.

Senior. Which do you wish to consider first?

Jun. There are many philosophers to-day who object to the code of utility on the ground that it over-simplifies the subject of morals, that it professes a unity in human interests which does not in fact exist. They claim that this is a pluralistic universe, that there is no single standard of conduct, that moral codes are not simple, but compound, and that the ends which men should seek are not one but many.

Sen. You remember we have distinguished between men's wants and their interests?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And of interests we discussed six kinds from which three separate standards of interest of unlike units could be distinguished?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And each standard can be made the basis of an infinite number of codes, of which we considered two or three particularly interesting special cases under each standard?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. So that the possible variation of moral codes has not been ignored in our discussion?

Jun. No, but the pluralistic moralist would propose the use of the various standards and codes interchangeably, fitting the standard to the occasion. He would not eliminate them as you have—or at least not so many of them.

Sen. Sometimes he would use the standard of desire, sometimes that of approbation and sometimes that of happiness, would he?

Jun. Yes, and as many codes are proposable under each standard, it gives a wide variety to choose from. Moreover it seems to me many codes which have nothing to do with these standards, or with other means of measuring interest, are considered available.

Sen. And the freedom of choice between codes is what constitutes a compound code?

Jun. Yes; there is no restriction; no hard and fast rule about what code is to be used.

Sen. Can you mention a few sample codes from which men are free to select?

Jun. Well, without going into a description of each, a few typical ones, often appealed to in practice, may be cited very easily. The Christian code, the code of conventionality or custom, the code of honor, the code of natural affection, the code of natural or inalienable "rights," the code of expediency, the code of justice, are a few among many.

Sen. You mean that sometimes men settle what alternative should be selected by asking what a good Christian would do about it, at another time they may ask what the "proper" or customary thing is, in still another case they would ask whether it was honorable or dishonorable, and in other cases whether it was "natural" or "unnatural," expedient or inexpedient, just or unjust, and again the question of "rights" might be raised.

Jun. Certainly; or among others, the code of utility itself might be appealed to, or any one of a hundred others. Or a number of codes might be applied to the same problem, so as to have the thing thoroughly compounded and a sort of an average struck.

Sen. And when the different codes conflict, what is done?

Jun. Some sort of proponderance of merit or demerit would settle the case I suppose.

Sen. And by what standard would the preponderance be estimated? How would the varying influence of the various codes be compared and decided? For instance suppose a given act were Christian, conventional and honorable, but also unnatural, inexpedient and unjust; how would a person tell what to do?

Jun. Assuming these particular six codes were applicable to the case I suppose he would tell by the way he felt about it.

Sen. So that in case of conflict between the codes

of a compound standard the code which would really be used would be that which directed men to decide the situation by the way they felt about it?

Jun. It would seem so.

Sen. And what kind of a feeling would be appealed to? Would it not be one of approval or disapproval?

Jun. Even with a compound standard a normal man would not decide a given course of conduct to be right unless he approved of it. But a conflict of codes could be avoided by using only one code for a given contingency, always judging a contingency by the code appropriate for judging it.

Sen. That is, the cases of conduct that men are always called upon to decide in life are concrete cases, and each case is judged by the particular code that fits it, other codes being excluded?

Jun. Yes. In this way you see conflicts would be avoided. Some cases of conduct should be judged by the Christian code, let us say, the codes of custom, honor, justice, etc., not being applicable. In other cases the code of honor alone would apply, those of Christianity, custom, justice and the rest being excluded, and so in all cases; each concrete contingency having a single code applicable to its solution, but different cases calling for different codes.

Sen. And in any concrete case how should we decide which code to apply?

Jun. By noticing which code seemed to fit best.

Sen. And would we ever apply a code to decide a given question of right and wrong conduct if we disapproved of applying it to the question?

Jun. No, I suppose not.

Sen. If that is the case then these compound codes all reduce to a single code—that of approbation or conscience, since we apply them or don't apply them according to whether we approve or disapprove of doing so.

Jun. Then you claim compound codes are never applied to decide what conduct is right?

Sen. Only as assistants to conscience; the final arbiter is conscience, but the incidence of many codes may of course be used to influence its decision. It is obvious that we cannot apply several different codes to conduct without a code for judging codes, and in practice this code-in-chief turns out to be that of conscience, all other codes being subordinate. So you see this objection to utility only lands us again in convictionism.

Jun. This seems a strange disguise for convictionism to take. The disguises we have discussed before have been simple codes. How do you explain the fact that such a multiplicity of codes simmers down to one?

Sen. The explanation is quite simple. The kinds of conduct which men approve, being determined so largely by the accidents of their education, will not fit into any one extrinsic category—like that of utility for instance. There is no single perceived

characteristic in which they all share. Now before the convictionist can accept a moral code he must be assured that all its provisions and consequences will coincide with his convictions. Examining various codes he naturally finds none (except the code of approval itself of course) which meet this requirement. Hence he concludes that there is no single characteristic common to all right acts. In other words, there are a plurality of characteristics common to such acts, and this is what he means by saying moral codes are compound or pluralistic. They must seek several ends instead of one because the convictionist discovers that he approves several ends instead of one. It is obvious, however, that there is one, and only one, characteristic common to all codes tested in this manner, namely their ability to meet with the approbation of the person who proposes them, and this characteristic it is that gives unity to the multiplicity of codes which the pluralist is willing to recognize.

Jun. In other words, the various codes of Christianity, justice, expediency, etc., are merely classifications of conviction. They are convenient categories under which to view conduct as something approved or disapproved?

Sen. Yes, they are crude classifications or codifications of conviction.

Jun. But the philosophers arrange conduct in a smaller number of codes on principles different from those commonly accepted. For instance, Sidg-

wick claims that there are only three consistent methods to be discovered for solving the problem of morals.

Sen. Of course the common classifications, justice, natural rights, propriety, expediency and the others are unscientific classifications. They are not mutually exclusive but overlap and conflict in a haphazard manner offensive to the orderly mind. The classifications of the philosophers are more orderly and consistent, but it is the same process. It is a classification of conviction just the same, only it is better done.

Jun. Both the pluralist and the utilitarian then propose a single standard?

Sen. Certainly. The pluralist is only a convictionist in a pluralistic disguise and hence proposes the single standard of conscience. The utilitarian, repudiating man's conscience as a guide, and consulting only his interest, arrives at another single standard—that of utility. The two employ different methods but both arrive at single standards.

Jun. Do you claim that you are using a different method from any of the three discussed by Sidgwick? I should say the code of utility was only another name for what he calls universal hedonism, except that it includes the factor of probability.

Sen. There is a resemblance in the codes but none in the methods. Indeed we have been engaged in seeking an answer to a different question from that which ethical writers like Sidgwick set

out to discuss. The question we are trying to answer is "What course of conduct will achieve a result of maximum interest to mankind?" Sidgwick sought the answer to a different question which might be expressed thus: "How do men proceed when they seek scientifically to classify or codify their moral "convictions"? Of course these questions, being different, call for different answers.

Jun. But surely men's convictions are of interest to them, so that the two questions are related, even if not the same.

Sen. Yes, convictions are convictionally interesting, but convictional interests are usually personal interests or partake of the personal. Hence the usual convictional code, while of interest to the person propounding it, is of little interest to mankind. The more impersonal a code is the less conviction it has in it. By throwing away conviction altogether we can become completely impersonal and consider the question of a guide to conviction which is not itself conviction, and yet of maximum interest to mankind. By so doing we arrive at the code of utility. This method of procedure was unknown to Sidgwick. He does not mention it, nor to my knowledge does any other ethical writer, except Bentham. Even Mill misses it, and hence rests, or attempts to rest, utility on convictional grounds.

Jun. Yes. You have said most of this before, only in different words. You are criticizing convic-

tional codes to-day on the ground of their lack of interest, not of their lack of truth?

Sen. Why, of course, when a man tells us that he approves of a certain course of conduct there is no reason to doubt the truth of his statement. If he says he approves it he probably does. What he says is true, but it is not interesting. At any rate if it has any particular interest to mankind, it has it only by accident. That is the trouble with the question which ethical writers in general are trying to answer. It is hardly worth answering. It is too much like trying to discover how a coin will happen to fall. When the answer is discovered it may be a true enough answer, but it is not likely to be of any particular interest. As Sidgwick plainly shows, it can be as well one thing as another.

Jun. And what relation have these compound codes to the mixed codes suggested now and then during our talks? You will recall that we have reminded one another a number of times of the possibility of mixtures and you have always deferred discussing them. Have these mixtures any particular relation to the compounds we have just been considering?

Sen. I could answer that question better if you would suggest a mixed code. Have you got one to propose?

Jun. A mixed code, I take it, is one which measures the interest of mankind by a mixture of interest units—of desire, approbation and happiness.

Sen. That is my notion of it. A mixed code would correspond to a method of measuring volume in space by a mixture of spatial units, linear, surface and volume. The one would average or add magnitudes of desire, approbation and happiness as the other would average or add magnitudes of length, area and cubic content. Can you suggest a method of doing either of these things?

Jun. Of course I do not see how to do such a thing; but it seems to me the various standards of interest might be mixed by using them interchangeably, and thus avoid making life monotonous by sticking to one all the time.

Sen. You mean sometimes applying one standard and sometimes another?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Without regard to any convictions in the matter?

Jun. Well, if we used our convictions to determine the proportions of the mixture we should of course run into convictionism again.

Sen. Perhaps we can do it on some principle independent of conviction. Here is a code, for instance, which proposes using the several standards to an equal degree, thus showing no discrimination between them:

“Right conduct should be determined by the standard of desire one-third of the time, by that of approbation one-third of the time, and by that of happiness one-third of the time.”

How does that suit you?

Jun. It is obviously absurd.

Sen. It would not get as far as meeting the first requirement of rightness, would it?

Jun. Certainly not.

Sen. Well, is there some other proportion which would measure the interest of mankind any better?

Jun. Any numerical proportion for determining the mixture would be bound to be arbitrary. Men would have to mix them as they felt disposed to do.

Sen. They would mix them in the way they felt like mixing them?

Jun. Yes, they would do as they liked about it.

Sen. And to propose that men shall do as they like is to propose a code of conduct is it not? He who proposes it proposes a moral code just as truly as he who proposes the code of utility?

Jun. Yes, it is a possible code of conduct, but no one would seriously propose it as a guide to men, or if he did propose it, he would not do it if he disapproved of doing it, would he?

Sen. Being a human being with the processes of thought common to human beings, it is safe to say he would not.

Jun. So even this code of freedom among standards is only another disguise for convictionism. If a man had no convictions in the matter he would not propose it.

Sen. No, nor any other mixture of standards. All mixed codes of conduct actually proposed, seri-

ously proposed, reduce to the same basis as compound codes. Any non-convictional mixture is seen at a glance to be arbitrary and absurd.

Jun. This is a long session I know, but just one more point before we stop. There is another objection to moral codes in general, prevalent to-day, which is sufficiently philosophical to be noticed. The socialist philosopher Marx and his followers claim that all moral codes are economically determined, and are merely a set of rules whereby one class seeks to control the conduct of another.

Sen. So far as this criticism applies at all it applies to codes of conscience merely, which are all that Marx—or any one else for that matter—distinctly recognizes as “moral.” We have already noticed that such codes are largely determined by prevailing customs and accidents, and hence of course among others, by economic customs and accidents.

Jun. But the criticism does not apply to the code of utility?

Sen. Of course not, because that code is independent of all customs and accidents and of convictions caused by them. The code of utility is no more economically determined than the multiplication table.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 36

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it over-simplifies the moral question and is insufficiently pluralistic is unsound. It rests upon convictionism based on the plural causes of conviction.

A compound code of morals requires a single code by which to apply it. This single code is that of conscience, so that a compound code of morals is merely another disguise for convictionism.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it is "economically determined" is unsound. This objection is directed only to convictional codes, and is part of a more comprehensive objection.

SESSION 37

Senior. What philosophic difficulty do you wish to raise to-day?

Junior. How about the objection of determinism or necessity? Those who oppose the doctrine of free will claim that the control of men's acts by their wills is a delusion—that human acts are as rigidly determined by the law of causation as any other events in the physical world, and hence there is no sense in talking about choosing between this or that alternative because no choice is possible anyway.

Sen. If we enter on the interminable discussion of free will vs. necessity we shall be hopelessly side-tracked.

Jun. Nevertheless it is an objection that must be faced. The code of utility is proposed as a means of guidance in the choosing of alternatives. If there are no such things as alternatives how can it have any application?

Sen. Did you ever hear the objection of determinism advanced against the practice of the blacksmith's art, or against rules for the guidance of blacksmiths?

Jun. No, I never did.

Sen. Or against rules for baking or soap-making or banking or playing whist?

Jun. No.

Sen. Rules for doing these various things consist in directions, telling people what to do and what not to do in order to achieve the particular end aimed at, whether the end be shoeing horses, baking bread, making soap or money or taking tricks at cards?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And such directions assume the same power to choose between alternatives as the code of utility does?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. Well, the code of utility assumes no more and no less about man's freedom to choose than codes for blacksmithing or baking or card-playing. It leads to a set of rules of precisely the same character. Hence it is just as much and as little subject to the objection of determinism as are these other practices. When the philosophers claim that rules for card-playing are impracticable because man's will is not free, it will be time to take them seriously when they claim that rules for being useful are impracticable on the same ground.

Jun. But this does not really meet the objection of determinism. It only shows that it applies as much to all other rules for the guidance of human activities as it does to utility.

Sen. I am not attempting to meet it, because to do so would side-track the discussion for several

days and keep us away from our issue during that time. Anyone would agree that it would be absurd to say that the doctrine of determinism rendered blacksmithing or card-playing impossible or impracticable, and I am merely pointing out that it would be equally absurd to bring the same objection against utility. If I can show that utility is hit no harder by this objection than blacksmithing I shall be satisfied, and this it is easy to show.

