

**To the Artizans  
of England**



*Florence Nightingale*

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**Original title**

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(printed, but not published).

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The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices, and terminology of their  
time, and have not been updated.

**Cover**

Florence Nightingale at Embley Park, in Wellow (near Romsey, Hampshire),  
the family home of Florence Nightingale from 1825 until 1874.

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## DEDICATION

### TO THE ARTIZANS OF ENGLAND

FELLOW SEARCHERS,

1. There are many who say that they will do what little good they can here without looking further to a future or a God.
2. There are others who say that a future which will set right all they could *not* do here is all they have to look to.

Of the first I say: I reverence their devotion. But I think that they can only feel thus by looking so little a-head that, in “doing,” they will make mistakes – such that “the little good” they could do will be not good at all; and that, in order to do even “this little good” wisely, they *must* “look further,” and, if they look, they will see – a future and a God.

To the second I say: The *value* of a future, if there is one, must depend entirely on the character of the Power which makes the plan for man.

Upon these two grounds the following inquiry is undertaken. It is an inquiry into the *plan* upon which mankind is created, or, in other words, into the *character* of the Power who planned it.

**Note** – J. Stuart Mill’s “Logic” – especially as regards “Law,” “Free Will,” and “Necessity” – has suggested much of the foundation on which the argument rests; though whether he would acknowledge the superstructure, I am quite ignorant.





## INTRODUCTION

### CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO MORAL RIGHT

WITH regard to the states of mind which we distinguish as *thoughts, emotions, and volitions*, and with regard to actions, or other external manifestations of them, a consciousness exists in some minds, which is expressed when those states of mind, or their manifestations, are characterized as morally right or morally wrong. This consciousness, existing with a feeling of satisfaction in the right, of dissatisfaction in the wrong, is designated moral feeling. \*

There are occasions on which the man of moral feeling will be conscious of ignorance or uncertainty as to what is right; will desire to refer to some other consciousness or knowledge than his own for enlightenment – sometimes to be found in other human minds. But sometimes the limits and ignorance common

\* Morality, which is the foundation of all science, is not accepted *as* a science. On this subject we are, generally speaking, permitted only to accept the guidance of vague individual feeling, or of supposed revelation. How could men advance as they have done in chemistry, geology, botany, &c., if they were to treat these studies in the same way? But nobody cares about morality as a science: that is, the science of morality in the mind of God – the *consciousness* of God.

If we have to speak of the mind of God, we can find no other word than “consciousness” available. The mind of God, the feeling, the thought of God, do not express the truth. “Consciousness” expresses the state or kind or manner of feeling in God and in man. J. Stuart Mill has pointed out that the word *feeling* has this difficulty: it is often applied more peculiarly to the sensitive or emotional phases of our nature. If you ask what my consciousness is at any particular moment, I can only

to human nature suggest to us a desire to know, if we may – in as far as we may – what would be the consciousness of right in a nature having in moral right the kind of satisfaction which exists in the conscientious human mind, but without its limits of nature and knowledge.

How may man attain or approximate, to the extent of his power, to a true conception of moral right – that is to say, to such a conception or consciousness as would exist in a moral nature without man's limits of nature and knowledge? and how realize in human nature and human life, as far as is possible to him, his best conception of right? These seem to us questions appropriate to the moral nature of man.

The man who believes he knows the right and who reverences the right – who is dissatisfied with the wrong – is yet sometimes wanting in will to pursue the one, to avoid the other, though even suffering under the consciousness of wanting it.

Sometimes, where the knowledge and will exist, which would, were it possible, realize the right, there is a painful recognition of want of power to realize it.

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say that it is the sensations, thoughts, emotions, or volitions which exist in me at that moment, and I express that which is so compounded in me by the word consciousness.

Morality, because of its practical importance, has been treated differently from every other subject. People could not wait to learn from experience a theory of right and wrong – knowledge of the Power that rules them, and how to gain His help. In the infancy of human nature and human experience, people rushed to conclusions – they did not *observe* whether God gave help because they prayed or sacrificed, in order to try some other way if they were still ill and unfortunate, although they prayed. The sciences of physiology, of political economy, &c. – slowly, indeed, but still actually – did go on to be studied. But it was and is left in the vague how much we owe to acting upon the laws of those and other sciences – how much to our prayer or to God's merciful interference. This is but a type of the multitudes who recognize science *and* prayer – of the infantine ignorance betrayed in all modes of public worship – consequently of popular belief. How many are there of such kinds of worship in which we do not find thorough ignorance, or misinterpretation of God?