

perform such actions is that, on the whole, it appears to be the most prudent course, *i.e.*, the course which most promotes his own happiness. Whatever may be thought of the former of these answers, the latter must surely appear unsatisfactory even to those who feel logically bound to accept it. It is unsatisfactory in that it does not explain the idea of duty, but explains it away. It is an undoubted fact that the feeling of obligation and duty does exist in the minds of men, and that it is a very different feeling from that which prompts us in matters of doubt and difficulty to select the course which, on the whole, appears most prudent. But if this answer is a true one, if "I ought" merely means "it is prudent for me," then the distinction between duty and interest which seemed so solid can be nothing more than a subjective illusion.

But is the method by which these results are reached a true one? Is it a fact that the two questions, "What is right?" and "Why should I do right?" are really independent of each other? To answer this we must notice in the first place that there is a certain ambiguity in the use of the expressions involved. According to one school of moralists, "right" and "what we ought to do" mean the same thing, and on this view the question, "Why ought I to do what is right?" is exactly equivalent to the question "Why is it right?" and this may be regarded as independent of, and posterior to, the question "What is right?" But the independence of the two questions bears a different aspect on the utilitarian theory, which defines right actions as those which promote happiness. When we ask "Why should we do such actions," it is not self-evident to begin with that we ought to do them, and therefore the question is almost necessarily understood in the same sense as when we ask, "Why ought I to do any particular act"—to pay a sum of money, for example,—which tacitly includes the inquiry, "Ought I to pay it?" If no reason could be given why I ought, the natural conclusion would be that I need not pay it. In this sense the question, "Why ought I to do what is right?" is so difficult to answer that some utilitarians abandon the attempt altogether,