Jun. If you are satisfied with that your position is reasonable. You put the rules of utility and those of a cook-book on the same plane so far as the objection of determinism is concerned. But a second philosophical objection to utility occurs to me. It is claimed that a calculation of happiness—a hedonistic calculus—such as is implied by that code is impossible for lack of data and would be impracticable even if the data were procurable. It cannot be said that a given act or series of acts will result in such and such an increase or decrease of happiness. All, or almost all, human acts interlock with the acts of others and with events over which men have no control, and are in fact part of an interlocking series of causes and effects extending to eternity. So how is it possible to say that a given course of conduct will presumably produce this amount of happiness or another course produce that amount? Moreover, even assuming there were some way of calculating the amount, how absurd it would be for a man to stop and calculate at every moment of his

life the amount of happiness to be secured by all the alternatives open to him at that moment. Why he never could act at all because he would spend all his time trying to calculate.

Sen. Here are two objections, not one. The first one was really met in our twenty-fifth talk. It was there clearly implied that it is not necessary to calculate the absolute amount of happiness resulting from alternatives, or even the numerically relative amount. It is only necessary to establish a presumption of greater or less between them. If you are called upon to take your choice between two purses each containing money, it is not essential to an intelligent choice to know either the absolute or numerically relative amounts of money contained in them. To know which contains the larger amount is sufficient, and it is the same with choices involving happiness. I suppose it might be hard to calculate the amount of pain involved in cutting off a person's leg, but it would be easy to decide that there would be less pain with an anæsthetic than without one, and this would be a sufficient guide to the comparative usefulness of the two alternatives.

Jun. But sometimes there is no definite amount of happiness involved, but only a general tendency. For instance in the question: Is it better to instruct school children in the rules of health and imbue them with healthful habits, or is it best not to do so? there are no definite amounts to be calculated, even approximately. The effects of these two alternative

policies are too far-reaching. How can a hedonistic calculus be applied to such a question as this?

Sen. It cannot be applied except in a very general way, and the code of utility does not require its accurate application. The requirement is that, when available, evidence shall be used to decide the comparative usefulness of alternatives, and the most useful selected. If the evidence indicates a preponderating tendency in an alternative to produce happiness, that is sufficient. Can you perceive any preponderating tendency in the example you have cited?

Jun. Yes, other things being equal, there would be a greater tendency to health and hence to happiness in the inculcating of knowledge and habits of health than in its alternative.

Sen. Very well, if the evidence agrees with you the question is decided.

Jun. But even a question involving the issue of greater or less requires consideration to decide it. Does the code of utility require that before deciding on any act, even the most trivial, like blowing the nose or rubbing the eyes, a person must stop and deliberate on the question?

Sen. Have you reason to think it would be useful to deliberate much on such trivial matters?

Jun. No, I have reason to think it would be a nuisance.

Sen. Very well, you have answered the question yourself. When it is more useful to deliberate on

an issue than not, then deliberate on it. Otherwise do not. This is obviously an application of the code of utility which says of *all* acts—when it is more useful to do them, then do them, otherwise, do not.

Jun. But how are you going to decide on their relative utility if you give the matter no consideration? How can you follow the evidence if you don't even consider it?

Sen. You cannot. Therefore it should be considered.

Jun. But have you not just admitted that it is not useful to deliberate on the utility of trivial acts?

Sen. I said it would not be generally useful to deliberate afresh each time a trivial decision is to be made, and indeed this rule applies to some decisions that are not trivial. A decision between getting out of the way of an approaching railroad train and not getting out of the way is not trivial—anyway the difference in consequences is not—but it does not require much deliberation.

Jun. You mean perhaps that the deliberation can be done once for all for whole classes of decisions instead of being done all over again at each recurrence of a situation.

Sen. Yes. It is unfamiliar situations or those which have some exceptional element in them which require deliberation. Also situations, whether familiar or unfamiliar, which have not previously received due consideration, particularly if they are important.

Jun. That is, the tendencies of many familiar ways of meeting situations are so well known as to require no consideration at each recurrence.

Sen. That is the point exactly. In other words the code of utility applies to acts which decide utility—to judgments of utility—just as it applies to all other kinds of acts.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 37

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that the will is not free applies as well to all alternative codes and to all rules or precepts of action; and is therefore not more pertinent to one than to another.

Objections to the code of utility on the ground that it involves an impractical hedonistic calculus or independent application to decisions as they arise are unsound. They rest upon a misunderstanding of the method of applying the code in the concrete.

SESSION 38

Junior. You claimed yesterday that the code of utility can guide men without any necessity for separate deliberation on each particular act as the possible occasion for it arises. Can you make this matter clearer, for of course it is important to understand how such a general and abstract rule as the code of utility can be made to apply to such concrete and particular things as the everyday acts of everyday men?

Senior. It is the business of a bank executive to make as much money as he can for his bank is it not? As an executive that is the end he is aiming at?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. His code is "Make all the money possible" just as the code of utility is "Make all the happiness possible," and both codes are comprehensive and abstract rules requiring concrete application?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. Now in the course of his business activities the bank executive is called upon to make many decisions, some requiring deliberation, because their tendency to accomplish the end of money making may not be at once obvious; but do all his decisions require deliberation? Does he need to pause and consider every time he thinks of reaching out his

hand to take up his pen, every time he reads a report, every time he directs his secretary to write a letter? In each of hundreds of familiar acts which he is called upon to perform every day, does he have to stop and deliberate on the effect of what he is doing or proposing to do upon the final object of his activities as a bank executive?

Jun. No, obviously not.

Sen. And does this prevent him from successfully adapting his means to the end of making as much money for his bank as he can?

Jun. No. To stop and deliberate when no deliberation is called for would interfere with his efficiency as a money maker.

Sen. Well, the relation of a good bank executive to money making for his bank is the same as that of a useful human being to happiness making for his race, and each should use the same principles of common sense in seeking his end. Perpetual resort to a hedonistic calculus is as unnecessary in the latter case as to a financial calculus in the former. In both cases guidance is furnished by the tendency of acts or policies to achieve the end sought.

Jun. Yes, I understand that; but the banker is guided by a great many principles more concrete than that which merely says "Make all the money possible." He has in mind many principles and much knowledge relating to the fluctuation of land, stock, and bond values, the incidence of taxation on property, the security of investments and the pro-

priety of distributing them in this way or that, the credit to be accorded certain classes of institutions, etc., etc. He may not have these principles duly formulated as set rules perhaps, but they are in his head nevertheless and he knows how to act on them.

Sen. That is, he has a number of subordinate rules, formulated or unformulated, telling him more concretely how to make money?

Jun. Yes, but they are all rules for making as much money as possible in the long run.

Sen. And it is the evidence which experience provides revealing the relation between the causes of money making and the effect in money made that guides bankers to the principles of successful banking, is it?

Jun. Yes, they follow the evidence provided by experience, of course.

Sen. In precisely the same way the utilitarian derives from experience the subordinate rules which enable him to apply the code of utility in the concrete. The relation between the causes of happiness making and the effect in happiness made is revealed by experience and can be formulated in rules or principles too numerous to mention, or, as in the case of the banker, they may be left unformulated; but it is these rules of experience, whether formulated or unformulated, which guide the useful man in the concrete, just as analogous rules guide the good banker. Neither goes back to his abstract code every time he is called upon to act. He simply

follows the rules which have previously been derived from that code and proved by experience to be safe to follow.

Jun. Can you give a few examples of rules which it would be useful for men and nations to follow, or things which it would be useful for them to do?

Sen. Should I undertake to do so, the next thing required of me would be to produce the evidence to support them, and this might be a tedious procedure.

Jun. Can you not cite some so obvious as not to require evidence?

Sen. Well, here are a few trite samples of things it is generally useful for individuals to do, rather than otherwise. Follow the Golden Rule; avoid untruthfulness, sloth and extravagance; exercise the body, mind and will regularly; trust reason in all matters of belief and conduct, especially in important matters like the choice of a vocation or a mate, or in the exercise of suffrage. And here are a few samples of things it is generally useful for nations to do, rather than otherwise: Follow the Golden Rule with other nations and with posterity; establish efficient means of making, executing and interpreting laws; take measures for insuring approximate equality in the distribution of wealth; establish agencies for the creation of wealth; and of knowledge—particularly of knowledge relating to the design of institutions and the efficient adaption of social means to ends.

Jun. When you say that such rules of conduct as these are generally useful do you mean that they are universally useful and not subject to exception?

Sen. No, they are merely examples of subordinate rules and may be subject to exception. They are simply rules which evidence indicates to be useful, though of course I do not undertake here and now to marshal the evidence for them.

Jun. But if they are subject to exception how does anyone know in the case of a concrete contingency whether or not the rule or the exception applies. How are exceptions determined?

Sen. By the same means as the rules themselves—by the evidence that they are useful.

Jun. But in the great majority of cases these subordinate rules are safe to follow?

Sen. Yes. For instance take the rule against lying. It is useful to train people not to lie, because in a community where lying prevails people continually mislead one another, and no one can trust what another says. In such a community the knowledge required for the guidance of conduct is hard to get and perpetually tinged with doubt and distrust; everyone feels insecure and suspicious of those about him, and in many ways which I have not the time to particularize, the usefulness of men to one another is diminished. In other words, the evidence clearly indicates that lying in general tends to cause unhappiness and to block happiness and hence is not useful. But suppose a person to be critically ill, his

life perhaps depending upon maintaining tranquility of mind. In this case his doctor may be justified in making an exception to the rule against lying. It may in this exceptional case be more useful to mislead than not to mislead. Therefore it may be right for the doctor to tell his patient he is not in danger even though it involves a lie—that is, a deliberate effort to deceive.

Jun. According to the code of utility then, lying is not always wrong. It is only generally wrong and sometimes right. It is a general, but not a universal rule?

Sen. Yes, that is correct, and so with any other subordinate rule of utility, such as that against murder, or stealing or drunkenness. Any one of them may be subject to exceptions.

Jun. And can exceptional cases always be cited?

Sen. Perhaps not; but we cannot in the case of any of these rules be certain that exceptions might not be discovered.

Jun. Why can't we be certain?

Sen. Because the usefulness of an act is a question of evidence and no man is infallible.

Jun. Then there is no rule of utility which is universal and can have no exception?

Sen. None except the code of utility itself. To the rule "The most useful act should always be done" there is no exception, and can be none. This rule of conduct is the test of all others, determining

finally, not only all subordinate rules but all exceptions to them.

Jun. And how do you know this rule is universal?

Sen. Did we not agree that an act which "should be done" is another name for a right act?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And did we not agree that a right act is another name for an act of maximum ultimate interest to mankind?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And have we not established the presumption that an act of maximum utility is the only act of that character?

Jun. We agreed that to be the presumption.

Sen. Well if this be so an act that "should be done" is, by definition, an act of maximum utility, so that the proposition is universal by definition.

Jun. But after all we have only established a presumption, and you have so framed the definition that it shares the uncertainty of the presumption. Perhaps we have made a mistake in fixing on maximum happiness as the end of maximum interest to mankind. Our analysis of the nature of human interest may have been faulty. We are not infallible, and the code of utility might at any time be invalidated by discovery of some point we have overlooked.

Sen. All this is true. I am not claiming certainty for the code of utility, but only universality.

Assuming our analysis is correct, the general statement of utility admits of no exceptions. To concede that it did would be to concede some more universal rule by which exceptions are to be determined, and as that rule would itself require to be established by analysis of human interest the same uncertainty would attach to it. Man cannot escape his fallibility by any expedient whatever.

Jun. Well, suppose we admit the rule of utility to be universal. In order to render it applicable to concrete cases it is essential, is it not, to formulate subordinate general rules and exceptions thereto, these subordinate rules and their exceptions being the immediate guides to conduct?

Sen. You understand the principle correctly. And if you will compare it with that which guides the bank executive you will find it to be the same. As a guide pure and simple, the rule "The most money making act should always be done" is universal and has no exception; but evidence is required to tell what acts are in fact most money making, and by means of this evidence the subordinate rules as to security and distribution of investment, probability of fluctuation in value, incidence of taxation, etc., etc., are learned, and these rules are the immediate guide to his policy—that is, to his conduct.

Jun. And these rules of money making have exceptions?

Sen. They have or are likely to have; and these

exceptions are determined by the same code as the subordinate rules themselves, namely the code of money making. In other words, when a banker has reason to believe he can make money by following a given rule he follows it, otherwise he makes an exception to it—he doesn't follow it. In this he is just like the man who seeks to execute the code of utility. When it is most useful to follow a given rule he follows it. Otherwise he does not.

Jun. But in either case there is a strong presumption in favor of a general rule?

Sen. Yes, and the burden of proof is on him who claims that a given contingency constitutes an exception. That is why in most instances we can follow a rule of utility without pausing to test it each time. Unless there is something exceptional about the situation to which it is applied we are safe in following it.

Jun. And this method of guidance is the same with the bank executive as it is with the executive of usefulness?

Sen. Exactly the same. The same advantages and disadvantages pertain to each. If a man ever gets confused about the general way to go about the production of happiness let him remember that it is the same way that reasonable men go about the production of money or wealth or knowledge and he may feel less confused about it.

Jun. But is it not unsatisfactory to be guided by subordinate rules, which are uncertain and subject

to exception and of such a character that it may be hard to tell just when exceptions should be made and when they should not?

Sen. Yes, and equally unsatisfactory when money, wealth or knowledge is our object. The trouble is that any alternative proposal is bound to be unsatisfactory from the same cause. Man cannot be guaranteed against mistakes until he becomes infallible. We do not know enough to make either happiness making or money making automatic. But we do not realize certainty by abandoning probability—we only realize improbability. The strength of the code of utility resides largely in the weakness of all alternatives to it.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 38

The code of utility itself is the only universal rule of utility. Its application to conduct in the concrete is accomplished through general and subordinate rules, the utility of which rests upon evidence.

All subordinate rules of utility are or may be subject to exception, the exceptions being determined by the same code as the rules.

The burden of proof rests upon the allegation of an exception to a subordinate general rule of utility.

This relation of universal to subordinate rules applies to all efforts to adapt means to ends, whether the end be money, wealth, knowledge, happiness or anything else to which means may be adapted.

SESSION 39

Junior. We have thus far discussed quite a few objections to the code of utility. I suggest before proceeding further we summarize the results. In our twenty-ninth talk you indicated that, before we got through, we should be able to put our finger on the things which prevent men from recognizing that utility is what they are groping for. Are you prepared to put your finger on them now?

