

### *Arthur Balfour's Cambridge and the reaction against Mill*

In *A defence of philosophic doubt* (1879) Arthur Balfour attempted to explode the premises of Mill's empiricism and excoriated him as a triumphalist intellectual authoritarian who refused to acknowledge the doctrinal correctness of any system other than that of *A system of logic*. Balfour had studied with Henry Sidgwick between 1866 and 1869 when Mill dominated Cambridge Moral Sciences but his hostility to Mill was also part of a wider reaction against Mill in British high thought. This paper looks at Balfour's *Philosophic doubt* alongside three other contemporary manifestations of that reaction: H. I. D. Ryder's *Idealism in theology* (1867); 'John Stuart Mill's philosophy tested', W. Stanley Jevons' three-part *Contemporary Review* essay of 1877-8; W. L. Courtney's *The metaphysics of John Stuart Mill*, (also 1879). These can all be seen as participants in what John Morley, commenting in 1880 on the predilections of Frederick Greenwood, his editorial predecessor at the *Pall Mall Gazette* called 'a vigorous all round reaction against the Liberalism associated with Mill in one field and Gladstone in another'. This paper examines the contours of that reaction and its role in shaping the self-fashioning of the British intelligentsia in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

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