

Show Mills letter to Blackwood or to any one should  
the subject ever happen to come on the topics with you & friends

St. Andrews 15 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1854  
My dearest Sir John  
I return you Mills letter,  
which preserve,  
& do not find myself much  
the worse of the Milling. It  
is fortunate that he has  
condescended on one paralogism,  
because we now know what  
to think of the other general  
charges what he advances.  
To boggle at prop II after  
having swallowed (hypothetically)  
prop I is simply pitiable.  
But the battle, as I  
always knew, must turn on  
the question of necessary truths, &  
thus is the secret of Mills

whole opposition. This is a  
matter of life or death to  
him. In one sense all demon-  
strative argumentation is  
reasoning in a circle. It is  
an overt evolution of what  
is covertly contained in the  
premises. There is a sentence  
which I don't understand  
"unless each successive" &c.  
In short the whole letter  
evinces the desperate determi-  
nation of a man who feels  
that he will be damned  
for ever unless he can  
succeed in swearing down

his own throat that two &  
two don't make four.  
He says at the end that all  
metaphysicians will in his opinion  
be wrong "until they leave off  
revolving in the eternal round  
of Des Cartes & Spinoza, &  
cease to imagine that phil.  
can be founded on necessary  
truth" Now the curious thing  
is that metaphysicians have  
left off & ceased doing this  
for generations, for centuries.  
Consequently according to Mill  
they have ceased to be wrong  
for centuries. Yet he does  
'nt admit that either.

Philosophers generally since  
the days of Bacon have  
been doing the very thing  
which, says he, if done  
would ensure success. This  
is a pretty strong proof  
that the method which  
Mill recommends has  
met with no success  
in its application to meta-  
physical topics. Hence I  
say go back to the old  
method —— bring that to perfection ——  
study necessary truth —— & There  
is some chance of a good  
result being reached.

Yours aff[ectionately] J.F. Ferrier.