[In 1941 Miller began work on a book, never finished, whose main part would show "analysis at work" as in his articles in this section on free will, knowledge, Hume and causality, universals, and objectivity of value. This section, then, carries out Miller's own plans in title and content.

With his first publication in 1893, his translation of his doctoral dissertation at Halle on 'The Meaning of Truth and Error', Miller expressed his commitment to "analysis of terms" as the main business of philosophy and applied it to "the states of mind we call knowledge" in relation to 'belief' and 'error'. He was not much concerned, he remarked to a fellow-student at Halle, with the Geschichte of the problem but rather, characteristically, with its Lösung. The results of his analysis led William James to see that "any definitely experienceable workings" would serve as intermediaries between ideas and object quite as well as the intentions of Royce's 'Absolute Mind', and this conclusion, James later remarked, belonged to "the fons et origo of all my pragmatism". Many years later Miller referred to 'The Meaning of Truth and Error' as "a poor business", thus suggesting that it was well superseded by the more pointed and circumspect analysis in his article of 1937, 'Is There Not a Clear Solution of the Knowledge-Problem?'

'The Relations of "Ought" and "Is"' appeared in 1894, shortly after Miller became an Associate in Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College, his first teaching position. It applies the method of analysis to ethics with a view to 'definiteness' and assured progress in philosophy and indicates that for Miller 'analysis' was primarily "logical analysis" as currently prominent in American and British philosophy, i.e., dissection of and distinction among concepts and statements in relation to ordinary "facts of consciousness" and ordinary sentences expressing those facts. Miller explicates the relation of 'reason' to 'relativity' in ethics, analyzes arguments denying relativism, refutes the view that statements of obligation are imperatives, and then proceeds to analyze 'oughtness' as the requirement of a system, "a certain ideal arrangement of things, acts, and lives".}
Utilizing a distinction between specificatory and indicative propositions, which Plato’s “interminable puzzles” confused, Miller concludes that ‘ought’ and the system it involves is forever “relative to the individual that holds it, and yet, from his standpoint, absolute”. Seeking greater precision and currency, Miller returned to some of these points, with different formulation, in the essay of 1950 on ‘Moral Truth.’

The fact, as it is freely asserted to be, that metaphysics – including, we may suppose, the theoretical part of ethics – is “the most contentious of all the sciences”, has not brought with it all the results that an observer of the effects of chronic war might have expected. Repelling, on the one hand, all those minds which value intellectual peace above intellectual conquest, it has not, on the other, given to the remainder those stern satisfactions of discipline and of definite victory or defeat which belong to a developed state of militancy. Philosophic dispute lingers in the guerilla stage of warfare. The infinite relief of seeing controversies decided is denied to us. “Definiteness”, Cardinal Newman has said, “is the life of preaching”. Definiteness is also the life of philosophic thinking; not, indeed, its bare vital spark (for, if only the definite in this sphere survived, the overcrowded condition of the theoretic world had been immensely relieved), but certainly its healthy life. Definite premises if not definite conclusions, definite ignorance if not definite knowledge, – these form the only sure preparative for progress. It is the misfortune of philosophy, not that like all true science it is contentious, but that it does not duly profit by its contention; that it is not sufficiently organized as a science to take stock of its advance and to prevent old controversies that have performed their appointed part in the historical development from living on in the midst of our proper present controversies to confuse and retard them. The need of demanding recognition for cogent argument, of extorting admission for established results, and of executing justice on condemned theories – the need, in a word, of discipline – may profitably at the present juncture be insisted on.

No topic of speculation suggests this need more forcibly than the rational basis of ethics. There is no common consciousness here either of tasks or of achievements. Yet the problems in themselves are both pressing and distinct. How can one moral end or moral order logically be proved