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ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHY.

BY

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EDINBURGH: W. P. KENNEDY, ST. ANDREW STREET.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

MDCCCLVI.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

THE following "Essays in Philosophy" were originally contributed to the *North British Review*, in the period extending from 1846 to 1855. They are now collected and republished, with a few slight alterations, chiefly in order to afford ready access to the evidence they may furnish, in support of the author's application for the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, left vacant by the death of Sir William Hamilton.

In this point of view, these Essays are relevant, principally as manifesting the general tendency of the writer's opinions, in regard to Logical and Metaphysical questions that are prominent in the discussions of the Nineteenth Century, and especially in the works of the distinguished philosopher who recently adorned the Metropolitan University of Scotland. Though pre-

pared at intervals during nine years, and as circumstances arose to call them forth, it is believed that this small volume of Essays is pervaded by a Common Philosophical Principle. That principle assumes different modifications, according to the various aspects in which the chief problem of metaphysical research, viz., the Relation of Knowledge and Existence, happens to be contemplated.

The Theory of Knowledge, suggested in the following pages, the author is at present endeavouring more fully to mature. This task should be the labour of a life. He desires, when he contemplates it, to be influenced by the warning of Lord Bacon, against the “over early and peremptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods; from which time commonly sciences receive small or no augmentation. “Knowledge,” adds Bacon, “while it is in aphorisms and observations, is in growth: but when once it is comprehended in exact methods, it may perchance be further polished and illustrated, and accommodated for use and practice; but it increaseth no more in bulk and substance.” The perfection of philosophical opinion, and any well-grounded assurance of certainty in those high matters, are the results only of cautious, long-continued, and patient reflection.

Some passages from a Lecture having reference to the Exercises of a Philosophical Class, into which the writer has sought to communicate intellectual life during the period of his academical experience, are introduced as an Appendix. They relate partly to practical arrangements for making Philosophy a gymnastic of the mind, in the Universities of Modern Europe, as it was in the Schools of Ancient Greece.

CHURCH-HILL, *May* 29, 1856.

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ESSAY I.

LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNITZ.

ESSAY I.

LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNITZ.*

THE lately republished philosophical writings of Leibnitz are the productions of a species of intellectual labour that is very rare in this country, but of which, in Germany, France, and America, the press is giving forth some original and many republished specimens. The amount of republished metaphysical literature of the higher kind which has appeared in foreign countries within the last thirty years, is worthy of remark. Some idea of it may be formed from any common catalogue of books recently issued from the press of Leipsic, Berlin, Paris, or Boston. The labours of the illustrious Cousin in this department are well known. The works, in whole or in part, of Plato, Proclus, Abelard, Des Cartes, André, and Pascal have reappeared under the superintendance of this eloquent founder of the modern eclectic school of France.

Containing as they do the results, and in many re-

* *North British Review*, No. IX. (May 1846.)

spects splendid results, of purely abstract thinking, the works of Leibnitz are singularly fitted for contributing to imbue the mind of an ardent student with comprehensive and lofty speculation. While his writings abound in daring hypotheses, they have, nevertheless, greatly advanced metaphysical science, by rendering current a multitude of new ideas; and the fact of the continued circulation of an amount of abstract thought so great, so peculiar in its kind, and so fitted to set other minds to work, as these books contain, can never be unworthy of the consideration of those who would observe and study literature in its higher relations. Besides their intrinsic value, they are connected with an important epoch in the history of modern speculation. This philosopher looms vast even in the distance, at the entrance of the labyrinth of recent German Philosophy.

Though a curious combination of circumstances has hitherto preserved the surface of the British mind, in a great measure, unruffled by an influence powerful enough to create so much commotion on the continent of Europe, there are signs in the literary horizon which betoken a change, for which society in this country would do well to be prepared. By the well-regulated study of these unwonted topics, we may not merely disarm the enemies of religion, of what in other times has been, and will continue to be, a favourite weapon of assault, but we may even convert that weapon into an instrument of use in the service of an enlightened Christianity. The interest lately revived elsewhere in the life and labours of Leibnitz, and indicated among other

means by various recent publications,* suggests some meditation upon the leading events in his biography, accompanied with a few historical and speculative notices, as an introduction to that great department of knowledge of which he was so distinguished a cultivator, viz., Metaphysical Philosophy.

