

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^r 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.