Senior. Yes. Misunderstanding of the code of utility appears to be due to four kinds of confusion:

(1) Of the causes of happiness with happiness itself.

(2) Of the meaning of maximum happiness.

(3) Of the method of applying probability to secure the end of utility.

(4) Of conscientiousness with righteousness.

The last named confusion is the principal obstacle to the recognition of utility. In its absence all others would be easily overcome. We can put our finger on it very definitely as the one great cause of moral obscurity. The one thing that has hidden the solution of the problem of morals from moralists is the presence in their minds of moral convictions.

Jun. Well suppose we take up these four kinds of confusion in their order. Can you pick out examples of objections due to the first kind?

Sen. Yes. Here are a couple expressed in rather typical language:

(1) What is happiness to one is unhappiness to another. (Session 27.)

(2) People get tired of too much happiness. (Session 27.)

Jun. And what are some examples of objections due to the second kind of confusion?

Sen. The following would appear to belong to this class:

(3) Common every-day conduct cannot contribute to the happiness of mankind. (Session 28.)

(4) The end of human conduct is not the greatest happiness, but the greatest happiness of the greatest number. (Session 29.)

Jun. Which are examples of the third class?

Sen. Here are a number of objections due apparently to this kind of confusion:

(5) We cannot be certain of the effects of our acts, and hence cannot tell useful from useless ones. (Session 27.)

(6) Human nature is too complex and variable to be guided by science to any particular end. (Session 28.)

(7) Remote happiness is too uncertain to be considered in guiding conduct. (Session 29.)

(8) Men are always governed by selfish motives, and hence cannot be made to serve mankind. (Session 34.)

(9) Man's will is not free, and hence he cannot choose useful, or any other, alternatives. (Session 37.)

(10) The amount of happiness which will result from a given act is not subject to numerical calculation, and hence useful conduct cannot be distinguished from useless conduct. (Session 37.)

(11) The code of utility is too abstract to apply to concrete decisions. (Session 38.)

Jun. Now what are some objections due to the fourth and most fatal kind of confusion?

Sen. Here are some of that class:

(12) Each man's conscience tells him what is right and what is wrong. (Sessions 21 and 22.)

(13) Inequality in the distribution of happiness is unjust and therefore wrong. (Sessions 30 and 31.)

(14) Good men should get more happiness and less unhappiness than bad ones. (Session 31.)

(15) Right and wrong conduct is a matter of motive. (Session 32.)

(16) Character, not happiness, is the end to be sought by men. (Session 33.)

(17) True happiness should be sought but mere pleasure should be avoided. (Session 33.)

(18) The end cannot justify the means. (Session 34.)

(19) The code of Christianity is the only guide to conduct. (Session 35.)

(20) The will of God is the determinant of right and wrong. (Session 35.)

(21) There is no single code of morals, because ideals of conduct are not one, but several. (Session 36.)

(22) All moral codes are economically determined, and hence are accidental and ephemeral. (Session 36.)

Jun. Here are twenty-two objections to the code of utility and you think they can all be met?

Sen. I have indicated the general method of meeting them in recent talks.

Jun. And do you think any more objections can be raised?

Sen. Perhaps so; but these are the principal objections, and I have reason to think all others would turn out to be little more than verbal disguises or variations of these. There are endless ways of expressing an objection. It would be obviously impossible to deal separately with all variations of wording. To do so would involve indefinite repetition, and indeed you have observed, no doubt, that in meeting the objections you yourself have raised, more or less repetition has been unavoidable. This is because the same difficulty takes different forms in men's minds, and to meet it in one form fails to satisfy men that it has been met in another.

Jun. In our twenty-ninth talk you said that a good proportion of the criticisms of the code of utility would turn out to be confirmations of it, because they would indicate a groping for something too near the principle of utility to be explained on the ground of mere coincidence—shots too near the bull's-eye to be random ones. Can you indicate which are such shots and which are not?

Sen. In our past talks we have taken up each objection separately, pointing out those whose gropings were most significant. The trend in each case has shown precisely the same direction, and what is even more significant, it is the same direction that we were led to take in the gropings of our earlier discussions—from the code of brickdust to that of happiness. A summary of the objections shows the following situation:

Objections 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 22 are merely misunderstandings, not weakening the code of utility but not confirming it.

Objections 18 and 21 are recognitions of the code of conscience, and 12 is an explicit expression of it.

All the others; namely, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20—that is, thirteen out of the twenty-two objections—are gropings for, or obscure recognitions of, one or another requirement of utility; either for science as a means or happiness as an end. It is these criticisms which are in effect

confirmations, since they recognize, even if blindly, the central place of usefulness in morals. This blindness can be turned into insight by ignoring the convictions of conscience which have caused it. The code of utility thus stands out plainly as the code which all moralists have been feeling for in their attempts to guide human conduct to the end of greatest importance to mankind.

Jun. But surely many moralists have recognized that unguided conscience cannot guide mankind to his goal?

Sen. Some have said that they recognized it, and condemned it as a guide, but they propose no alternative which does not turn out to be the same thing in disguise. A moralist may repudiate conscience under the name of conscience, but he accepts it under the name of self-realization, or loyalty, or love, or perfection, or the objective of evolution, or "intrinsic value" of some other kind.

Jun. And are there no exceptions?

Sen. I have only found one—Bentham—who recognizes the grounds on which the code of happiness rests—and even he expresses it equivocally, besides falling into error about motives.

Jun. Most moralists repudiate convictionism under some names and accept it under others? Bentham repudiates it under all names?

Sen. Yes. He is entitled to the credit of having first pointed out the real grounds on which a guide to conduct can be built, and he clearly recog-

nized that all alternatives to utility are disguises for convictionism, which he called "the principle of sympathy and antipathy," a long but appropriate name.

Jun. And have moralists since his time failed to recognize his discovery?

Sen. It would seem so, for they continue to employ the fallacious process he exposed. They continue to revolve in the circle of convictionism, so that it is as true to-day as in Bentham's time, that there is only one alternative proposed to the code of utility, namely the principle of sympathy and antipathy—the disguises different but the principle the same.

Jun. But is there not another way of opposing the code of utility? Why may not a moralist take the position that we do not know enough at present to formulate any code of moral science for the guidance of men and hence propose as an alternative neither the code of conscience nor any disguise for it—in fact make no proposal at all?

Sen. And thus avoid the difficulties of defending an alternative by proposing none.

Jun. Yes; why not take a *laissez faire* attitude and let things take their course without attempting to guide them by any artificial rule?

Sen. On the principle of each man his own moralist perhaps.

Jun. No, because that would be convictionism again—that would be proposing each man's con-

science as a guide to his own conduct. I mean to propose no guide at all—not even conscience.

Sen. That is to say, not *approved* doing only, but *any* kind of doing, would be right doing—whatever is done, *ought to be*.

Jun. No, I mean not mentioning or considering “right” or “ought” or anything of that kind at all—just letting things take their course.

Sen. But don’t you see this would be an alternative just as much as any other proposal? To propose to let things take their course is to propose the guidance of human conduct by whatever causes may happen to determine it. To adopt such a proposal would have consequences just as definite as to adopt any other. When you say “Do not try to guide conduct at all” you have proposed a code of conduct just as definite as that of utility, and just as definitely an alternative to it as that of conscience. To do nothing about a thing is only one way of doing something. Not to put out a lighted match in a waste basket will have precisely the same consequences as putting a lighted match in it. To leave causes in operation produces the same effects as to put them in operation. To suspend activity is not to suspend the law of causation. And what is true of acts is true of guides to action. To propose no guide to conduct is only one way of proposing a guide. Men cannot escape doing something by doing nothing; and moralists cannot escape proposing a guide to conduct by refusing to propose one.

Jun. I see your point, and guess there is no way of dodging the issue by this expedient. And after all I suppose no one would propose doing nothing to guide human conduct if he disapproved of proposing it?

Sen. Not if he were normal.

Jun. So that even this most negative of proposals turns out to be only another disguise for convictionism.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 39

Objections to the code of utility arise from four kinds of confusion:

- (1) Of the causes of happiness with happiness itself.
- (2) Of the meaning of maximum happiness.
- (3) Of the method of applying probability to attain the end of utility.
- (4) Of conscientiousness with righteousness.

The fourth is the most prevalent and potent.

Of twenty-two objections to the code of utility heretofore considered, two arise from the first kind of confusion, two from the second, seven from the third, and eleven from the fourth.

Of the twenty-two objections to the code of utility heretofore considered, thirteen turn out to be confirmations of it.

The only proposed alternative to the code of utility is the code of conscience.

All other apparent alternatives are disguises for the code of conscience.

To propose no alternative to the code of utility is a special way of proposing an alternative.

SESSION 40

Junior. You claim, do you not, that all actually proposed alternatives to utility are convictionism under one disguise or another?

Senior. Yes.

Jun. And that they are proposed because their proposer approves of them?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Well, then, I have another objection to the code of utility. Why is it not merely one more disguise for convictionism? Are you not doing the very thing you accuse other moralists of doing? Come now, own up; why do you propose the code of utility? Is it not because you approve of it?

Sen. Do you want me to answer that question yes or no?

Jun. I wish you would.

Sen. Well the answer to it is easily to be found in former discussions, and so far as the validity of the code of utility is concerned, it does not make any difference which way I answer it.

Jun. But if you admit the force of the objection by answering yes, does not that prove that utility itself is merely another disguise for convictionism, and hence subject to all the disabilities of other disguises?

Sen. To answer yes then would give the objection its greatest force?

Jun. Certainly, it would be admitting all that the objection requires to be admitted.

Sen. Suppose for the sake of strengthening your objection then I answer "yes." What does that prove about the code of utility?

Jun. It proves you are advocating it on the same grounds as other convictionists and hence if your reasoning condemns them, it condemns yourself.

Sen. But I am not the code of utility. Condemning me is not condemning it.

Jun. But if the grounds on which it rests are invalidated the code is invalidated, and by answering "yes" you are admitting your grounds to be the same as those of other convictionists.

Sen. I think a parallel will make this matter clear, and show that the code of utility is not touched by this objection. Suppose I claim that the proposition—"Nine times five is forty-five"—is true. Would you agree with me?

Jun. Anyone who knows the multiplication table would agree with you.

Sen. Suppose I now say it is true because I believe it. Would you still agree with me?

Jun. No. It is true whether you believe it or not.

Sen. If I claim that nine times five is forty-five on the ground that I believe it, you can show my grounds to be invalid, can you?

Jun. Very easily.

Sen. But would that prove that nine times five is not forty-five?

Jun. Of course not. I should have proved you wrong but the multiplication table would still be right.

Sen. Very well. Then when I claim (for the sake of strengthening your objection) that the code of utility is the right code to guide men's conduct because I approve it, you can easily prove my reasoning wrong, but the code of utility will still be right. I can claim the code of utility to be right on unsound grounds just as I can claim the multiplication table to be true on unsound grounds, but to show the grounds to be unsound no more invalidates the code of utility than it does the multiplication table. It shows that I am mistaken, but it leaves the code untouched. The correct answer to your question of course is "no," but I answered "yes," just to show that even if I conceded all you asked, the code of utility would remain unaffected.

Jun. You do not propose that code because you approve of it then?

Sen. Of course not. I have tried to explain before that the world is not interested in what I approve, or yearning to discover what my sentiments may be on any question. Hence I do not bother to express to the world what my sentiments either of approval or disapproval may be. What I do attempt is to advance reasons for believing that the

code of utility is the code of greatest interest to mankind. This is something which is interesting to the world, if true, and it is on these grounds and these alone that I suggest the code of utility as a guide to the conduct of mankind.

Jun. The code of utility does not rest on convictional grounds then?

Sen. Previous discussions are ample to show that it does not. It rests on the nature of certain states of consciousness, and its interest is determined exclusively by the interest of those states. But since you have brought up the question in this form I take occasion again to emphasize that the importance of the code of utility is completely independent of the convictions of any man or aggregate of men, as much so as the truth of the multiplication table. Indeed it is so completely independent of them that if all men should become entirely incapable of convictions, either of belief or disbelief, approbation or disapprobation, it would not alter in the minutest degree the importance of the code to mankind.

Jun. And you claim that utility is the only code of which this can be said?

Sen. The only proposed code. This was clearly implied in what was said yesterday. To measure the interest of a code of conduct we can get nowhere by discovering how we feel about it any more than we can measure the distance between two stakes

driven in the ground by discovering how we feel about it.

Jun. And you measure the interest of mankind, as you would measure the distance between two stakes?

Sen. Yes, utility, like probability, is measured by applying a standard of measurement adapted to the purpose, and we have shown in previous talks that the only standard of measurement adapted to the purpose of measuring the interest of mankind is the standard of happiness. Utility can be urged on convictional grounds, just as any other code can, but when those grounds are withdrawn it leaves the interest of the code intact, whereas in the case of all alternative codes it leaves them without any interest at all, except perhaps such as they may possess from their resemblance or approximation to the code of utility.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 40

The code of utility is the only proposed code of conduct which is free from convictionism.

If mankind were entirely incapable of conviction, the interest of the code of utility would remain unchanged. Of no other proposed code can this be said.

SESSION 41¹

Junior. To-day I wish to raise a philosophical question of fundamental importance. As I understand certain moralists there is a state of mind of great importance to mankind that you have apparently overlooked.

Senior. Of great importance, you say?

Jun. Yes, very great.

Sen. Then I assume it is of interest—intrinsic interest.

Jun. Well, if it is very important it can hardly be a matter of indifference.

Sen. It is another kind of non-indifference then which was overlooked in our search for states of mind distinguishable from indifference—a seventh kind?

Jun. As I understand the matter it is.

Sen. And does it resemble any one of the kinds we discovered more than another?

Jun. I should say it resembled approval and disapproval more than the other kinds.

Sen. But it is not the same thing under another name?

Jun. I judge moralists—or some moralists—would claim it was something different. Various

names are applied to it—sense of duty, categorical imperative, and others.

Sen. It is something observable in the mind, is it?

Jun. Yes, it is observable on certain occasions. It is a mental attitude toward acts—a very imperative attitude—a feeling that we must do, or avoid doing, certain things. It is the kind of feeling you have toward an act when you say it is your imperative duty to do it.