Perhaps these two last words are fitted to excite feelings of repugnance in the minds of some readers, as relating to something that is conceived to be at best vague and unproductive. The tendencies of public opinion in Great Britain, in the former half of this century, have evidently been greatly averse from these speculations. The section of society given to abstract meditation has never in any age been a large one; and the recent wide extension of a certain measure of intelligence has perhaps helped to diminish it, by putting the current lite-

* *E. g.* 1. *God. Gul. Leibnitii Opera Philosophica quæ extant Latina, Gallica, Germanica omnia.* Edita recognovit e temporum rationibus disposita pluribus auxit Introductione Critica atque indicibus instruxit JOANNES EDUARDUS ERDMANN, Phil. Doct. et Prof. Publ. Ord. in Univers. Halens. Pars Prior. Pars Altera. Berlin, 1839-1840.

2. *Œuvres de Leibnitz, Nouvelle Edition, collationée sur les meilleurs textes, et précédée d'une Introduction.* Par M. AMEDEVÉ JACQUES, Professeur de Philosophie au Collège Royal de Versailles. Paris, 1842.

3. *Œuvres de Locke et Leibnitz, contenant l'Essai sur l'Entendement Humain, revu, corrigé, et accompagné de Notes; l'Eloge de Leibnitz, par Fontenelle; le Discours sur la Conformité de la Foi et de la Raison; l'Essai sur la Bonté de Dieu, la Liberté de l'Homme, et l'Origine du mal, la controverse réduite à des argumens en forme.* Par M. F. THUROR, Professeur de Philosophie au Collège de France, et à la Faculté des Lettres. Paris, 1839.

4. *Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr von Leibnitz—Eine Biographie.* Von DR. G. E. GUHRAUER. Zwei Bände. Breslau, 1842.

5. *Exposition de la Doctrine Philosophique de Leibnitz.* Œuvres de VICTOR COUSIN.

rature more under the control of a public for the most part necessarily busy with the affairs of practical life. If we except the rising symptoms of a coming change—indicated partly in the poetical contemplations of Coleridge and the logical philosophy and learning of Sir William Hamilton—no literary efforts are even contemplated which involve purely speculative research ; and hardly any concern is manifested for the philosophical pursuits of other nations. Metaphysical Science cannot, from its peculiar nature, be made generally popular till the exercise of reflection has become more common ; unless, indeed, as sometimes happens, the science itself is degraded, so that (while the name Metaphysic is retained) those who profess to be its votaries are conversant exclusively, not with the most subtle and evanescent, but with the simplest and most generally seductive class of the objects of thought.

The present is a remarkable, and, indeed, anomalous historical epoch. In these islands it is, and has been since the commencement of this century, a period of rapid physical and social progress. Men have gained an increased knowledge of the laws and processes of matter, and thus the world is becoming a more convenient place of habitation. The principle of commerce has been developed to an extent unknown in the ancient world. The present revolution in the means of social intercourse and communication seems to be preparing the way for other changes, about which it is hardly safe to speculate. All the increased “subjection of matter to mind” which the world, and especially this country, has witnessed since the principles of the Baconian philo-

sophy have become popular, must be indeed gratifying to every lover of his race. And in the more sublime departments of Physical Science the same progress is visible. Geology is contributing the details of the past history of the planet on which we live. The telescope is making magnificent disclosures of the distant regions of the material creation. Nor is public interest confined to what is merely physical. Society itself is undergoing fundamental changes; and the "science of society," under its twofold form of civil and ecclesiastical, is the theme of discussion and controversy.

An age in which controversy turns on first principles needs, and will soon demand, a Metaphysical Literature. That state of knowledge and of general opinion is not a hopeful one, in which the thoughts and energies of men are directed exclusively towards physical or economical science. And when the intellect is in a state of fermentation, bare facts, separated from principles, excite only a feeble interest. Men then feel that beneath the stir occasioned by incessant activity among the outward events of this passing world, there lie hid the invisible elements and springs of those external changes of which this strange and dangerous life is the scene. Within and immediately around that inner circle, is the domain peculiar to Philosophy. The more deeply thought is exerted on any subject, the further is it compelled to go within the dominions of this "science of sciences." The soul there casts about for its anchorage in the ocean of thought.

