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## HUMANISM.

*Lecture by Professor Watson to the Philosophical Society (concluded).*

Without attempting a fundamental criticism of the doctrine of Mr. James, it may be pointed out that it rests throughout on two assumptions:— Firstly, that nothing can be verified except that which belongs to the sphere of external nature, and secondly, that there is an absolute opposition between faith and knowledge. Now, it is rather curious that, although Mr. James has described Kant as a "curio," his own doctrine so far as these two assumptions are concerned coincides with that of Kant. For it is one of the main positions of the critical philosophy that knowledge is co-terminous with sensible experience, in other words with the connected system of individual objects which constitutes the world of nature. Holding this view, Kant naturally went on to maintain that all the distinctively human interests, including morality and religion, must be based upon faith. Now, it was pointed out by Kant's immediate successors, and especially by Hegel, that the limitation of knowledge to the system of nature is a purely arbitrary assumption, resting upon the untenable hypothesis that the highest category constitutive of knowable objects is that of reciprocal action. Mr. James is involved in

the same criticism. His main reason for denying that morality and religion can be proved is his tacit assumption that nothing can satisfy the intellect except that which can be expressed in terms of mechanical causation. He seems to forget that the whole sphere of life, not to speak of consciousness, is inexplicable except from a teleological point of view, and that the system of nature itself is ultimately unintelligible unless it is interpreted from the same point of view.

A similar remark applies to the opposition between faith and knowledge. Even the proposition that there is truth and that it is obtainable by us is held to be beyond all rational evidence. Now, it is of course true that there is no way of proving the possibility of a true judgment by going beyond the whole sphere of knowledge. We can show the falsity of a particular or limited judgment by pointing out that it is inconsistent with some principle, the truth of which is admitted, but we cannot bring truth itself to the test of any higher principle. What we can do, however, is to show that even the denial of truth, since it is a judgment made by us, at least presupposes its own truth as a denial. Thus we may fairly argue, that the