Sen. And is this an attitude toward a person's own acts only, or do people feel it toward acts of others?

Jun. Mostly toward a person's own acts. But sometimes you feel that other persons have imperative duties, and if their conduct does not conform to them you are likely to have a feeling of strong disapproval.

Sen. And these imperative duties; are they things that ought to be done?

Jun. Moralists would agree that they ought to be done, I think.

Sen. Then they use the word "ought" in a meaning different from that employed by the utilitarian.

Jun. Yes, they mean by an act that ought to be done, one that the categorical imperative or sense of duty commands shall be done.

Sen. This sense of duty appears to me to resemble very closely what we have been calling moral sense or conscience.

Jun. It does resemble it. Indeed the name conscience appears to be another name for the sense of duty.

Sen. So here is another verbal issue raised.

Jun. Yes, but it is raised just as much by you as by your possible opponents. If this word conscience has been used in a certain meaning and you for your own purpose give it another, you are the one who is raising a verbal issue, are you not?

Sen. I should say I was unless I carefully explained what I was doing. I am not particular about the word conscience, but I want some word to designate the thing, and as long as other expressions like sense of duty and categorical imperative are available to express the other thing—if it is another thing—it seems to me that the word conscience might be spared to express what I have used it to express.

Jun. Well, the important matter is to avoid all verbal disputes by assigning a word to each meaning; so let us use the word conscience as we have been using it, and assign the other expressions to the new meaning I have brought forward for attention to-day.

Sen. All right, but of course I have my doubts whether it is a new meaning. It may be an old meaning under a new name. It is easy to mistake a new name for a new meaning. If this sense of duty is something different from what we have

called conscience it must have different characteristics.

Jun. Of course it must.

Sen. Let us see if we can discover what they are; and first let me ask whether we ever disapprove of doing what our sense of duty tells us to do?

Jun. I cannot speak for others, but I never do.

Sen. You always approve of doing your duty?

Jun. Certainly.

Sen. Does your conscience ever tell you to do what your sense of duty tells you not to do?

Jun. No.

Sen. The two voices always agree.

Jun. In my case they do.

Sen. If you were able to hear one, then you could dispense with the other, since both urge you to the same conduct?

Jun. That is the way it appears to me, but the moralists must have discovered something new, since they would never assent to the proposition that to obey the imperative voice of duty was anything so simple and commonplace as gratifying an approbation or disapprobation. Remember the categorical imperative may impel a man to conduct utterly destructive of his own happiness—and he will acknowledge its claims. Duty comes before everything else.

Sen. This does not distinguish the categorical imperative from conscience. We have already pointed out that approval and disapproval are to be ex-

pressed in units entirely distinct from happiness and unhappiness. Men often disapprove of doing what they desire to do, or what they know will bring them happiness, and their disapproval often prevails in determining conduct. I cannot seem to find in myself any sense of duty or categorical imperative distinct from conscience. Can you?

Jun. No. I appear unable to find it. My duty and what my conscience tells me to do seem the same thing.

Sen. And have you searched your mind for it carefully?

Jun. Quite carefully.

Sen. Perhaps it is something possessed only by a selected few?

Jun. If so, it cannot be of very great interest to mankind, can it?

Sen. If we do not know what it is, we cannot tell. It is too much like revelation. But there is another characteristic of conscience—its control by custom and the accidents of education—is the sense of duty free from that? Are the things which the categorical imperative commands a man to do or refrain from doing entirely uninfluenced by the code of conduct which prevails in his vicinity or among his group?

Jun. I do not think that such independence of prevailing codes is claimed for it.

Sen. Take the sense of duty of the devout Brah-

min for instance—surely it forbids him to slaughter cows or eat beef?

Jun. As I understand it the categorical imperative would forbid such things in a Brahmin even if he was starving.

Sen. But it would not forbid a cowboy on the Nebraska prairie?

Jun. No, because his moral code is different.

Sen. But if this is so then we may at least assert that if the categorical imperative is not conscience it resembles it in being determined by the vagaries of local codes of conduct, and hence by chance.

Jun. It would appear not to differ from conscience in this characteristic.

Sen. And have you ever heard that the sense of duty was a kind of interest which could be averaged or added or otherwise combined into a resultant of maximum interest to mankind?

Jun. I have never heard this suggested, though I think it might be as practical to do such things as in the case of approval.

Sen. And we did not find that very practical?

Jun. No.

Sen. And how about the distinction between what the sense of duty *does* tell a man to do and what it *ought* to tell him to do. Do moralists harp on this distinction?

Jun. On the contrary, I think the sense of duty determines what ought to be done. If it tells you to do a thing you ought to do it.

Sen. So that what it *does* tell you and what it *ought to* tell you are the same thing.

Jun. Well, only in the same sense as in the case of conscience. Sometimes a man, even if he is a moralist, finds that another man's sense of duty is not what it ought to be.

Sen. This categorical imperative certainly does resemble conscience. My guess is that it is the same thing under a different name; and that in the absence of the feelings of approval and disapproval it would not exist. I doubt if it is another kind of non-indifference at all. At any rate if it is, it is as ill adapted to guide human conduct to an end of maximum interest as conscience is. It fails to meet the same requirements of rightness that conscience fails to meet. If it is a guide to conduct at all it is a guide only under the same restrictions as conscience—it is a safe guide only when guided aright.

Jun. But if a moralist of standing should tell you that his categorical imperative, his sense of duty, told him to reject the code of utility, what would you say?

Sen. I should inform him that mine tells me just the opposite, but that both of us had better let it go at that. What either of us says about the matter is doubtless true, but it is not interesting—to mankind.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 41

The code of the categorical imperative or sense of duty is either the code of conscience under another name, or if it is not, is subject to the same disabilities as that code.

SESSION 42

Junior. I am not yet done raising objections to utility. According to that code the whole importance or interest of an act depends upon its tendency to produce happiness?

Senior. Yes.

Jun. It is only a question of quantity of happiness?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Then what difference does it make in what kind of a sensorium the happiness is produced? Why is not the sensorium of a horse, a dog, a bird, a snake, or a mosquito as useful a place as the sensorium of a man for happiness to exist in? Is it not arbitrary to draw a distinction between men and animals as you have done?

Sen. Yes, it is. This makes about two dozen objections you have raised to utility, and at last you have found one which will hold water. Between animals and men there are, or have been during the process of evolution, all intermediate stages. No line can be drawn distinguishing the shape, size, or other characteristics of an animal that is worthy to be an agency for producing happiness from one that is not.

Jun. It is necessary to revise the code of utility then to make it consistent with the principle which justifies it?

Sen. Yes, it is necessary to substitute the name and meaning of "sentiency" for "mankind" in all previous definitions and statements; but there is an excuse for limiting heretofore the discussions to the interests of mankind alone. I did not raise the issue of the happiness and unhappiness of animals earlier because it would have complicated the matter and removed it from the usual channels of discussion. The revision required in substituting the interests of the entire sentient world for that of mankind alone is easily made and understood.

Jun. Very well. We have found at least one valid objection to utility; even if it applied only to the form and not the substance.

Sen. And we have now revised the form to make it more accurately express the substance.

Jun. But this raising the question of beings different from man suggests another query about the code of utility—not necessarily an objection, but a query.

Sen. Plenty of queries may be raised.

Jun. The original clue to the code of utility was obtained in the distinction between indifference and non-indifference?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. And following this up, six kinds of non-indifference were discovered?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. And by examination of these kinds of non-indifference we were led through several intermediate stages to the code of utility as the only expression of maximum ultimate interest to mankind—or sentiency?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Now the query I want to make is: Suppose beings were discovered whose consciousness included states of non-indifference different from those which we have distinguished; would it not require a re-examination of the validity of the code of utility?

Sen. You mean states of non-indifference as different from happiness and unhappiness as they are different from indifference or from each other, for instance?

Jun. Yes.

Sen. It would of course require a re-examination of utility. And indeed that code does not pretend to any "absolute" validity independent of the feelings of such sentient beings as are open to the observation of men. Discovery of different states of non-indifference in other beings affectable by human conduct, or discovery of such states in the consciousness of man himself, might require a modification of the code, or even the substitution of some other for it. But of course, we should have no means of judging about this until the new kinds of non-indifference had received attention.

Jun. But does not this place the code of utility in a precarious and tentative position? If it can be so easily upset, it can hardly claim to hold the same place in moral science that the code of logic holds in physical science—it cannot claim the same authority to guide conduct as probability can claim to guide belief?

Sen. I think that it can, for both codes result from a process of induction and are subject to the uncertainties of that process.

Jun. And has not physical logic an “absolute” validity then, independent of the experiences of men?

Sen. No. If a set of beings could be discovered in whose experiences the principles of identity and uniformity, on which physical science rests, provided no guidance to belief and some other principles did, or if additional principles for the guidance of belief were to be discovered in the experiences of men, a re-examination of the code of probability would be as necessary as would be required of the code of utility if new kinds of non-indifference were to be discovered. Neither physical nor moral logic has any validity outside of the experiences of men or of beings accessible to man’s observation. There is nothing “absolute” about either of them—nor can I perceive that either has any firmer foundation than the other.

Jun. And this seems to bring us again to the issue originally raised away back in our first talk,

as to whether a scientific basis of morals could be discovered, and if so, what it could be. I take it that you claim the code of utility to be such a basis, and if so, I should like you now to defend that position.

Sen. Very well.

Jun. Your claim is that utility is as scientific a guide to conduct as probability is to belief.

Sen. My claim is that it is reasonable to so assert; and as far as the means employed are concerned, I believe the claim will be at once allowed, for these means are exclusively determined by probability itself. Utility indeed is but a special application of probability—its application to the end of maximum interest to mankind. If this proposed end is once accepted as established on ground as firm as the proposed means, then all moral difficulties disappear from our problem, leaving only those of probability—which, to be sure, are serious enough.

Jun. True, they are serious enough, but if it is hard to adapt means to an end when we know what the end is, how much harder it must be when we don't.

Sen. Yet if the opponent of utility has no definite alternative end to propose, he must be prepared to meet this harder—indeed this impossible—task.

Jun. Well, as far as the guide to the means of utility is concerned, your claim must be allowed. Science is avowedly the guide to means, and back

in our fourth talk we concluded that it was a successful guide. What we then started to look for was a similar guide to ends. And the question is, have we discovered it? In what sense can the end of utility—happiness—be said to be more “scientific” than soap or money or wealth or misery or any other end that might be mentioned? What is meant by “scientific” when applied to such a thing as an end?

Sen. We agreed that whatever is reasonable is scientific?

Jun. I remember we agreed to that; but what is meant by “reasonable” when applied to an end?

Sen. If the steps by which we arrive at a conclusion are reasonable, does it not establish a presumption that the conclusion is reasonable?

Jun. It would seem so.

Sen. Have you observed in the course of our conversation that I have appealed to your emotions, your traditions, your prejudices or anything but your judgment?

Jun. No. You have seemed to me almost too cold for a moralist.

Sen. You have noticed no attempt to consult feelings of sympathy or antipathy in arriving at conclusions?

Jun. No. Such feelings when encountered have been ignored. You deserve the credit—or discredit—for seeking the right as dispassionately as the most dry-as-dust scientist seeks the truth.

Sen. As far as you have noticed then there has

been no appeal to unreason in the steps by which we arrived at our final conclusions about the nature of right and wrong ends?

Jun. As far as I understand the character of unreason no such process has been appealed to, but the absence of unreason is not exactly equivalent to the presence of reason, perhaps.

Sen. Still I take it a presumption is established by the absence of unreason?

Jun. A presumption, yes.

Sen. We will endeavor to strengthen it to-morrow.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 42

The interest of happiness is independent of the kind of being which perceives it.

To escape inconsistency the code of utility must be revised, the end of maximum interest to sentiency being substituted for that of mankind.

The more restricted expression of the code has been discussed heretofore only for purposes of simplicity and convenience, and the revision may be readily made and understood.

The code of utility would not necessarily be valid to beings capable of kinds of interest different from those known to mankind, but such beings are unknown.

It is equally true that the code of probability would not necessarily be valid to beings capable of inferring by processes different from those known to mankind, but such beings are unknown.

As far as the means to be employed are concerned, the code of utility is a scientific code of conduct.

SESSION 43

Senior. You think it important to show that the end sought by utility is scientific, do you?

Junior. Yes, we recognized in our first talk the importance of showing this.

Sen. But since then have we not learned something about importance?

Jun. We have learned that, in the ultimate analysis, happiness is the raw material of importance.

Sen. Consider then how this discovery has changed the aspect of our inquiry. It becomes more important to show that science is useful than to show that usefulness is scientific, does it not?

Jun. Yes, that would seem to follow from the very meaning of importance.

Sen. Hence if we failed to show that the end of utility was a scientific end it would constitute more of a reflection on science than on utility, would it not?

Jun. It would seem so. In fact it would not constitute any reflection on utility at all.

Sen. So what we have learned since our first talk has rendered unnecessary and unimportant the

proof that the end of utility is scientific; and if this is the case, why should we bother to undertake it?

Jun. Then science derives its importance from its utility, does it?

Sen. If it were useless where would be its importance to mankind? Would the world be interested in a science which produced only misery except to avoid it? If science is not useful, its importance must be negative?

Jun. Still I think if you could show the end of utility to be a scientific end it would be important, because the public mind has become accustomed to associate importance with the word "scientific" and that association cannot be ignored.

Sen. That is true, but it would be necessary to extend the meaning of the word, since at present it has no application to the validity of ultimate, but only to that of proximate, ends.

Jun. You mean no application sanctioned by custom?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. And would such an extension of meaning be a scientific, that is, a reasonable thing to do? If sufficient extension or change of meaning is allowable, *any* code can be shown to be scientific.

Sen. No doubt of that, and such verbal shifts are among the commonest futilities of philosophy. It is easy to show that black is white by a sufficient change in the meanings of the words "black" or

“white.” But certain extensions of meaning may be reasonable, especially if we recognize exactly what we are doing in the process.

Jun. And is there any scientific precedent for extensions of the kind you propose?

Sen. Yes. Such extensions of meaning are familiar in science. For instance the word “multiply” originally applied only to a process of increasing numbers, but when the meaning of the word was extended to multiplication by fractions its application was extended to a process of decreasing them, and this changed the original significance of the word. To multiply a number originally implied making it larger, and to make it smaller by multiplication would have then been regarded as an absurdity.