The need for a First Philosophy, of the kind we have indicated in the foregoing paragraph, is not indistinctly

referred to by Lord Bacon :—" Because," says he, " the distributions and partitions of knowledge are not like several lines that meet in one angle, and so touch but in a point, but are like branches of a tree that meet in a stem, which hath a dimension and quantity of entireness and continuance, before it come to discontinue and break itself in arms and boughs ; therefore, it is good to erect and constitute one universal science by the name of '*philosophia prima*,' primitive or summary philosophy, as the main and common way, before we come where the ways part and divide themselves ; which science, whether I should report deficient or no, I stand doubtful."

The Metaphysical spirit makes itself manifest in various forms ; and this passage from Bacon in several respects illustrates the difference between the two great classes into which philosophers may conveniently be divided, according as they employ one or other of two modes of research that differ in their principles, methods, and results. One class includes those who would merely generalize from experience ; and whose highest laws are in consequence only their most extensive generalizations. The other class assume their first principles as given in the very act of exercising observation, and by demonstration endeavour to reach the extreme results of philosophy.* It is not easy to find a nomenclature sufficiently comprehensive, and yet distinctively characteristic, to admit of suitable application to these schools. Probably, that suggested by Sir James Mac-

* It is to be remarked, that the modified views of many thinkers who have been ranged on each side, call our attention to their *tendencies* rather than to their fully-developed principles.

kintosh is sufficiently exact for our purpose ; and we may term the former of the two classes we have referred to Observational, and the latter Speculative Metaphysicians.

Leibnitz is the type, in modern times, of an abstract thinker of the purely speculative school. It is curious to trace the connexion between the secluded and seemingly ineffective study of what Bacon calls the *philosophia prima*, in the form in which it appears in this school, and the great external and social changes in the world. The "Advancement of the Sciences" is obviously connected with the astronomy of Newton and Herschel. The "Wealth of Nations" is an acknowledged cause of many recent alterations in modern society. The "Essay on Human Understanding" has plainly influenced the subsequent current of British thought. Not less surely, though less obviously, has the more purely speculative philosophy of that school, in which Leibnitz is one of the most illustrious names, been connected, for good and evil, with important modifications of those minds by which public opinion must be formed. The intimate relation between the labours of men of this class, and that meditative style of Christianity which is displayed in the writings of some of the great names in the Christian Church, is also manifest. The influence of Idealism and the higher Metaphysics as operative forces in society, becomes more apparent when we observe how efficacious their spirit has been to neutralize a vulgar sensationalism.

The study of the systems of Philosophy in all their variety, and of the lives and labours of various philosophers, is to be encouraged for many reasons. It sup-

plies curious and useful thoughts, which might never otherwise have been suggested, and it also stimulates reflection in the student. The history of the erratic course which the human spirit has taken in the experience even of profound thinkers, is besides fitted to moderate dogmatism. The men of mightiest genius are found often to have fallen into the most signal errors. It is morally useful to train the mind in the habit of calmly apprehending and appreciating new doctrines, however opposed to what one has previously been accustomed to entertain. "Man," says Pascal, "is made for thinking. To think as we ought is the sum of human duty." Habits of abstract meditation have, moreover, a use additional to their absolute value to the individual speculator; they accustom men to a kind of exercise which must always be closely connected with the great *progress* epochs of history; and by the lucid and comprehensive views which they foster, as well as by the invigorating effect of the act of self-inspection, they become a potent force among those at work in society.

Some knowledge of the personal history of Leibnitz is likely, besides its intrinsic use and interest, to be a valuable help to the reader who desires to understand and appreciate his writings. It is satisfactory to find that most of the materials collected by former biographers, eulogists, and commentators, along with some new information, have lately been condensed into a useful biography by Dr. Guhrauer, who has already laboriously edited several of the works of Leibnitz, and contributed

to the revival of an interest in the philosopher. His monograph is well fitted to bring the reader into intercourse with the great German, and with those numerous contemporaries with whom he maintained a "literary commerce" during the grand period in which he lived.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz was born in Leipsic on the 21st of June 1646. He was descended of an ancient family, that had gained distinction in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. His grand-uncle, Paul Leibnitz, attracted notice in the wars in Hungary, and was highly honoured by the Emperor Rodolph II.

