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SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CRITICISM AND THEOLOGY.

Fashion in religious controversy, as in other things, is continually changing, and the methods of apologetics have to change with them. Instead of discussing either the attack or the defence in the abstract, I propose in this paper to illustrate the temper of the times, on both sides, from a few books which lie at this moment on my study table, and seem to me to be exceptionally suggestive.

I do not know that there has been a time within recent memory when the attack on the foundations, records, and doctrines of revealed religion has been more outspoken, confident, and daring. It seems in many quarters to be quite assumed that the older Christianity is dead; that the new conception of the world evolved within the last fifty years or so has given it its death-blow; that the kindest thing the world can now do for it is to see it decently buried. In such a learned quarterly, for example, as *The Hibbert Journal*, on this side of the Atlantic, the assumption in many articles openly is that Christianity, in the old sense, is obsolete, and that the only question left to ask is, what substitute can we find for it? The supernatural, of course, is to be given up; there must be an end, as one article puts it, to "the entangling alliance of religion with history"; religion is to be based on moral and spiritual, or on rational,

REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE

APOLOGETICAL THEOLOGY.

SOME DOGMAS OF RELIGION. By JOHN McTAGGART ELLIS McTAGGART, Doctor in Letters, Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College in Cambridge, Author of *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, and *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*. London: Edward Arnold. 1906. 8vo.; pp. xx. 299.

Dr. McTaggart presents us in this volume with a reasoned plea for atheism. His atheism is based neither upon materialism nor upon a complete scepticism, but upon an idealistic metaphysic. The particular form of idealism to which he holds is that which (as he supposes) underlay the systems of Fichte, Hegel and Lotze; and which conceives reality as ultimately consisting of a harmonious system of self-existent selves: it may perhaps be designated idealistic pluralism. He does not in this volume set forth the grounds on which he holds to this metaphysic. It is not its purpose to establish his metaphysical basis. It is its purpose to examine the evidence for the great trilogy of natural religion,—God, Freedom, Immortality,—with a view to determining whether this evidence is adequate. The method of the reasoning is, therefore, critical, and its trend is negative. Dr. McTaggart holds, indeed, that there exist arguments of sufficient strength to justify a belief in human immortality. But these are not the arguments which are commonly relied upon, but reduce to those which establish the idealistic theory of the fundamental nature of reality. And as it is not the purpose of this volume to determine the fundamental characteristics of reality these arguments are not adduced. All that is done is, by a critical examination of the arguments ordinarily relied upon in disproof of immortality, to remove objections out of the way, and then to suggest that, as the really telling arguments for immortality are metaphysical rather than moral, they tend to commend to us a doctrine of eternity rather than of immortality—a doctrine of preëxistence as truly as of post-existence, for human beings,—Dr. McTaggart himself being inclined to construe this eternity of existence in terms of transmigration. With his fundamental conception of reality as a system of selves, freedom presents no necessary inconsistency, provided this freedom be not construed out of relation to the law of causality. Accordingly, if we understand him aright, Dr. McTaggart argues for the doctrine of human freedom ordinarily called the freedom of self-determination,

but called by him, in accordance with a distribution of theories of his own, the freedom of self-direction; although it is possible that he may push his determinism to a mechanical extreme. This chapter is chiefly notable for its clear and convincing refutation of the theory of indeterminism. It is in its examination of theism, however, that the interest of the volume culminates. There is no suggestion of a God inherent in Dr. McTaggart's fundamental metaphysic: and he finds no reason to believe in a God in the lines of argument usually relied on to prove His existence. He feels quite certain that there is no such God as the higher theism demands—an omnipotent Creator and Director of all. To him all existent reality is eternal and ultimate (p. 234)—and there is therefore no place for a Creator, and the Divine Being, if such exists, is limited by the coexistence of the rest of existing reality. He might find a place for a non-omnipotent, non-creative God,—if there was only valid evidence of His existence. But he discovers none. "There seems to me," he says, "only one reason why we should not believe in his existence—namely, that there is no reason why we should believe in it" (p. 260). The issue of the whole discussion is therefore that the slate is clean: we have no guidance on these great subjects of God, freedom, immortality except the implications of our metaphysical theory. And as in Dr. McTaggart's view a true metaphysic conceives reality as an eternal self-existent system of selves, a true religion, founded on this metaphysic, will do without a God, but will allow a self-determined freedom and an immortality construed as eternity *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post*. Meanwhile all non-metaphysicians are warned off of the religious terrain. No man is justified in holding opinions on these great subjects save as the result of metaphysical study. Religion is therefore for the metaphysician alone. "And thus we are driven to the conclusion that, whether any religion is true or not, most people have no right to accept any religion as true" (p. 293). We may regret this, but we may in part console ourselves with the reflection (among others) "that the man who has no religion cannot have a bad one" (p. 294).