Jun. And how would you go about extending the meaning of the word “scientific” to the end of utility?

Sen. In much the same way as the meaning of the word “multiplication” was extended. This was done, not by showing multiplication by fractions to be a special case of multiplication by integers, but by showing both processes of multiplication to be examples of a common process.

Jun. And is there an analogous relation between the processes of physical and moral logic?

Sen. The ultimate foundations of both kinds of logic are discoverable by parallel processes of groping, and justified by the same reason.

Jun. I think it would be of interest to illustrate this.

Sen. Well to begin with there are two kinds of reasons—reasons for *believing* and reasons for *doing*, and reasons are never required or given for anything else.

Jun. But are there not reasons for approving also? To guide conscience is to guide approval, and you surely have proposed to guide conscience by reason.

Sen. A reason for doing is a reason for approving the thing to be done, of course, just as a reason why an event will occur is a reason for believing it will occur. Hence a reason for approving is not distinct from a reason for doing, any more than a reason for an occurrence is distinct from a reason for believing in the occurrence. To guide conduct by a conscience which has itself been guided by reason is safe enough, since it is only a way of making reason guide conduct through conscience.

Jun. You mean it is a way of making reason guide conduct indirectly instead of directly.

Sen. Yes.

Jun. With this understanding, it seems safe to say that a reason which is not a reason for believing anything or for doing anything is not a reason at all.

Sen. So that a parallelism between believing and doing is suggested by the fact that there are two things and only two for which something or other called a "reason" can be given.

Jun. Yes.

Sen. And the implication is that these two kinds of reasons must have something in common; otherwise they would not be expressed by the same word?

Jun. That is certainly the implication. What in your judgment is their common quality?

Sen. Well, both are tests of convictions, one of physical, the other of moral convictions.

Jun. That is to say, one is a test of belief, the other of approbation.

Sen. Yes.

Jun. And have they anything else in common?

Sen. Both are ultimate answers to questions beginning with the words *why should*. To continue asking why should men *believe* such or such a proposition leads finally to the definition of a reason for a belief, and to continue asking why should men *approve* such or such an act leads finally to the definition of a reason for an act; but it takes a lot of groping to find either ultimate answer, and few there are who have the patience for it. Nevertheless those who pursue the task with sufficient patience and intelligence will in all probability arrive at the conclusion that a reason (or sufficient reason) for believing a proposition has been given when the probability of the proposition has been shown to be greater than its contradictory, and a reason (or sufficient reason) for approving (and hence for doing) an act has been given when the

utility of the act has been shown to be greater than its alternatives.

Jun. Former discussions have shown that the meaning of utility involves that of probability, so that the meaning of both kinds of reasons depends upon the meaning of "probability."

Sen. Yes, that is another common quality of reasons—they are both expressed as probabilities. Utility, as already emphasized, is only an especially interesting kind of probability—a probability of happiness.

Jun. There appear to be several similarities between reasons for believing and reasons for doing. Do any others occur to you?

Sen. Another characteristic common to the two is that they are so constituted as continually to be confounded with the thing they are adapted to test. Beliefs are confounded with reasons for belief just as approbations are confounded with reasons for approbation. It is common for men to make what they *do* believe the test of what they *ought to* believe, just as it is common (indeed almost universal) for them to make what they *do* approve the test of what they *ought to* approve.

Jun. Are there any other points in common between reasons for beliefs and reasons for acts?

Sen. Well, neither kind of reason is arbitrary. Neither is limited or influenced or determined by any man's habits, feelings, convictions or conduct. Their power to test conviction rests on nothing but

the nature of things. They agree in not being inventions but discoveries.

Jun. Discoveries! Discoveries of what?

Sen. To answer that question will reveal another characteristic common to both kinds of reasons. There exist in the human mind, a number of different mental processes which are causes of conviction. Logic has arisen from the discrimination of certain of these processes and their selection as tests of all other causes of conviction. Thus the processes of inference or judgment described in books on physical or common logic, whether deductive or inductive, are processes common to all minds and employed in all minds as guides to belief, but not employed to the exclusion of other processes. These particular processes however have been given the name of "reasoning" processes and by their means reasons for belief are revealed, by which all men when reasoning determine belief.

Jun. Logicians then discriminate between the causes of belief and the reasons for it?

Sen. Certainly. All beliefs have causes but not all beliefs are reasonable.

Jun. Yet all men do not guide their beliefs by reason?

Sen. No, but it is as true in physical as in moral logic that what men do is no criterion of what they ought to do.

Jun. And are there several mental processes

which are the causes of moral convictions—approbations and disapprobations?

Sen. There are, but moral logic arises from the discrimination of one such process—the use-judgment—which is common to all minds, and its application as a guide to the end of maximum interest to mankind. To this process in this application the name moral reasoning is appropriate, and by its means reasons for acts (or for approving acts) are revealed by which all men may determine their conduct, and do determine it when they do right.

Jun. And it is proposed that this process be used to the exclusion of all others, just as in the parallel case of physical logic?

Sen. Yes. There is the same distinction between reasonable and unreasonable approbations that there is between reasonable and unreasonable beliefs. All acts as well as all beliefs have causes, but that does not mean that all acts are reasonable.

Jun. And why do logicians select the particular processes that they do select, from among all other mental processes which are found to cause convictions among men? Why should they select one process or set of processes rather than another?

Sen. The answer to this question brings to light still another and perhaps the most important characteristic common to both kinds of reasons. They select the particular processes they do because in the case both of physical and of moral logic the result of applying those processes in the guidance of con-

viction is of universal interest to mankind. By applying the processes of physical reasoning men are successful in distinguishing beliefs which will be realized or verified from those which will not, whereas by applying other processes they are unsuccessful. And by applying the processes of moral reasoning they are successful in distinguishing conduct which will promote their ultimate interests from that which will not, whereas by other methods they are unsuccessful.

Jun. And both kinds of success of course are of universal interest to men?

Sen. Not only of universal interest but of greater interest than any other; for what alternative guide to belief could be of so much proximate interest to mankind as one which tells them what to expect or believe among the infinite possibilities of expectation and belief which life presents. And what alternative guide to conduct could be of so much ultimate interest to mankind as one which tells them what course of conduct among the infinite number of courses selectable will attain a result of maximum ultimate interest to them. Thus if science is extended to conduct as well as belief it becomes of maximum ultimate as well as proximate interest. The end sought by physical science is of maximum interest because of what it is a *means to*. The end sought by moral science is of maximum interest because of what it *is*.

Jun. It would seem then that we fully appreciate

the importance of the reasoning process, whether physical or moral, only by comparing it with the importance of its alternatives.

Sen. Yes; but note this significant fact, that the importance of the results of physical reasoning is ultimately dependent upon the importance of the results of moral reasoning, since successful guidance to belief would be of no ultimate interest to men if it did not affect their happiness in the slightest degree, and this brings us back to the point we emphasized at the beginning of this session—that it is moral science which gives importance to physical, not physical science which gives importance to moral.

Jun. There seem to be quite a number of characteristics common to physical and moral reasons, discoverable by intelligent groping.

Sen. Thus far we have mentioned eight of considerable significance. Both reasons for belief and for approbation are:

(1) Tests of conviction, but not themselves convictions.

(2) Final answers to questions beginning with the words "why should."

(3) Expressible as probabilities.

(4) Independent of the mental states they are designed to guide.

(5) Generally confounded with the mental states they are designed to guide.

(6) Applications of processes of universal occurrence in the minds of men.

(7) Of universal interest to mankind.

(8) Of greater interest to mankind than any other proposed guides to conviction.

Jun. And you think these resemblances justify the application of the name scientific to the code and the end of utility.

Sen. It would seem useful and therefore reasonable to apply such a name to them, but the name that is applied is less important than the resemblances which justify it, for after all what gives a thing importance is not the name applied to it, but the characteristics which it possesses. The code of probability and the code of utility have certain common characteristics, and the significance of these similarities cannot be obscured either by giving or withholding a common name. The fact of their common character remains, whether a name is used to represent it or not.

Jun. But in applying the word "scientific" to the end and code of utility—for in applying it to either you apply it to both—you are changing the ordinary meaning of the word, are you not?

Sen. Yes, we are extending it, since it has not heretofore been applied to the validity of ultimate ends, but the resemblances between probability and utility are such that it is helpful and clarifying to thought to so apply it. In other words, the reason for the extension of meaning is the same as that for

extending the meaning of the word "multiply" from a process for increasing numbers to one of diminishing them.

Jun. But you have in effect redefined the word "scientific," yet you have not proved the new definition to be a true one, I take it.

Sen. Of course not. Proof of truth does not apply to definitive, but only to material, propositions. The test of definitions is not truth but usefulness. Hence this extended definition is justified, as all other stipulated definitions are justified, by a reason for doing something, as defined in our twenty-fifth session.

Jun. True, but the definition of reason there given is itself stipulated. I could easily stipulate a different one which would not justify your definition of scientific. If you are entitled to stipulate a definition, so am I.

Sen. But would your alternative definition of reason be of equal interest to mankind?

Jun. I suppose not.

Sen. Can you suggest any alternative definition of a reason for an act, sanctioned by custom, or by anything else, sufficiently sharpened to raise an issue with the utilitarian definition?

Jun. No.

Sen. Well, if none such can be suggested then that definition stands, and the end of utility is shown to be a scientific or reasonable end by definition. The reason for calling it scientific is moral, not

physical. Physical reasons can explain, but only moral reasons can justify.

Jun. Then you claim that no other end can justify the use of the name scientific except that of utility?

Sen. Can you propose any other which would lead to a code possessing so many and important characteristics in common with the code of probability? Would a brickdust code, or a soap code, or a money code, or a wealth code, or an indifference code, or any alternative code of intrinsic interest, have characteristics in common with the code of probability of such significance as those we have enumerated?

Jun. They might be made to have some of those characteristics but not all of them. I can think of none that anyone would think of proposing which would have the characteristics numbered 1 or 4. And none, either proposed or proposable, which would have that numbered 8. As far as I can see, after considering the matter rather systematically for more than forty days, the only non-arbitrary code which mankind can follow as a guide to conscience is the code of utility.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 43

The nature of reasons is to be discovered by a process of intelligent groping.

Groping for the nature of a reason for an act results in the discovery of the code of utility, just as groping for the nature of a reason for a belief results in the discovery of the code of probability.

The code of utility possesses characteristics in common with the code of probability which justify extending the meaning of the word "scientific" to the code and end of utility. The more important of these characteristics are enumerated in Session 43

No other code possesses common characteristics of comparable significance.

The codes of utility and probability are justified by the same reason.

SESSION 44

Junior. In affiliating morals so closely with science the code of utility seems open to the criticism that it does not provide men with one of the greatest needs of their nature—a religious ideal.

Senior. And do other codes of morals provide men with a religion, or is it the religion which provides the code of morals?

Jun. It does not matter which way you look at it; religious and moral ideals are usually associated in the minds of men, and if the goal of utility fails to furnish the inspiration of religion it fails to touch one of the deepest springs of human nature.

Sen. But does it fail to furnish the inspiration of religion? Is not the end of utility an inspiring ideal? What object is more adapted to inspire men with religious enthusiasm than that of creating a universe of happiness?

Jun. But happiness in the abstract seems a very cold and inhuman sort of an ideal. Men are better inspired by something expressed in terms more warm and human. A heaven of abstraction has no strong personal appeal.

Sen. You mean that men like something concrete which the imagination can take hold of?

Jun. Yes, and something that appeals to their personal tastes.

Sen. The taste of the Buddhist is best satisfied by an ideal of calm contemplation, that of the Calvinist by an ideal of vocal and instrumental glorification of God; the heaven of the Mohammedan is a houri harem, of the Norseman a Valhalla of flowing mead, and of the American Indian a happy hunting-ground?

Jun. Yes. In these ideals there is a personal appeal. Something to fight and die for.

Sen. But each ideal is a local one, and its interest confined to persons of certain habits, or ways of thinking and acting, developed by local training. The Puritan is not inspired by a happy hunting-ground; harp playing and psalm singing do not appeal to the hardy Norseman, and the enthusiasm of the houri lover is not kindled by the prospect of an eternity of sojourn in Nirvana where nothing is mentioned but Om.

Jun. That is true, but each religionist is at least inspired by his own ideal. Abstract happiness appeals to no one.

Sen. Well, if you removed all the happiness from the houri harem and the happy hunting-ground and the other ideals, what appeal would be left in them, even to their devotees?

Jun. But there is no abstract happiness in them. It is all concrete.

Sen. Happiness when felt is always concrete. It

is only when talked about that it is abstract. The thing that can be measured in terms of intensity and duration is something sufficiently concrete to appeal to anybody. Remove this from your religious ideals and what is there left to interest men?

Jun. Nothing, I suppose, but desires and approbations.

Sen. And they would be rather cold and cheerless things divorced from all happiness or potentiality thereof.

Jun. Yes. They would not be far removed from indifference.

Sen. Is it not clear that the normal ideals of religion are ideals of means? Nirvana appeals to the Buddhist because it is a means to peace and freedom from pain. Psalm-singing appeals to the Puritan because it is a means of uplifting his thoughts from the carking cares of the world. And hours and mead-drinking and hunting are particularly obvious means to happiness.

Jun. Yes. It seems to me that to make happiness an ideal which will arouse inspiration and enthusiasm, it must be expressed in terms of its causes.

Sen. And of familiar causes also, for the very reason that unfamiliar causes do not suggest the effect?

Jun. True, the causes must be familiar.

Sen. So that in the ideals of religion we observe again the confusion of causes of happiness with their effect?

Jun. No doubt the habit of seeking the effect through the cause has led to confounding the two; but this does not alter the fact that a person's enthusiasms are confined to objects which appeal to his personal tastes—and tastes are specific. Can you express the ideal of utility in terms of a specific cause of happiness?

