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I. BERKELEY'S IDEALISM.

A splendid edition of Bishop Berkeley's works was issued, in 1871, by Professor Alexander Campbell Fraser, the incumbent of the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh—the chair once illuminated by the genius of the illustrious Sir William Hamilton. The elaborate dissertations in which the accomplished Editor expounds the Bishop's idealistic system, and the fact that they have emanated from one who has succeeded the great exponent and defender of Natural Realism, have had the effect of calling attention afresh to the principles of Berkeley's philosophy. In proceeding to discuss them we deem it important to furnish a brief preliminary statement of the main features of Berkeley's system :

1. The Denial of Abstract Ideas.
2. The Denial of the Existence of Matter as Substance. There is no such thing as material substance.
3. The Denial of even the Phenomenal Existence of Matter, separate from and independent of spirit: denial of Natural Realism. Material things have no reality in themselves. Whatever reality or *casuality* material things possess, is dependent and relative.
4. *Esse est percipi*: the so-called material world depends for existence upon the perception of spirit. A thing exists only as it is sensibly perceived.

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God by faith, than does Dr. McCosh affirm the knowledge of Him by perception.

There is, however, one respect in which it strikes us that Dr. McCosh has passed a just stricture upon Hamilton's position, if that position has been rightly construed. The latter says that to the object of sense-perception—that is, the external thing perceived, elements are respectively contributed by the distant object, by the intervening medium, by the organ of sense, and by the mind perceiving. The perceived object is modified by the mind itself. If this means that the object is compounded jointly of material and mental elements, we cannot see how Hamilton can be saved from the criticism that he compromises the great principle of his school, of an immediate, presentative knowledge of external objects, and that he imperils his own doctrine of Natural Realism, that in the same act we are conscious of the duality of self and the external world, of an antithesis, as to existence, of mind and matter.

We must arrest this notice before we would desire. Dr. McCosh's critical reviews of philosophical systems are learned and acute; his discussion of the doctrine of Causation is very able and has our hearty concurrence. To the Aristotelic causes, the material, the efficient, the formal and the final, which he has finely expounded, he might with propriety have added the instrumental of the Schoolmen. With his rejection of Hamilton's account of the genesis of the Causal Judgment we cordially agree. We regret his gingerly handling of Evolution. There is no reason why that hypothesis should be entitled to philosophic consideration, while there lie across its path Harvey's great and undisproved law: *Omne vivum ex ovo*, and the law of Hybridism which, if not removed, Huxley has confessed will shatter the Darwinian doctrine. It is the Transmutability of Species, not generative propagation *intra speciem*, that is the essence of Evolution, and until science has established that fact, philosophic concession to its claims is as unwise as it is premature.

J. L. G.

ALEXANDER'S PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

SOME PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. *By Archibald Alexander, Professor Philosophy in Columbia College.* New York: Charles Scribners' Sons: 1886.

This is a small volume of only 170 pages, but it condenses into a brief compass the results of extensive philosophical learning. Professor Alexander displays a profound insight into the problems which for ages have tasked the speculative intellect. It seems to have been his purpose to state them rather than to solve them, to array in their most formidable shape the doubts which attend them, so as to stimulate the effort to encounter and settle them. But he does in some instances allow himself to indulge in positive argumentation and the defence of

dogmatic conclusions. This mixed character of the work, partly sceptical (in the philosophical sense) and partly dogmatic warrants a few critical observations.

One can hardly avoid the impression that the Professor is not merely stating doubts abstracted from personal experience, but having a concrete influence upon his own speculations. And this supposition is legitimated by the significant utterance: "Self-consciousness cannot be aided in its observation by any instruments, and it is extremely liable to make mistakes, because its testimony cannot be *directly* corroborated." No wonder doubts exist, if consciousness itself is doubted. This raises the mighty question of the fundamental certitude of knowledge as grounded, in the last analysis, upon the trustworthiness of consciousness. It might fairly be presumed that, unless our constitution was the product of a malign intelligence, and was intended to be an organ of deceit, we should have been endowed with some power designed to be a true witness to facts. Such a power is consciousness. The antecedent presumption is confirmed by universal experience. But sin exists as a revolutionary force deranging our original constitution. May not consciousness have been rendered untrustworthy by this influence? We cannot suppose it. For, in the first place, the consciousness of our original constitution must be regarded as an essential element of that constitution. If not, it never could have known itself. It would have been non-existent to itself, which is absurd. But no essential elements of man's nature have been ruined by his fall into sin. They lay deep down beneath the storm which wrecked his separable qualities. In the second place, the God who made our nature and subjected us to his moral government by the conditions of our being, would have left himself without witness within us, had he permitted the veracity of consciousness to be destroyed or even impaired by sin. Apart from a supernatural and external revelation, it is the only testimony to the existence of the intellectual, æsthetical and moral standards in our nature which represent God and uphold his authority—the laws of truth in the intelligence, of duty in the conscience, and of worship in the affections. To have suffered that testimony to be obscured would have been to have permitted himself to be deprived of moral government and the vindication of his moral perfections. Worse than that, man could have had no certain proof of the divine existence itself. This world would have been a meaningless waif in the universe. In the third place, if the testimony of consciousness be doubtful, the quest for fundamental certainty, which is as irrepressible, as it is natural, would, *cæ necessitate*, require an appeal to another and a deeper consciousness; and so, as has often been urged, a regression of consciousnesses to infinity would exist, which is absurd. In the fourth place, as a great philosopher has said and our author himself acknowledges, if we doubt consciousness, we would be obliged to doubt that we doubt, since consciousness is the only informant as to the fact of the doubt. Why, then, raise