We must not omit a special allusion to the eventful epoch of the philosopher's birth. Just a hundred years before, Luther had rested from his earthly labours, during the excitement of the most memorable religious and social change which the world has witnessed since the introduction of Christianity. But soon after the Reformer's death, Christian doctrine, owing in a great measure to the want of Christian organization in the Church, became, especially in Germany, gradually separated more and more from the hearts of nominally Christian men. The coldness of mathematical demonstration represented Christianity in the pulpits and halls of the country of the Reformation, where, in the seventeenth century, the icy orthodoxy of Calixtus took the place of the fervid sermons of Luther.

The period of the Protestant Reformation was a time of much general excitement and progress in society, as well as the era of a great revolution in the Church. The

modern reformation of Philosophy was, however, formally inaugurated at a later period. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the recovery and revived use of the remains of antiquity supplied, for the most part, sufficient materials for literary activity. The controversy between the Aristotelians and the Ramists in the sixteenth century had, moreover, diverted men's minds from the production of a Philosophy altogether modern and reformed. The birth of Leibnitz was just subsequent to the time when, the strength of the evangelical movement having unhappily abated in most countries, a movement towards a reform of Philosophy had succeeded. The mind is not likely at any time to be strongly stirred in a science like Theology, without being directed to "the science of sciences." A New Philosophy was making its appearance in England and France. Bacon's "Advancement of the Sciences" appeared in 1605, and the "Method" of Des Cartes in 1637. In each country thought and research had assumed a fundamentally different form. In England, the practical character of the people well agreed with the lessons of comprehensive sagacity that were given forth in the works of Bacon; and these naturally led to the solid and cautious, yet withal little imaginative form, which metaphysical science assumed afterwards in the works of Locke; and through Locke, generally, in British philosophy. In France, on the other hand, the philosophical writings of Des Cartes had awakened that style of speculation which cannot be wholly dormant while the spirit of Plato and St. Augustin attracts sympathy in the world, and which

in France, subsequently to Des Cartes, was adorned and elevated by some of the noblest and worthiest spirits of modern times. Besides the lives of Malebranche and Fénelon, those of Pascal, and Arnauld, and Nicole, and the other recluses of Port-Royal, give to the Cartesian a more sacred interest than can be attached to any other modern school of Philosophy. Although this peculiar feature of its history is marred by that mystic quietism which the monastic genius of the Catholic Church tends to foster, it is encouraging to find even this imperfect illustration of the manner in which Christianity may be allied to general speculation.

But Germany was thenceforward to be the European focus of Idealism, and of abstract thinking of every kind. In that country, previously to the rise of the Leibnitzian philosophy, there had been no manifestation of the new spirit of reform. The labours of Leibnitz virtually mark the commencement of the extraordinary course which metaphysic has since run in the native country of that celebrated thinker. Since then, the principle which at first separated the schools of Locke and Leibnitz has modified the currents of thought in Britain and Germany, and is thus connected with many of those characteristics by which the British is signally distinguished from the Continental mind. Since then, too, Germany has been the centre of European speculation, and has exhibited some of the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of human thought. There, amid the successive revolutions of more than a hundred years, every abstract question has been debated that the mind of man can

entertain ; and there has been added to preceding ones, perhaps the most remarkable and instructive of all the records of the clouded wanderings of human reason. The discussions raised by Leibnitz have given birth to the philosophical systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and so to the now enormously accumulated materials of the Teutonic metaphysics.

The father of Leibnitz was Professor of Morals in the ancient University of Leipsic. He died during the childhood of his son. By his pious mother, the thoughts of the young Gottfried Wilhelm were much directed to religion ; and this guidance no doubt gave to his subsequent speculations much of that theological cast by which they are distinguished. Both his parents were Lutherans. The first twenty years of his life were spent chiefly in Leipsic.* In the Nicolai School of that city, and also in the University, which he entered in 1661, he gave early evidence of his peculiar type of genius. His powers of mind were directed, in turn, to almost every object of knowledge. He eagerly studied history and the classics, in which his reading extended far out of the beaten track in which the ill-judged exertions of his narrow-minded teachers would fain have restrained him. It was, however, when he was introduced to Logic and Philosophy, that the strength of his genius, and the special direction of his mind, were fully shown. He read Aris-

* An interesting account of the remarkable self-educating process which the mind of Leibnitz underwent during these years, nearly related as that is to the subsequent development of his philosophy, is given by himself in the "*Pacidii Introductio Historica.*" See Erdmann's Edition, p. 91, and see also p. 162.