Sen. This cannot be done, because the specific causes of happiness are not one, but many. Moreover there are no doubt many specific causes of happiness to individuals which would be causes of unhappiness to mankind. Power to dominate others, for example, may give happiness to the dominating but not to the dominated. Remember that utility seeks the happiness not of individuals but of mankind, and may seek it as successfully through causes which do not appeal to the tastes of men as through those which do. It may sometimes be more useful to adapt tastes and desires to the conditions of fulfilment than to attempt to adapt conditions of fulfilment to tastes and desires.

Jun. But you cannot expect men to co-operate unless you appeal to their tastes and desires, and surely the end of utility cannot be attained without the co-operation of men.

Sen. That is true, but the end of utility cannot be attained by seeking any one specific means to it—at any rate any one means that can be specified in our present condition of ignorance.

Jun. The specific means of making mankind happy are unknown, then?

Sen. Something is known about them, but doubtless far more is unknown.

Jun. But surely that is a serious situation and augurs ill for the ideal you seek, for how are men to attain the end of utility if they are ignorant of the means?

Sen. Well, when you don't know how to do a thing that ought to be done what is the most reasonable thing for you to do about it?

Jun. The most reasonable thing for me to do is to go to work and find out.

Sen. Precisely. And that is the most reasonable thing for men to do in seeking the end of utility. If they cannot at once set in operation the causes which will most effectively produce the happiness of mankind, they *can* at once set in operation the causes which will produce the knowledge of how to produce it.

Jun. Then the ideal that science sets up to inspire men is the pursuit of useful knowledge, including, I suppose, knowledge of how to apply useful knowledge to the end of utility?

Sen. Yes, that I should say is a good way of expressing the religion of utility. And let me remind you that the pursuit of knowledge is capable of inspiring men to the most intense and sustained effort. It is the religion of the creative mind, and

has inspired the great scientists and philosophers of all ages.

Jun. But the ideal of the great moralists has been, not knowledge, but service.

Sen. And what service is greater than usefulness? How can you serve mankind better than by showing them how to be happy?

Jun. Then the ideal of utility is an ideal of serving through knowing—of seeking happiness through knowledge?

Sen. It is a union of the ideals of physical and of moral science in a single ideal, and hence unites the ideal which inspires the scientist with that which inspires the moral teacher or leader. He who pursues the ideal of useful knowledge and its applications is open to the inspiration of all that is reasonable and right. A man whose enthusiasm is not aroused by the ideal of utility is one whose enthusiasm is best left unaroused. He whose imagination is not kindled has no imagination to kindle. To the utilitarian the surface of the earth is a stupendous means of production—a vast green factory whose raw materials are the resources of nature, whose mechanism is the brain of the scientist and the hand of the worker, and whose ultimate product is that quality of sentiency which we have agreed to call happiness.

Jun. And I suppose efficiency is an ideal of such a factory as it is of any other.

Sen. Efficiency is a proximate ideal to be duly

subordinated to its end. The factory of utility seeks the maximum output of its product that the surface of the earth and the resources of nature and of human nature may, through the application of knowledge, be made to yield.

Jun. But why do you confine your ideal to the earth? Moralists and religious teachers have soared higher. The progress of knowledge may in time transform man or the superior beings which succeed him from terrestrial to cosmic beings, and enable them to erect happiness factories in other worlds than ours.

Sen. It is safe to let our successors cross that bridge when they come to it. We can keep our eyes on the stars but for the present our feet must remain on the earth. Perhaps our successors may discover something of greater ultimate interest than happiness and of more dimensions than space in which to produce it. We will not attempt to limit or to anticipate the potentialities pregnant in the pursuit of knowledge, but we can do our feeble best to direct the activities of men in that direction.

Jun. The immediate exercise of the religion of utility then would seem to call for the conversion of the earth into a vast research laboratory for the pursuit of useful knowledge.

Sen. Yes, a knowledge factory should precede a happiness factory; nor are the two things incompatible. The pursuit of knowledge is no mean source of happiness—certainly more useful im-

mediately as well as remotely than the ideal of the modern world—the pursuit of wealth. The beginning of real happiness on earth will date from the conscious expansion of our present research equipment in physical science into a research system of moral science adapted to develop the causes of happiness and the means of applying them to the end of utility. If the world would spend on useful research—psychological, physiological and sociological, as well as physical, chemical and biological—what it now deems itself able to spend on war and preparation for war, some of those now living would see the millennium.

Jun. The millennium. And can any reasonable and practical man predict the millennium while human nature remains what it is? Religion may inspire men; it may even give them hope, but it cannot give them happiness. No matter how the earth may be transformed by the power of science, the unsatisfied longings of man will remain to make him miserable.

Sen. But further knowledge may reveal how to control desire and regulate attention. An enlightened generation will not need to leave desires which cannot be satisfied in the minds of men. If it cannot usefully satisfy them it will transform them into desires which can be usefully satisfied. For longings which cannot be fulfilled it will deliberately substitute longings which can, just as for institutions which do not harmonize with human

nature it will deliberately substitute institutions which do.

Jun. But no way of doing such things has ever been discovered.

Sen. All the more reason why men should set to work to discover it. Experience proves that one generation may know and do what previous generations could not even dream of knowing and doing. But though we cannot predict what men may be able to know and through knowing do, we are well aware of how to produce knowledge. The method of science is known, and perseverance in that method will expand knowledge beyond what the imagination of man can conceive. We have knowledge of the method but of the product we have only the beginnings of knowledge. Let man expand his useful knowledge, including his knowledge of how through education and breeding to produce unselfishness, industry, intelligence and the other useful qualities of human nature, and he does not need to worry about the millennium. It will come to pass automatically; for the law of causation operates as uniformly in human nature as in the rest of nature. On this assurance, together with the assurance that happiness can be produced as an effect of causes, is founded the religion of utility.

Jun. Then you predict that the deliberate creation and application of useful knowledge will do for mankind what ages of religious teaching and preaching have failed to do?

Sen. That is what I predict, and the prediction is founded not upon conviction, but reason. It is a commonplace that knowledge is power, and knowledge of usefulness is power to be useful. Moreover the growth of knowledge is accelerative—the longer it grows the faster it grows. Should the world devote its energies to the creation of useful knowledge as it now does to the creation of superfluous wealth it would progress more in one month of the twenty-first century than in the one hundred years of the eighteenth. This is a characteristic of knowledge-growth easily open to observation. The ideal of utility offers mankind the reasonable hope that through the usefully directed efforts of man alone, pain may be permanently banished from the world and happiness expanded in a degree to which limits may not be set.

Jun. Then science locates heaven on earth instead of in the sky?

Sen. That would appear to be the most available place to locate it—at least for the present.

Jun. But religion is not alone concerned with an ideal of heaven or of progress toward perfection. It is concerned with God and immortality. Surely these things are not useless?

Sen. Certainly not. As we pointed out in our thirty-fifth session, God is simply the name for the most useful being in the universe, and if the evidence indicates that such a being is not running the

world, the code of utility imposes on man the duty of doing his best to create one who will.

Jun. It is certainly a strange religion that suggests, not that God created man, but that man shall create God.

Sen. But if God does not exist surely it would be useful to create Him. Not that I suggest that it can be done, but at least man can move in that direction. If Nature, unaided by man, can evolve an Aristotle from an amœba, why, with the aid of her most intelligent product—man—should she not evolve a being who will be to Aristotle what Aristotle is to an amœba.

Jun. But is the theory of utility incompatible with a belief in God?

Sen. By no means. Utility is a guide not to belief, but to conduct.

Jun. Belief in God and immortality then are entirely consonant with utility?

Sen. Entirely so. These are matters to be judged by the evidence of what is, or is to be. Utility is concerned only with what ought to be.

Jun. But does not utility require that man shall follow the evidence wherever it may lead?

Sen. Only the evidence that affects happiness. When it is right to follow the evidence, follow it. When it is not, don't.

Jun. But would it make no difference in the code of utility whether God and immortality were proved by the evidence to exist or not?

Sen. It would make a difference in the subordinate rules of the code, no doubt, but not in the code itself. It would affect the means of utility but not the end. Happiness has the same interest to men or animals in one life as in another, and that of sentiency should be sought as zealously without the aid of God as with it.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 44

The code of utility implies an ideal end for men to work toward, comparable to the ideals of religion.

This end unites the ideal which inspires the scientist—truth—with the ideal which inspires the moralist—service—combining these into an ideal of usefulness, resting not upon conviction, but reason.

The ideal of usefulness holds before men the reasonable hope that through the deliberate development of useful knowledge unhappiness may be banished from consciousness and the way to universal and illimitable happiness discovered and taken.

Validity of the belief in God and immortality cannot be tested by the code of utility, nor is the validity of the code affected by the validity or invalidity of these beliefs.

SESSION 45

Senior. Are you not about through criticizing the code of utility?

Junior. No, for to-day I am going to bring the strongest criticism of all against it, and one derived from the code itself. I wish to point out that judged by the standard of usefulness itself, all we have been doing is useless, because we have not given a single practical concrete rule for the guidance of human conduct.

Sen. I thought we made a suggestion yesterday, and even a suggestion may be useful.

Jun. You mean your advice to men to start research into the causes of happiness and how to apply them to the end of utility?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Well of course that is a suggestion, but no one is likely to follow it, and what is the use of giving suggestions which no one will follow?

Sen. But you must remember that we have not even tried to formulate the subordinate rules of utility. We have been engaged in seeking to discover the end to be sought by men—and surely if men are to spend their lives taking measures and adopting means it is useful to understand to what final end the means and measures are to be adapted.

Jun. Yes, but after all you admitted in session twenty-six that the end pointed out is nothing new. The pursuit of happiness was recommended to men back in the Old Red Sandstone period of history and has been dinned into their ears ever since.

Sen. Yet we have surely done a little something in distinguishing it from its causes, showing the basis of its division into higher and lower forms, explaining its relation to distribution in space and time, and to probability, suggesting means of measuring it, and clearing up quite a number of delusions about it.

Jun. Perhaps so, but most if not all of these things have been done before. What is the use of doing them again?

Sen. Of course when we discuss a subject like morals systematically, everything we utter cannot be original. Perhaps our method of discovering the nature, or rather the various natures, of interest may appeal to you as new?

Jun. I am not raising the issue of originality but of usefulness. What specific directions have you given which will help to guide men's conduct in the practical affairs of life?

Sen. Is it not of some practical use for a man to know exactly what he means by a reason for an act so that he can recognize one when he sees it, and to know just what he is talking about when he says a given act or policy is right and ought to be done, or is wrong and ought not?

Jun. I don't know. Sometimes it is very annoying to know too clearly what you mean by words, and especially for others to know. Why, if this practice should spread and people should learn to know what they were talking about, what would become of metaphysics and mysticism? It would spoil the whole thing.

Sen. Well, we have learned to distinguish between a utilitarian and a convictionist who happens to approve the code of utility, and this perhaps is a useful distinction adapted to help men, and keep them from being misguided by their convictions?

Jun. You mean it would help them if they paid it any attention, but they won't. Why, I don't expect to pay much attention to the distinction myself. My convictional habits are too strong. I believe you have several times observed this in me.

Sen. What you say makes me feel rather ashamed. I fear I may have spoken hastily when I suggested we discuss these questions. Indeed I should feel very guilty if I had proposed our daily sessions as anything better than a method of wasting time. And now I understand you raise the objection that they have proved too successful a method.

Jun. Yes, that is the objection I am raising. What men need is something concrete to guide their conduct, like "Eat John's food. It will cure what ails you" or "Vote for Bill. He is all right." There is no use in mere abstractions such as we have discussed.

Sen. No use in understanding the nature of usefulness?

Jun. I suppose that much must be admitted, but my point is that it is inadequate. In order to get anywhere it must be combined with an understanding of what particular kinds of conduct are in fact useful.

Sen. But have we not accomplished something in basing utility on a foundation as firm as that of probability, and showing it is the scientific basis of morals? The code of utility as a more or less vague generality, may have been familiar to men for ages, but has its relation to the code of probability and therefore to science been shown before?

Jun. Well, suppose it has not, how does that render it of any greater service to mankind? Will men seek to follow the code of utility any more zealously after it has been shown to be scientific than before?

Sen. It would seem as if they would be less subject to misguidance by the various codes of custom if once they should see clear reason why such codes have no authority.

Jun. But you have furnished no real alternative to such codes, since they, or at any rate some of them, are concrete, whereas utility is abstract. Therefore I wish to renew my objection that we have not helped to guide mankind in concrete contingencies because we have formulated no subordinate rules which will apply in such cases.

Sen. And I wish to renew my reply that we have not even tried to formulate such rules.

Jun. But can such rules be formulated? I mean rules in any essential respect different from those familiar already, for of course there are many rules and precepts for attaining happiness well known to men.

Sen. There is no set of rules or method of thought at present available which goes about the production of happiness seriously and scientifically.

Jun. You claim that men do not treat the happiness of mankind scientifically and seriously. How then do they treat it?

Sen. As the subject of generality or the predicate of platitude.

Jun. Indeed; and can you mention some things that they do not treat in this way?

Sen. Steel rails, sulphuric acid and machine guns are a few of them.

Jun. And you claim these things are produced more successfully than happiness because they are sought more seriously.

Sen. More seriously and more scientifically. When means are to be adapted to ends, seriousness without science is futile. As a guide to the attainment of happiness, men are offered such rules as: "Be good and you will be happy." "Happiness is within ourselves." "Business before pleasure." "True happiness should be sought, but mere pleasure avoided." Suppose men sought the attainment

of a high output of steel, or iron, or coal, or oil by directions so half true, untechnical and platitudinous. What kind of an output would you expect to get?

Jun. Some such output as the world now gets in the way of happiness, I suppose. But I cannot get used to the idea that happiness can be produced the way steel, and oil, and coal can, though I recall that in our first session you made some such suggestion. Seriously, would you recommend producing happiness by the methods used in producing such things?

Sen. I would recommend producing happiness by the method common to the production of such things. Effecting results by the scientific employment of causes should be taken as seriously in the moral as in the material world. Therefore a technology of utility should be created as serious and scientific as the technology of steel. A utilitechnic should be developed, no more platitudinous and futile, and no more swayed by feeling or moulded by tradition than the modern technique of war or industry. We should consult the convictions of conscience as little in producing happiness as in producing pig iron.

Jun. Your suggestion seems to be that utility can be made a technical subject—an applied science.