doubts as to philosophical problems at all? The problems, the doubts and ourselves would all, as to knowledge, be zero. In the fifth place, the practical consequences of refusing reliance upon the veracity of consciousness furnish a complete reduction to absurdity. If we cannot trust consciousness, we can trust nothing. The processes of human law, the relations of life, the business of men would all be impossible. Society would be disintegrated and universal anarchy prevail. The result would be nescience in the intellectual sphere, and nihilism in the real.

No, consciousness does not need to be "directly corroborated." It is ~~an~~ ^{an} *antip*ostipistic. It is its own corroboration, and the fundamental corroboration of everything else. Otherwise our nature would be a radical lie. Consciousness, in a normal condition of our faculties, never lies. It no more deceives, as the intellectual eye, than does the bodily eye. The difficulty is not in the spontaneous testimony of consciousness, but in the inferences derived from it, and the reflective construction of its data. The intellect may take error for truth, but the consciousness correctly affirms the fact of the mistake. The conscience may approve crime as duty, but the consciousness tells the truth about the dreadful substitution. It gives the facts as they are, just as we may be conscious of the truth that a witness lies. Further, it gives the standards of truth and duty. It informs men of them, and then informs them of their misapplication of those standards to the cases of experience. In short, it is the mirror in which every fact within us, and every fact without us which is in relation to our perception, is faithfully reflected. It thus grounds the fidelity of memory, and makes possible a judicial review of our conduct. We must stand by the trustworthiness of consciousness, or the bottom is knocked out of everything. Religion and morality, philosophy and science, law and government would otherwise become unmeaning terms.

The author maintains the true and important position, that there is ground which is common between theology and philosophy. The distinction is obvious between natural religion—the religion originally communicated to man as an unfallen being, and supernatural religion—the religion communicated to man as fallen. It is in the first of these spheres that theology and philosophy meet. Without the Bible, the theology of natural religion and philosophy would have been coincident. But the Bible takes up, clarifies and republishes the elements of natural religion, and besides creatively originates the redemptive contents of supernatural. When, then, theology and philosophy confront each other upon the common territory of natural truth, it ought to be considered a maxim that the latter should bow to the supremacy of the former; and that for two reasons. First, the right reason and conscience which man originally possessed have been clouded and impaired by sin. They err, consequently, in their judgments, and if there be a new and authoritative revelation from God, their aberrations ought to

be corrected by its standard. That such a revelation has been furnished is incontestably proved by Miracles. Secondly, the later revelation must take precedence of the former, upon the principle that the last decision of a supreme authority must regulate all preceding ones.

Now we hold that most of the ontological problems—that is, problems transcending the empirical data of consciousness—which have perplexed philosophy, and which Professor Alexander so ably emphasizes, have been definitely settled by the Bible. It leaves no doubt as to the question of Being. It reveals to faith an individual, spiritual, free, personal Being who is the *fons et origo* of all things. It settles the profound question of the Infinite. It reveals to faith an infinite Being—infinite in his intelligence, will and moral perfections. It takes for granted an aptitude in man's nature for the reception of such a revelation—a faith which, going beyond the negative concepts of thought, positively affirms the Infinite, not as the vague abstraction of the Absolutists, but as a personal, active, creative being, not identical with the universe, but originating, comprehending, sustaining, governing and overpassing it. It settles the question of the duality of spirit and matter, and therefore leaves no room for doubt whether Monism or Dualism be true. It settles the question of the finiteness of the world, by affirming its beginning, and so denies the old Greek doctrine of its eternity, a doctrine to which, after the lapse of ages, modern speculators, with all the lights of the boasted inductive philosophy, are drifting. What progress! They come back at last to Anaxagoras, Plato and Aristotle. Meanwhile the Bible has for millenniums been definitely denying that doctrine. It settles the vexed question of Cause. It explicitly affirms God to be the first cause of all things, and that man, in a derived and secondary sense, is a real and responsible cause of his own acts. And here in its testimony to the responsibility of man in connection with a moral law, a Judge and eternal sanctions, is to be found the secret of men's rejection of the Bible, which, as a solvent of their merely intellectual difficulties, they would gladly welcome.

Philosophy, then, has no right to say that such problems, however baffling they may be to the unaided intelligence of man, are insoluble problems. They are settled by the highest authority. She ought not still, like the ancient heathen thinkers, to "reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man," for she is face to face on the same ground with an authoritative, divine revelation, which if listened to would resolve her doubts and settle her difficulties. She might still be at liberty to speculate as to the *How*, but the *That* has been divinely given. Devoutest gratitude is due to God for the unerring testimony of consciousness in its sphere, and for the unerring testimony of the Bible in that transcendent sphere into which consciousness cannot penetrate! We are not blind orphans crying for light, but are led by the hand of a Father to all necessary truth. To those who reject that proffered hand, it will at last be said, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish."

J. L. G.