As Dr. McTaggart's purpose in this volume is not to establish conclusions but to clear away conclusions illegitimately established, we should perhaps attend more to his critical method than to what we may incidentally learn of his positive opinions. The progress of his discussion is as follows. He first undertakes to demonstrate the importance of dogma, or rather its indispensableness to religion. Next he endeavors to show that the customary arguments relied on for the establishment of religious dogma are illegitimate. Taking up then the three great dogmas, he examines in turn the ordinary basis for belief in Immortality, Freedom and God, and finds it in all cases inadequate; indicating, however, as he goes on that there exists nevertheless good reason in his metaphysical assumption for belief in immortality and freedom, defined in accordance with its requirements, but not for belief in God. Summing up, finally, he contends that there remains nothing but our metaphysical determinations to rely upon for the establishment

of dogma. The dialectic employed by Dr. McTaggart in his destructive reasoning is very sharp and clear-cut, but not seldom also very formal, descending at times into purely verbal reasoning and even to something not far removed from what has been not very euphoniously called "chop-logic". Great reliance is placed upon definition and the verbal analysis of definition; and it would go hard with any logician if he could not put into his definition precisely what he purposed subsequently to bring out of it by analysis. Dr. McTaggart's logical sense is very acute, and with much of his reasoning the reader will be carried convincingly along: but it not seldom fails to convince because it fails in content. We cannot take space here to illustrate either its excellences or its defects. These may, however, be sufficiently suggested by some desultory remarks on one or two points of primary importance to Dr. McTaggart's argument.

Dr. McTaggart considers "that no man is justified in a religious attitude except as a result of metaphysical study" (p. 292). This judgment rests, however, ultimately on Dr. McTaggart's definition of religion. If religion be so defined as to make it rest on metaphysical conclusions, it should require less than an octavo volume to determine it to be unjustifiable in one who has made no metaphysical study. According to Dr. McTaggart, religion is that "state of mind" which "may be best described as an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large" (p. 3). If this be true, it is clear that no one is entitled to possess a religion until he has contemplated "the universe at large", and has attained a conviction that he himself is in "harmony" with it. Yet it is notorious, (and Dr. McTaggart is at once compelled to admit it), that men are religious who have no conception whatever of a "universe at large"; and that others are religious whose most fundamental conviction is that they are out of harmony with the universe as they conceive it. Why make so long and devious a circuit to get at a fundamental trait of human nature? Why not recognize at once that religion is simply the reaction of the human spirit in the presence of (add the qualification, "real or imagined" if you will) higher powers, perceived as such? Here is a perfectly simple definition which covers all the instances. It may indeed be argued—and successfully argued—that these "higher powers" must be personal since nothing less than personal can be higher than persons; and indeed that they must be one, since the involved attributes are singular; in a word that religion can come to its rights only in Theism, which is in and of its very nature Monotheism. But religion may exist without coming fully to its rights: else it could not exist at all as a "state of mind" of creatures like us. And we need only to recognize that systems like Buddhism which are formally atheistic, and thinkers like Spinoza and Hegel, who think of the higher power in relation to which they perceive themselves as standing, as impersonal, conceive this higher power imperfectly and are absorbed in the contemplation of this or that aspect of it, as *e. g.*, its immensity, its all-inclusiveness, its universal operation,—to understand that their response to its perception may be essentially religious. Re-