Sen. Yes, as technical as any other engineering science, and similarly dependent for success on serious research. Contrast the scientific study and experiment devoted to the technique of steel-making

with that devoted to the technique of happiness-making. Is there any comparison between the two?

Jun. And this technology of utility, this utilitechnics would supply subordinate rules and methods of thinking, useful in guiding men to the end of utility in the concrete contingencies of life?

Sen. Yes. But more particularly the rules and methods useful to the technicians of utility, the engineers of usefulness, who in the moral civilization of the future will replace the medicine men of politics so characteristic of our material civilization.

Jun. You mean that some sort of political or societal engineers will in the future run affairs of state, instead of statesmen and politicians?

Sen. Why not? The medicine man has been superseded in husbandry and medicine, why not in politics? Science has displaced superstition in material, why not in moral matters? Instead of the tom-toms, slogans, headlines, propaganda and lime-light posing of the politician, why not the designs, experiments, inventions, research and scientific planning of the engineer? Such methods of thinking and doing can be adapted as well to the end of utility as to that of railroad construction or radio transmission.

Jun. And do you seriously think a technology of utility can be developed at this stage of man's progress?

Sen. It can, but like any other technology, its development will require time and patience.

Jun. Yet a beginning might even now be made, I suppose?

Sen. It has been made. Plenty of evidence is already available for science to build upon.

Jun. And this evidence could be used for guiding men to technical subordinate rules of utility?

Sen. Yes.

Jun. Well. Can we not formulate these rules as the next step in our discussion? Heretofore we have been discussing the end to be attained. It is time we discussed the means of attaining it. I suggest we take up this subject to-morrow.

Sen. But I am a little stale after so many sessions. Do you not feel the need of a rest?

Jun. Yes; but we might as well get this subject off our chest before we take one.

Sen. Do you think it advisable?

Jun. Yes. I am rather inclined to think so. We might devote five minutes to the matter or ten if need be. Could we cover the ground in that time?

Sen. I hardly think so. The technology of utility is considerable of a subject.

Jun. It would take another series of sessions perhaps.

Sen. That is my judgment.

Jun. I am sorry for that, because the weather is now very fine for golf and we cannot afford to give so much attention to other matters.

Sen. You feel that such discussions would displace more important things, do you?

Jun. Yes, during this beautiful weather we cannot afford to waste time.

Sen. Then we had better wait till we have more time to waste.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 45

It is useful for men to understand the nature of usefulness, and a logic of conduct is useful because it leads to such understanding.

It is also useful for men to understand how to recognize useful conduct in the concrete, and such understanding rests upon knowledge of the relation between the means and end of utility.

Knowledge of the relation between means and ends is most effectively acquired by the methods of technical applied science.

A technical applied science of usefulness—a utilitechnic—would be the most effective, and therefore useful, instrument available to man for acquiring and applying knowledge of the means to be adopted for attaining the end of utility.

SUMMARIES

SUMMARY OF SESSION I

A scientific guide to belief has created a material civilization.

A scientific guide to conduct should tend to create a moral civilization.

Search for a scientific guide to conduct is an inquiry worth pursuing.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 2

Search for a scientific guide to conduct means search for a right guide.

Discovering a right guide to conduct requires discovering what is meant by the word "rightness" in a guide.

The meaning of words is to be found in the mind.

Search of the mind for the meaning of some words is a groping process.

In groping for meanings, discovery of what is *not* meant by a word is a clue to what *is* meant.

Discovery of what is *not* meant by rightness in a guide to conduct is a clue to what *is* meant.

General and undoubting rejection of a meaning groped for is assurance that it is not the meaning sought.

A (first) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not meet with general and undoubting rejection of the kind exemplified in Session 2.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 3

General agreement is a clue to, but not a criterion of, a scientific guide to belief.

General agreement may prove a clue to, if not a criterion of, a scientific guide to conduct.

Def. To *verify* means to confirm a prediction, judgment, or belief by observation, in the manner exemplified in Session 3.

Def. A *true belief* means one which will, would be, or would have been, verified.

Def. *False* means not true.

A scientific guide to belief provides means of distinguishing true beliefs from false ones.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 4

Def. An *end* means an effect aimed at, designed, or intended.

Def. A *means* means a cause chosen in order to attain an end.

By distinguishing between true and false beliefs respecting cause and effect, science makes possible the adaptation of means to ends.

Def. An *adaptive act* means an act adapted to attain its end.

Def. A *right means* means a means adapted to attain its end.

A *right end* is something the nature of which is not yet agreed upon. (Provisional.)

Def. A *right act* means a right means adapted to a right end. (Provisional.)

Def. *Wrong* means not right.

A scientific guide to conduct would provide means of distinguishing right acts from wrong ones.

The methods of science and reason are the same.

A scientific guide to conduct would provide as universal a guide to acts as already exists to beliefs.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 5

A belief that ought to be held is true.

A belief that ought not to be held is false.

An act that ought to be done is right.

An act that ought not to be done is wrong.

Ought to be is a synonym for should be.

A scientific guide to belief distinguishes between beliefs which ought to be held and those which ought not.

A scientific guide to conduct would distinguish between acts which ought to be done and those which ought not.

What men believe is not a criterion of what they ought to believe.

What men do is not a criterion of what they ought to do.

A (second) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not be merely a way of making what *is* the criterion of what *ought to be*.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 6

Def. Behavior means what men do, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

Def. Conduct means what men do voluntarily.

Conduct includes both voluntary acts and courses of action.

How men *do* behave is not a criterion of how they *ought to* behave.

Behavior is mental as well as physical.

Men's likes, dislikes, preferences, approbations, and disapprobations are a part of their behavior.

What men like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove is not a criterion of what they *ought to* like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove.

Def. Interest means that which is of concern or importance. (Provisional.)

What men like, dislike, desire, prefer, approve, or disapprove is not a criterion of their interest.

The clue provided by men's interest is independent of that provided by their likes, dislikes, desires, preferences, approbations, or disapprobations.

The distinction between right and wrong conduct is a distinction of great interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

SUMMARY OF SESSION 7

Def. A *code* means a rule or set of rules adapted to guide belief or conduct.

Def. *Chance* means that which happens as the result of random, accidental or haphazard causes, without design, plan, intent, or aim, and is exemplified in Session 7.

A (third) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall not use chance as a means of guidance.

Def. A *proximate end* means one which is of interest because of what it is a means to.

Def. An *intrinsic end* means one which is of interest because of what it feels like.

Def. *Proximate interest* means the interest of proximate ends.

Def. *Intrinsic interest* means an interest inherent in consciousness. (Provisional.)

A code of conduct which seeks only the attainment of proximate ends is not of great intrinsic interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

Def. *Usefulness* means adaptability to a serviceable or desirable end. (Provisional.)

SUMMARY OF SESSION 8

A right act is better than a wrong act.

A wrong act is worse than a right act.

Def. An *alternative* means one of two or more acts between which choice may be made.

One alternative may be better or worse than another.

A code of conduct is a means of distinguishing between alternatives, and in the absence of alternatives has no application.

A code distinguishing right from wrong conduct must provide means of distinguishing right alternatives from wrong ones.

In a world devoid of consciousness there would be no difference between right and wrong conduct.

Def. *Indifference* means a neutral state of consciousness, exemplified in Session 8.

In a world devoid of all but indifferent states of consciousness there would be no difference between right and wrong conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 9

Def. *Non-indifference* means a state of consciousness distinguishable from indifference.

Def. Intrinsic interest means non-indifference.

Intrinsic interest is of more than one kind.

Def. Unhappiness means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9.

Def. Happiness means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9.

Def. Pleasure means happiness.

Def. Pain means unhappiness.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 10

Def. Desire means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Aversion means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Approbation means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Disapprobation means a kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10.

Def. Approval means approbation.

Def. Disapproval means disapprobation.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 11

Happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are the only kinds of intrinsic interest.

In a world devoid of happiness, unhappiness, desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation, there would be no distinction between right and wrong conduct.

Def. Degree of intrinsic interest means degree of departure from, or contrast with, indifference. (Provisional.)

All six kinds of intrinsic interest vary in degree.

Def. Measurement of intrinsic interest means designation, or expression of its degree.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 12

The question: "What course of conduct will attain an end or result of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind?" is the question concerning conduct whose answer is of greatest intrinsic interest to mankind.

In this question:

Def. Conduct means everybody's conduct.

Def. Mankind means all persons living or to live whose intrinsic interests are affectable by alternatives at the time that choice is made between them.

Def. A *right act* means one of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind. (Provisional.)

Def. A *wrong act* means any alternative of a right act. (Provisional.)

A (fourth) requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct is that it shall be of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 13

Def. *Intensity of intrinsic interest* means a characteristic of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 13.

Def. *Amount of intrinsic interest* means the product of (average) intensity and duration.

Def. *Quantity of intrinsic interest* means amount.

Intrinsic interest can be measured by intensity or amount. (Provisional.)

Measurements of intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest are rough or approximate.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by duration alone.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 14

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by frequency of occurrence.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by time of occurrence.

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by place or sensorium of occurrence.

Def. A sort of intrinsic interest means a sort or kind of desire or aversion, or approbation or disapprobation, or happiness or unhappiness, and is exemplified in Session 14.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 15

Intrinsic interest cannot be measured by sorts.

Def. Desirable means what ought to be desired.

Desirability cannot be measured by desire, but can be measured by approbation or happiness. (Provisional.)

SUMMARY OF SESSION 16

Intrinsic interest can be measured only by intensity or amount.

Def. Resultant means the result of combining two or more magnitudes.

The result sought in a guide to conduct is a resultant of intensities or amounts of intrinsic interest.

The resultant of two or more intensities of intrinsic interest is obtained by averaging them, and is a measure of the combined or collective intensity.

The resultant of two or more amounts of intrinsic interest is obtained by adding them, and is a measure of the combined or collective amount.

The resultant of two or more intensities or amounts of interest is the same whether felt in the same or in different sensoria.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 17

Def. Equivalence means the relation between two magnitudes whose average or sum is zero.

Equivalence is possible only between positive and negative magnitudes.

Equivalence is possible between intensities of desire and aversion, and also between amounts thereof.

Desire and aversion provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, desire being taken as positive, and aversion as negative, interest.

Def. The standard of desire means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by desire and aversion.

Equivalence is possible between intensities of approbation and disapprobation, and also between amounts thereof.

Approbation and disapprobation provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, approbation being taken as positive, and disapprobation as negative, interest.

Def. The *standard of approbation* means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by approbation and disapprobation.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 18

Equivalence is possible between intensities of happiness and unhappiness, and also between amounts thereof.

Happiness and unhappiness provide a single standard for measuring intensities and amounts of intrinsic interest, happiness being taken as positive and unhappiness as negative interest.

Def. The *standard of happiness* means the standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by happiness and unhappiness.

The standards of desire, approbation, and happiness are the only proposed standards for measuring intensities or amounts of intrinsic interest.

These three standards of intrinsic interest correspond to three kinds of units of interest, no one of which is comparable with another.

Unless in the case of intensity of desire, there is no necessary relation between degree of power to determine conduct and degree of intrinsic interest.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 19

The codes which propose the maximum average intensity or maximum total amount of desire or aversion of mankind as the end for all men to seek do not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

The codes which propose the maximum average intensity or maximum total amount of approbation or disapprobation of mankind as the end for all men to seek do not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. Gratification of a desire means the doing or causing to be done of the act desired.

Def. Gratification of an approbation means the doing or causing to be done of the act approved.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 20

Def. Satisfaction means the intrinsic interest resulting from gratification.

Def. The code of individual desire gratification means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of individual desire as a guide to conduct, and and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified.

The code of individual desire gratification does not meet any of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of total desire gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate desires of mankind as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified.

The code of total desire gratification does not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 2 I

Def. The *code of total approbation gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate approbations of mankind as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified.

The code of total approbation gratification does not meet the first requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of individual approbation gratification* means the code which proposes the maximum gratification of individual approbation as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified.

Def. The *code of conscience* means the code of individual approbation gratification.

Def. Conscientiousness means the quality of acts which conform to the code of conscience.

Conscientiousness is not a criterion of rightness.

In order to serve as a guide to right conduct conscience requires a right code of conduct as a guide.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 22

Def. Conviction means belief or disbelief (physical conviction) and approbation or disapprobation (moral conviction).

Def. Convictionism means the practice of testing conviction by conviction.

Def. Physical convictionism means the practice of making belief (or disbelief) the test of truth.

Def. Moral convictionism means the practice of making approbation (or disapprobation) the test of right.

Def. The circle of convictionism means the process of testing codes for the guidance of conviction by means of the conviction which is to be guided.

The code of conscience originates in convictionism.

The code of conscience does not meet the second, the

third, or the fourth requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

In order to discover a right code to guide conscience it is necessary to repudiate conscience as a guide to a right code.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 23

The interest of a desire or approbation is not a means of measurement of its satisfaction.

Neither desires nor approbations are guides to, nor ends of, the right conduct of men.

Neither the standard of desire nor that of approbation can be used to measure the end of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind.

Desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are interesting attitudes toward a gratification. Happiness and unhappiness are not.

Def. Ultimate interest is a kind of intrinsic interest which would remain unaltered if everything else in the universe should promise to, and in fact, become and remain non-existent, and is exemplified in Session 23.

Happiness and unhappiness are of ultimate interest.

Desire, aversion, approbation and disapprobation are of non-ultimate interest.

Changes in amount of happiness and unhappiness are of ultimate interest.

Happiness and unhappiness and changes in amount thereof are the only known things of ultimate interest.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 24

The standard of happiness is the only standard which can provide a right code to guide conscience.

Units of amount of happiness are the only units which can measure the happiness of men or of mankind.

Def. The *code of individual happiness* means the code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for himself alone.

The code of individual happiness does not meet the first, the second, or the fourth requirement of rightness in a guide to conduct.

Def. The *code of total happiness* means the code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for mankind.

Evidence is the thing used by science as a guide in adapting means to ends.

Evidence can be used as a guide to the maximum happiness of mankind as it can to any other end.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 25

Def. A *use-judgment* means the process of establishing a presumption of happiness by means of the following rule of probability:

The presumption (of gain or loss) of happiness from any act is equal to the probable amount to be lost by selecting said act multiplied by the probability of losing it, subtracted from the probable amount to be gained multiplied by the probability of gaining it.