tote, Plato, and Plotinus, and revelled in the subtleties of the scholastic metaphysics—that stimulant of the human intellect for so many hundred years. In his father's richly-stored library, he read, almost during the years of childhood, Scotus, and Fonseca, and Rubius, and Suarez, and Zabarella, and other schoolmen, with special delight. To the literature of theology he was no stranger, even at this early period. His thoughts were directed to the deep controversies about election and grace, by the works of St. Augustin and Luther, the reformed theology, and the writings of Antony Arnauld. The amount of learning accumulated by this precocious student before he entered the University appears to have been prodigious. Soon after his entrance on academical life, *Des Cartes* fell into his hands. His tendency towards eclecticism, afterwards more fully displayed, was even then shown in endeavours to harmonize Plato and Aristotle, *Des Cartes* and the schoolmen. The scholastic logic and philosophy was then dominant in Leipsic, as it was in most of the other universities of Germany. The formal spirit, as well as the mechanical style of instruction then generally prevalent in Germany, harmonized ill with the fire of speculation that was already kindled in the bosom of the youthful Leibnitz. A thousand chimeras of speculation floated through his brain. He started a thousand difficulties with his teachers and associates. Even Bacon, and *Des Cartes*, and the later Philosophy, served to awaken rather than to convince him. His mind was too independent to be moulded by others. His intellect revolted from the authority of his masters. In solitude, he cherished the

most ardent views of the advancement of knowledge and the progress of man.

The whole history of the early years of Leibnitz forms a precious record of what we might call *speculative experience*. It reveals the self-educating genius of the really original mind, and shows a singular development of abstract thought at an age when the attention is usually engrossed with the objects of sense.* In his recorded experience, at the age of sixteen, are to be found the dim forms of those problems which agitated his thoughts during the most active years of his life. For days together, as he tells us, he was wont to pursue his walks alone in the woods of Rosenthal, near Leipsic, revolving in his soul the first principles of that mysterious life, to a consciousness of which he had become awake. Before he had studied mathematics, physics, or morals, he was led to the conception of the higher Philosophy. He felt, what can be felt only by the true metaphysician,—the need for a scheme of eternal first principles on which all knowledge must depend. This was the theme of his earliest writings. His speculations on a universal language, grounded on what he calls the alphabet of thought, and his treatise *De principio individui*, published when under twenty, display the metaphysician capable of going

* It would be interesting to collect illustrations of such experience out of the biographies of thinking men. A solemn moral regard is due to the cases of those especially (as Pascal) in whom a personal religious sentiment is found to mingle with the operations of a mind engaged in the processes of reflection, and which finds in the consciousness of sin and guilt a new element of difficulty and distress. Such instances suggest the whole subject of the *higher religious experience*, of which the phenomena are extremely important to the student of Scripture, and of the human spirit.

back to first principles, and of following consequences intrepidly to their issues. In these labours of this early period, we have a fair specimen of the whole intellectual life of Leibnitz. They are, moreover, eminently characteristic of the National Philosophy which he originated.

Owing to a difference with the University authorities, Leibnitz left Leipsic, and his native country of Saxony, and in 1666 went to the University of Altdorf. There he received his degree in law the same year. He thus belongs to that class of distinguished philosophers who have been bred to the legal profession. The philosophy of law naturally attracted his thoughts. At the age of twenty-one, he published a tract on jurisprudence, which forms an epoch in that science. "There was only one man in the world," says Hallam, "who could have left so noble a science as philosophical jurisprudence for pursuits of a still more exalted nature, and for which he was still more gifted; and that man was Leibnitz. He passed onwards to reap the golden harvests of other fields."

After leaving the University, he led a somewhat desultory life for several years. During the interval between 1666 and 1676, he visited several of the German universities, which must have served to confirm his academical tendencies. A professorial chair was soon within his reach, but was declined by one whose projects of Reform in Philosophy were too comprehensive to be confined within the narrow limits of a University. In 1667 he removed to Frankfort, where he became Secre-

tary to the Baron von Boineburg, and was patronized and employed by the Elector of Mentz. During his residence in the Electorate, he was much engaged in public, legal, and diplomatic labours, as well as in literary pursuits. Yet his mind was all the time pervaded by the great idea of his life. He found time to edit the *Antibarbarus* of the Italian Nizolius, and, besides, was active in theological controversy. The Baron, who was born in the Lutheran Church, had joined the communion of Rome, and was much interested in a scheme for the union of the Romish and Lutheran Churches. This eclectic movement was not forgotten by Leibnitz at a later period in his life.