ligions thus differ from religions as the conceptions entertained by their subjects of the nature of the higher powers which are their objects differ, and as the conceptions entertained by their subjects of their own relations to these higher powers differ. When these higher powers are conceived as persons, as they are explicitly almost invariably and, one may say, implicitly always (and that seems the significance of Mr. Dickinson's remark quoted on p. 10 that religious emotion is dependent on the universe being "greatly and imaginatively conceived"), then the sense of dependence which lies at the root of all religion (because it grows out of the perception of powers as "higher") is completed by a sense of responsibility (because these powers are perceived as "personal", *i. e.*, as moral agents); and the response of human nature, will take form from the moral judgment which the subjects of religion pass upon themselves. Religions become thus fundamentally religions of fear or religions of hope; and the conceptions, emotions and usages developed by them take form as one or the other of these emotions preponderates in them. Religion is not, therefore, so much "that particular happiness which comes from the belief that we are in harmony with the universe" (p. 9), as rather that particular state of mind which grows out of the conviction that there are higher powers upon our relations with whom our happiness depends. Happiness does not lie, therefore, at the root of religion, as is contended by both Dr. McTaggart and Mr. Dickinson, to whom no attitude towards the "universe" is religious unless it brings with it "rest and peace and happiness"; but is rather the end sought in religion—by various means according to the place of each religion in the scale of religions. Religion therefore is not based on a precedent conviction of a harmony already existing, but rests on a desire for harmony earnestly sought after. And above all, it is not based on a conviction of harmony existent between us "and the universe at large", but on a desire to secure harmony between us and "the higher powers", however conceived. The attempt to substitute the "universe" for "God" in the conception of religion, which characterizes both Dr. McTaggart's and Mr. Dickinson's definitions, is simply an outgrowth of their own philosophy and contradicts the entire phenomenology of religion. It is not "the universe" perceived as over against himself which is the source of man's religious ideas, emotions, actions. It is distinctly "the higher power", contemplated ordinarily distinctly as personal, and one may believe always obscurely so conceived or else the religious reaction does not follow. This broad fact of human religion becomes thus itself a witness to God. Resting on no metaphysical reasoning it presupposes no "metaphysical study." It is the immediate reaction of the human spirit to a part of its environment, and it becomes thus a guide to metaphysical reasoning rather than waits upon its results. It is only if we shut our eyes to what is and embody in our definitions our metaphysical theories that we can draw out of those definitions conclusions inconsistent with a valid religious experience and a sound religious conviction quite independent of metaphysical study.

It is perhaps especially in his argument against the validity of Theism that Dr. McTaggart's vice of purely verbal argumentation becomes

most glaring. The hinge of his argument here, it is not too much to say, is his doctrine of omnipotence. Omnipotence, he would have us understand, means a power to which, and to the exercise of which, no limitation of any sort whatever can be conceived. "An omnipotent person", he says, "is one who can do anything" (p. 202): "there is nothing that an omnipotent being cannot do" (p. 166). It is scarcely credible, but Dr. McTaggart does wish us to believe that this implies that an omnipotent being must be conceived as able to make the sum of two and two five or a thing to be and not be at the same time! And on the basis of this absurdity he gravely reasons that an omnipotent being could not be a person and could not have the benefit of the ordinary theodicy in view of the evil in the world—or indeed, even of the teleological argument for His existence, because forsooth the employment of means is in and of itself inconsistent with omnipotence! "There is nothing", says he, "that an omnipotent being cannot do. . . . A really omnipotent being cannot be bound by the law of Contradiction. If it seems to us absurd to suggest that the law of Contradiction is dependent on the will of any person, we must be prepared to say that no person is really omnipotent" (p. 166). "If He is bound by" the law of Identity, or "by the law of Contradiction and the law of Excluded Middle", "He is not omnipotent" (p. 203). Of such a God it may not be supposed that He has permitted sin to exist, in order that a greater good may be attained; for "any good result which might follow from the sin and its punishment could be obtained by such a God in virtue of His omnipotence, without the sin and its punishment" (p. 165). Nay, such a God cannot be supposed to use means at all, for, *ex hypothesi*, means have no worth in themselves, but owe their entire value to their supposed necessity in attaining a valuable end. But an omnipotent God can not require means to attain any end: "and therefore it would be inconsistent with His wisdom to use them, since they are of no value except to get an end which He could get as well without them" (p. 201). Not only then can He have the benefit of no theodicy which turns on a doctrine of means: but the teleological argument if valid in the discovery of means is His refutation—if means have been used, it is no omnipotent God who has used them. Now, all this, we say, is quite astonishing. When we affirm omnipotence we affirm unlimited power it is true, but we affirm only unlimited power. The omnipotent person is a person whose power has no limits. He can do all that He wills. But certainly this unlimited power imposes no limits upon His other attributes—His wisdom, say, or His goodness. It is not necessary in order to be omnipotent to be an idiot or a devil. By virtue of His omnipotence such a being can accomplish all He will: all that is the object of power is in his power. But it does not follow that He may therefore will the foolish or the wicked: foolishness and wickedness raise no question of power but of wisdom and of goodness. The law of Contradiction, for instance, does not belong within the sphere of power: its place is in the sphere of wisdom; and it is no limitation of the omnipotent God's power to say that He is incapable of folly. It is not a limitation of His