Def. The *utility of an act* means its presumption of happiness to mankind as estimated by a use-judgment which determines presumptions by means of the evidence available at the time the selection or rejection of the act is to be decided.

Def. The *usefulness of an act* means the utility of the act.

Def. A *right act* means one of maximum utility.

Def. A *wrong act* means one of less than maximum utility.

Def. An *act that ought to be done* means a right act.

Def. A *useful act* means one whose utility is greater than an act of minimum activity, except when said act is of greater utility than any alternative, in which contingency the act of minimum activity is the only useful one.

Def. A *harmful act* means one which is not useful.

Def. The *reason for an act* means the evidence that it is right.

Def. The *code of utility* means the code of conduct which proposes that all men on all occasions shall do right.

Def. The *end of utility* means the end sought by the code of utility.

Def. The *right end* means the end of utility.

Def. A *utilitarian* means one who, on non-convictional grounds, advocates the code of utility as a guide to human conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 26

The code of utility does not meet with unanimous and undoubting rejection from men.

It is not a method of making what *is* a criterion of which *ought to be*.

It is not determined by chance or accident.

It is of maximum ultimate interest to mankind.

It is the only code proposed (and presumably proposable) which meets all four of the requirements of rightness in a guide to conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 27

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that what is happiness to some is unhappiness to others is unsound. It rests upon confusion of happiness with its causes.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that the causes of happiness are unascertainable is unsound. It rests upon confusion of knowledge with certainty.

Those who claim that everyone knows the difference between right and wrong identify right with conscientious and wrong with unconscientious.

Those who claim that no one knows the difference between right and wrong are groping for the code of utility, but missing it because they confound knowledge with certainty.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that too much happiness becomes tiresome is unsound. It rests upon confusion of happiness with its causes.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 28

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that human nature is too uncertain and a science thereof too difficult to permit the application of science to morals is unsound. It rests upon misapprehension of the properties of human nature and the power of science.

The code of utility applies to all voluntary acts, from the trivial conduct of individuals to the most comprehensive policies of society.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 29

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the distribution of happiness in time is unsound. It rests upon misapprehension of the relation of probability to utility.

Recognition that trivial objects which are highly probable may be preferable to ambitious objects which are highly doubtful, and that immediate results are likely to be more useful than remote ones, originates in an endeavor to apply probability to conduct, and illustrates a common mode of groping for the code of utility.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the number of individuals affected is unsound. It rests upon confusion respecting the relation between number of individuals affected and amount of happiness felt.

The phrase "greatest happiness of the greatest number" is of uncertain meaning. It is not a correct expression of the end of utility.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 30

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores distribution of happiness among individuals

is unsound. It rests upon a confusion of means with ends explained in Session 31.

Equality in distribution of happiness is not an end of intrinsic interest to mankind.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 31

Equality in distribution of the means to happiness is a condition essential to success in attaining the end.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores discrimination in the distribution of happiness between good and bad individuals is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

Rewarding good (i.e. useful) individuals with happiness, and punishing bad (i.e. harmful) individuals with unhappiness is a means, not an end.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 32

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores motive as a factor in right conduct is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

Conscience is a goad, but not a guide. It is useful or not according to the code which guides it.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 33

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it ignores the distinction between good character and

bad, between virtue and vice and between higher and lower sorts of happiness is unsound. It rests upon confusion of means with ends.

The code of "self-realization" is a variation of the code of character development and has the same origin.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 34

Motives are not always self-interested.

The goodness or badness of motives is a function of their utility.

The code of utility requires appeal to the most useful motive or motives available.

The end justifies the means if it is the end of utility, but not otherwise.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 35

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it is contrary to religious codes is unsound. It rests upon confusion of convictions with reasons.

The Christian code of morals and that of most great religious systems is a restricted application of the code of utility.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 36

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it over-simplifies the moral question and is insufficiently pluralistic is unsound. It rests upon convictionism based on the plural causes of conviction.

A compound code of morals requires a single code by which to apply it. This single code is that of conscience, so that a compound code of morals is merely another disguise for convictionism.

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that it is "economically determined" is unsound. This objection is directed only to convictional codes, and is part of a more comprehensive objection.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 37

Objection to the code of utility on the ground that the will is not free applies as well to all alternative codes and to all rules or precepts of action; and is therefore not more pertinent to one than to another.

Objections to the code of utility on the ground that it involves an impractical hedonistic calculus or independent application to decisions as they arise are unsound. They rest upon a misunderstanding of the method of applying the code in the concrete.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 38

The code of utility itself is the only universal rule of utility. Its application to conduct in the concrete is

accomplished through general and subordinate rules, the utility of which rests upon evidence.

All subordinate rules of utility are or may be subject to exception, the exceptions being determined by the same code as the rules.

The burden of proof rests upon the allegation of an exception to a subordinate general rule of utility.

This relation of universal to subordinate rules applies to all efforts to adapt means to ends, whether the end be money, wealth, knowledge, happiness or anything else to which means may be adapted.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 39

Objections to the code of utility arise from four kinds of confusion:

- (1) Of the causes of happiness with happiness itself.
- (2) Of the meaning of maximum happiness.
- (3) Of the method of applying probability to attain the end of utility.
- (4) Of conscientiousness with righteousness.

The fourth is the most prevalent and potent.

Of twenty-two objections to the code of utility heretofore considered, two arise from the first kind of confusion, two from the second, seven from the third, and eleven from the fourth.

Of the twenty-two objections to the code of utility heretofore considered, thirteen turn out to be confirmations of it.

The only proposed alternative to the code of utility is the code of conscience.

All other apparent alternatives are disguises for the code of conscience.

To propose no alternative to the code of utility is a special way of proposing an alternative.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 40

The code of utility is the only proposed code of conduct which is free from convictionism.

If mankind were entirely incapable of conviction, the interest of the code of utility would remain unchanged. Of no other proposed code can this be said.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 41

The code of the categorical imperative or sense of duty is either the code of conscience under another name, or if it is not, is subject to the same disabilities as that code.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 42

The interest of happiness is independent of the kind of being which perceives it.

To escape inconsistency the code of utility must be revised, the end of maximum interest to sentiency being substituted for that of mankind.

The more restricted expression of the code has been discussed heretofore only for purposes of simplicity and convenience, and the revision may be readily made and understood.

The code of utility would not necessarily be valid to beings capable of kinds of interest different from those known to mankind, but such beings are unknown.

It is equally true that the code of probability would not necessarily be valid to beings capable of inferring by processes different from those known to mankind, but such beings are unknown.

As far as the means to be employed are concerned, the code of utility is a scientific code of conduct.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 43

The nature of reasons is to be discovered by a process of intelligent groping.

Groping for the nature of a reason for an act results in the discovery of the code of utility, just as groping for the nature of a reason for a belief results in the discovery of the code of probability.

The code of utility possesses characteristics in common with the code of probability which justify extending

the meaning of the word "scientific" to the code and end of utility. The more important of these characteristics are enumerated in Session 43.

No other code possesses common characteristics of comparable significance.

The codes of utility and probability are justified by the same reason.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 44

The code of utility implies an ideal end for men to work toward, comparable to the ideals of religion.

This end unites the ideal which inspires the scientist—truth—with the ideal which inspires the moralist—service—combining these into an ideal of usefulness, resting not upon conviction, but reason.

The ideal of usefulness holds before men the reasonable hope that through the deliberate development of useful knowledge unhappiness may be banished from consciousness and the way to universal and illimitable happiness discovered and taken.

Validity of the belief in God and immortality cannot be tested by the code of utility, nor is the validity of the code affected by the validity or invalidity of these beliefs.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 45

It is useful for men to understand the nature of usefulness, and a logic of conduct is useful because it leads to such understanding.

It is also useful for men to understand how to recognize useful conduct in the concrete, and such understanding rests upon knowledge of the relation between the means and end of utility.

Knowledge of the relation between means and ends is most effectively acquired by the methods of technical applied science.

A technical applied science of usefulness—a utilitechnic—would be the most effective, and therefore useful, instrument available to man for acquiring and applying knowledge of the means to be adopted for attaining the end of utility.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND PHRASES DEFINED IN THE SUMMARIES

(The numbers refer to the session in which the definition is stipulated.)

- Act that ought to be done*—A right act. (25)
Adaptive act—An act adapted to attain its end. (4)
Alternative—One of two or more acts, between which choice may be made. (8)
Amount of intrinsic interest—The product of (average) intensity and duration. (13)
Approbation—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10. (10)
Approval—Approbation. (10)
Aversion—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10. (10)
Behavior—What men do, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. (6)
Chance—That which happens as the result of random, accidental or haphazard causes, without design, plan, intent or aim, as exemplified in Session 7. (7)
Circle of Convictionism—The process of testing codes for the guidance of conviction by means of the conviction which is to be guided. (22)
Code—A rule or set of rules adapted to guide belief or conduct. (7)
Code of conscience—The code of individual approbation gratification. (21)

Code of individual approbation gratification—The code which proposes the maximum gratification of individual approbation as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified. (21)

Code of individual desire gratification—The code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of individual desire as a guide to conduct and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified. (20)

Code of individual happiness—The code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for himself alone. (24)

Code of total approbation gratification—The code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate approbations of mankind as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the approbation to be gratified. (21)

Code of total desire gratification—The code which proposes the maximum satisfaction of the aggregate desires of mankind as a guide to conduct, and measures satisfaction by means of the intrinsic interest of the desire to be gratified. (20)

Code of total happiness—The code which directs every man to seek the maximum amount of happiness for mankind. (24)

Code of utility—The code which proposes, that all men on all occasions shall do right. (25)

Conduct—What men do voluntarily. (6)

Conscientiousness—The quality of acts which conform to the code of conscience. (21)

Conviction—Belief or disbelief (physical conviction)

- and approbation or disapprobation (moral conviction). (22)
- Convictionism*—The practice of testing conviction by conviction. (22)
- Disapprobation*—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10. (10)
- Disapproval*—Disapprobation. (10)
- Degree of intrinsic interest*—Degree of departure from, or contrast with, indifference. (11)
- Desirable*—What ought to be desired. (15)
- Desire*—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 10. (10)
- End*—An effect, aimed at, designed or intended. (4)
- End of utility*—The end sought by the code of utility. (25)
- Equivalence*—The relation between two magnitudes whose average or sum is zero. (17)
- False*—Not true. (3)
- Gratification of an approbation*—The doing or causing to be done of the act approved. (19)
- Gratification of a desire*—The doing or causing to be done of the act desired. (19)
- Happiness*—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9. (9)
- Harmful act*—An act which is not useful. (25)
- Indifference*—A neutral state of consciousness exemplified in Session 8. (8)
- Intensity of intrinsic interest*—A characteristic of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 13. (13)
- Interest*—That which is of concern or importance. (Provisional) (6)

- Intrinsic end*—An end which is of interest because of what it feels like. (7)
- Intrinsic interest*—An interest inherent in consciousness. Provisional) (7)
- Intrinsic interest*—Non-indifference. (9)
- Mankind*—All persons living or to live whose intrinsic interests are affectable by alternatives at the time that choice is made between them. (12)
- Means*—A cause chosen in order to attain an end. (4)
- Measurement of intrinsic interest*—Designation or expression of degree of intrinsic interest. (11)
- Moral convictionism*—The practice of making approbation (or disapprobation) the test of right. (22)
- Non-indifference*—A state of consciousness distinguishable from indifference. (9)
- Pain*—Unhappiness. (9)
- Physical convictionism*—The practice of making belief (or disbelief) the test of truth. (22)
- Pleasure*—Happiness. (9)
- Proximate end*—An end which is of interest because of what it is a means to. (7)
- Proximate interest*—The interest of proximate ends. (7)
- Quantity of intrinsic interest*—Amount of intrinsic interest. (13)
- Reason for an act*—The evidence that the act is right. (25)
- Resultant*—The result of combining two or more magnitudes. (16)
- Right act*—A right means adapted to a right end. (Provisional) (4)

- Right act*—An act of maximum intrinsic interest to mankind. (Provisional) (12)
- Right act*—An act of maximum utility. (25)
- Right end*—The end of utility. (25)
- Right means*—A means adapted to attain its end. (4)
- Satisfaction*—The intrinsic interest resulting from gratification. (20)
- Sort of intrinsic interest*—A sort or kind of desire, or aversion, or approbation, or disapprobation, or happiness, or unhappiness, as exemplified in Session 14. (14)
- Standard of approbation*—The standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by approbation and disapprobation. (17)
- Standard of desire*—The standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by desire and aversion. (17)
- Standard of happiness*—The standard for measuring intrinsic interest provided by happiness and unhappiness. (18)
- True belief*—A belief which will, would be, or would have been, verified. (3)
- Ultimate interest*—A kind of intrinsic interest which would remain unaltered if everything else in the universe should promise to, and in fact, become and remain non-existent, as exemplified in Session 23. (23)
- Unhappiness*—A kind of intrinsic interest exemplified in Session 9. (9)
- Useful act*—An act whose utility is greater than an act of minimum activity, except when said act is of greater utility than any alternative, in which contingency the

act of minimum activity is the only useful one. (25)

Usefulness—Adaptability to a serviceable or desirable end. (Provisional) (7)

Usefulness of an act—The utility of the act. (25)

Use-judgment—The process of establishing a presumption of happiness by means of the following rule of probability:

The presumption (of gain or loss) of happiness from any act is equal to the probable amount to be lost by selecting said act multiplied by the probability of losing it, subtracted from the probable amount to be gained multiplied by the probability of gaining it. (25)

Utilitarian—One who, on non-convictional grounds, advocates the code of utility as a guide to human conduct. (25)

Utility of an act—The presumption of happiness to mankind of the act, as estimated by a use-judgment which determines presumptions by means of the evidence available at the time the selection or rejection of the act is to be decided. (25)

Verify—To confirm a prediction, judgment or belief in the manner exemplified in Session 3. (3)

Wrong—Not right. (4)

Wrong act—Any alternative of a right act. (Provisional) (12)

Wrong act—An act of less than maximum utility. (25)

THE END