His speculations about this time are marked by the vagueness naturally characteristic of one who had cast off the authority of others, and had not resolved a system for himself. It was the transition-period in his life, during which his recorded thoughts teem with the germs of those ideas that are found in a matured form, and in profuse variety, in the *Nouveaux Essais* and the *Théodicée*.

These years are still more marked as the period of the commencement of that literary intercourse which afterwards accumulated so enormously, and in which Leibnitz always appears in the centre of the thinking spirits of his age. It commenced, and was maintained, among others, with kindred minds in the Cartesian school—with Malebranche, the recluse author of the *Recherche de la Vérité*, of whom we have the interesting records that his genius lay dormant, till it was kindled

by contact with the speculations of Des Cartes, and that his controversy about Idealism with Berkeley, on the only occasion they ever met, so roused the ardour of the then aged philosopher, that his death is recorded a few days afterwards—and with Arnauld, the pious, contemplative Jansenist of Port-Royal, the theological and philosophical antagonist of Malebranche. Leibnitz visited Arnauld at Paris in 1672, and remained in that brilliant metropolis during the greater part of the few following years. In 1673, he went for a short time to London, and came in contact with many of the English *savans*—among others, with Collins and Sir Isaac Newton.* Shortly before his death, for the first and last time, Spinoza,—that type of the demonstrative metaphysician, received a visit at the Hague from the now rising Saxon philosopher. From the wonderful logical concatenation of the system of Spinoza, his mind must have received a powerful impression. From about 1674, his intercourse with Hobbes may be dated. The sceptical Bayle seems to have been the useful instrument of the more full development of his ideas—an indirect benefit which the cause of truth has often received from the labours of scepticism.†

The year 1676 is an era in the life of Leibnitz. Death had taken away his patrons the Elector of Mentz

* If it were consistent with our design to refer to the mathematical contributions of our philosopher, we should find him holding the first rank in these pursuits, and “sharing with Sir Isaac Newton himself the glory of his immortal discoveries.”

† Leibnitz numbered among his confidential correspondents a Scotchman—Burnet of Kemnay. See Dutens' Edition, vol. vi.

and Von Boineburg. He was himself in Paris. But his reputation in Germany was now of the highest. He accepted an offer, tendered for the third time, to reside at the brilliant literary court of Hanover. Thus commenced a connexion which lasted during the remaining forty years of his life, and in which he held a succession of legal and literary offices, under the Duke John Frederic and his successors, the Electors Ernest Augustus, and George Louis,—the latter of whom became George I. of England two years before the death of Leibnitz. The additional means enjoyed by him at Hanover for gratifying the peculiarities of his genius, were used with his characteristic ardour. The variety of his aims during these forty years is marvellous. The development of his speculative genius continued to advance, and his thoughts, stirred from their lowest depths by the cycle of the sciences during that whole period, would present an exceedingly curious spectacle, if we could have these changes in the current of the soul represented to the senses. History, languages, geology, mathematics, chemistry, medicine, politics, and theology, in turn secured his attention, and his busy spirit collected the various learning of each department. His almost superhuman versatility of mind secured for Leibnitz the highest distinction in most of the sciences which come within the range of human thought. In history he laboured for years on the antiquities of the house of Brunswick, and the early annals of Germany. An experience of the extreme difficulty of historical researches suggested to him what may be styled the comparative

anatomy of languages as an instrument for facilitating his efforts to travel backwards into the past. To the study of languages he accordingly applied himself with incredible zeal. He laid ambassadors and Jesuit missionaries under contribution for philological facts. In prosecuting this one department of investigation, he maintained a vast correspondence. Facts gathered from China and the Eastern tongues served to animate his exertions, and added new materials for speculation. Not content with the records and memorials of the past, contained in the words and works of man, he interrogated the globe itself. In his speculations on the physical vestiges of its early history, we find curious anticipations of recent geological hypotheses. These may be seen in a small tract entitled *Protogea*.*