power which renders it impossible for Him to make the sum of two and two five: it is the perfection of His reason. One might as well talk of a steam engine being made strong enough to draw an inference, as of omnipotence possessing such might as to transcend the law of Excluded Middle. These things are things which are unrelated to power: and concerning which power has no function. And the same is true of the employment of means in order to secure ends. There is here no question of power but of wisdom. If the ends are more wisely secured by means than by power, then it is the part of wise omnipotence so to secure them. If the ends are outside the ends of power, then no omnipotence can make the first step towards securing them. The plausibility of Dr. McTaggart's argument here seems to depend entirely on its generality and abstractness. Some ends are objects of power, and it may seem strange that an omnipotent being should reach them by means rather than by immediate act. There may be reasons why he should: but these reasons lie outside the ends themselves. Other ends, however, are obviously unattainable by power, because they are not objects of power. And it happens that the specific ends sought in the creation of the universe and in its government are not only supposed by the framers of theodicies, but also are in themselves intrinsically of this last sort. It is not within the power of omnipotence for example to secure a manifestation of the Divine justice and grace without objects of such kind that upon them justice and grace may be secured. These things do not belong in the sphere of "power". The reason why God is supposed not to attain that better thing which is attained by the presence of sin in the universe, without sin, is not, then, because He is supposed to lack in power, but because the attainment of this end in itself requires sin as its condition. We may accord with Dr. McTaggart in his criticism of special theories which have been advanced. We agree with him that the attempt to make the presence of sin the inevitable result of the creation of free agents or the inevitable result of government by general laws, and so justifiable in God's universe, is a failure. But it does not follow that the very idea of a theodicy derived from the use of sin as a means to a glorious end otherwise unobtainable is inconsistent with the conception of an omnipotent God, because forsooth omnipotence can have no need of means. Omnipotence has the same need of means for the attainment of ends not themselves the direct product of force as impotence itself has: and omnipotence abnegates none of its prerogatives when it subjects itself to the government of wisdom, goodness and truth. To affirm that God is omnipotent is not to assimilate Him to the hurricane or the volcano which blindly acts in all its power on all occasions; but to affirm that infinite righteousness, holiness, goodness, and love is served by equally infinite power—that whatever God wills, He can execute, and that therefore the infinite holy, righteous and good Will will work its ends and that in its own time and way, according to what is the absolute Best.

From these specimens the quality of Dr. McTaggart's reasoning may be not unfairly judged. Let it suffice to say farther merely that the

charm of his style carries the reader over many a doubtful argument. With his criticism upon the current reasoning by which Immortality is established or supposed to be established, we find ourselves very much in sympathy. Only, as our metaphysical presuppositions differ fundamentally from his, we differ substantially with him in the relative estimate we put upon the several varieties of reasoning which are employed. To the metaphysical reasoning we attach little value: to the moral, more: but we should not be greatly disturbed were all of it pronounced inconclusive. "We have a more sure word of prophecy"; and it is Jesus Christ who has "brought life and immortality to light". No doubt it may seem below the dignity of metaphysics to consider facts of experience in determining a question like this. But plain men often find the empirical establishment of facts very great aids to belief. Thinking as we do of souls as manufactured articles, and of the ultimate nature of reality as something very different from a "joint stock company", we have no tendency to construe immortality in terms of eternity *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post*—the less so, that it is precisely upon the metaphysical arguments for immortality that we lay the least stress. With respect to Freedom, we go very fully with Dr. McTaggart, if we correctly understand him, although there are some of his arguments which do not appeal to us, and we consider him more successful in refuting indeterminism than in meeting the objections to determinism—because, chiefly, of the intrusion of his peculiar metaphysical views into this portion of the discussion. So soon as he enters formally upon the discussion of Theism, we part company with him *in toto*. Here everything seems to us unreal and deformed by verbal subtleties; and the conclusion arrived at impresses us as already given in the metaphysical presupposition rather than as derived from the critical process. The discussion may be recommended to students, however, as a good whet-stone for their wits.

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

CHRISTIAN THEISM AND A SPIRITUAL MONISM. God, Freedom and Immortality, in view of Monistic Evolution. By the Rev. W. L. WALKER, author of *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, *The Cross and the Kingdom*, etc. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1906. 8vo; pp. viii., 484. Price \$3.00 net.

One of the profoundest and most difficult problems which human thought can propose to itself is that of reconciling the dualism which is persistently obvious in our world with the kind of monism which a sound Christian theism involves. The distinction between Spirit and Matter is, at least, to the average, unreflecting man on the street, simple, fundamental and final; and yet if God alone is self-existent and eternal, and if God is Spirit, then monism in some sort must be the only ultimate faith. The dualism of our naïve thinking must be reducible to the simpler term of which monism is the name. This simpler term, than