Leibnitz was able, in an unusual degree, to combine the external and the contemplative life. A great part of his time was busied with the conduct of civil and ecclesiastical negotiations. His correspondence regarding the unity of the Church, with the Landgrave of Hesse-Rheinfels, with Arnauld, with Spinola, and with Bossuet, which occupied more or less of his time during twenty years, deserves some distinct notice. The reunion of the Protestants with the Church of Rome was then placed by Leibnitz in the first rank of those questions on a settlement of which his heart was set. By his philosophic mind this adjustment was felt to be nearly related to his previously ascertained speculative doctrine of the theocracy, and a universal hier-

* See Dutens' Edition, vol. v.

archy. His veneration for the Romish theory of a living infallible authority, supplementary to, and expository of, the written word of Scripture, was indeed coupled with a protest against the existing corruptions of the Church, and an expression of his fear that a formal adherence to Rome on his own part might, from the practical intolerance of the Romish theologians, cramp the freedom of his philosophical speculations. Though he thus firmly resisted all solicitations to join the outward communion of Rome, yet his heart, and perhaps his conviction, was accorded to the system of the hierarchy. His love for scholastic learning may have biassed his inclinations in this direction, and his comprehensive genius, like that of many other kindred spirits, found gratification in the vast unity and completeness of the *ideal* Catholic Church, with its ritual, and its organization, apparently so suited for all the various characters and circumstances of those whom it desires to embrace within its ample fold, and all bearing so much the semblance of a fitting picture of that still vaster organization wherein he loved to contemplate the whole universe reclaimed into the harmony of the government of the All-holy and the All-wise. Yet this part of the life of Leibnitz is not one that can be studied with unmixed satisfaction. The source of those oscillations of opinion which are sometimes the consequence, in honest and devout minds, of a many-sided view of an extremely comprehensive subject, seems hardly sufficient to account for the inconsistencies of Leibnitz in his negotiations with the representatives of the Church of Rome.

During the later years of his life he was much engaged with another project of ecclesiastical union. A scheme was promoted by him about the year 1697, (under the auspices of the Courts of Hanover and Berlin,) for a general union of the Protestants against Rome, and especially of the two great sections of Protestantism,—the Lutheran and the Reformed. It was quite suited to the eclectic genius of the philosopher, and was long pressed by him on the attention of Europe. He laboured to destroy what he called the “idle phantoms” by which the Protestant Churches were separated. But the defects which marked his other scheme of universal Christian communion, marred this project of Protestant union. Both were essentially political and philosophical. They fail to recognise Religion and the Church as independent powers, whose liberties are essential for the accomplishment of the ends of the Christian society. Even this philosopher seems not to have felt, that when religion becomes the slave of merely human authority, it ceases to be either the great instrument of civilisation, or the means of preparing men for full union in the City of God. The pious Spener, who had personally experienced its supernatural force, predicted the ill issue of the Conference for Union held in Hanover in 1698, at which Leibnitz, Jablonski, and Molanus were present. The result justified his sagacity. A scheme for ecclesiastical union or co-operation, in order to be successful, should be able to assume the spirit of hearty and supreme devotion to religion on the part of those who are to be united. The progress of the great spiritual commonwealth, and not

the political arrangements of nations, must be its ruling principle.*

The general doctrine of toleration, and the laws which regulate the attainment of truth, were frequently the subjects of incidental speculation on the part of Leibnitz, connected as they are with ecclesiastical unity, and, indeed, with the discussion of whatever relates to the social or individual good estate of man. His disposition was naturally tolerant. In his works we have repeated glimpses of those doctrines which have now become much more widely diffused through society, and which were so admirably enforced by his great contemporary Locke. He appreciates with cordiality the value of the prevalence of mild sentiments, and an unsectarian spirit, as means for the discovery and diffusion of truth—habits of mind, which, we are glad to believe, are becoming now of more generally recognised moral obligation.

Even the speculative discussion of this class of subjects has not yet been exhausted. There is room for an investigation into those general relations among men

* It appears that an attempt was made early in the eighteenth century, and supported by Leibnitz, to introduce the constitution and liturgy of the English Church into Hanover and Prussia. A correspondence was opened with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and afterwards with the Archbishop of York. The English liturgy was translated into German in 1704. How strangely do the events of history reappear! The attempt to approximate the organization of the Churches of England and Prussia was unsuccessfully revived very recently, and in 1817, the fondly-cherished scheme of Leibnitz, having for its end the union of the Lutheran and the Reformed, was actually accomplished under the auspices of the late King of Prussia.

considered as members of society, in regard to individual belief or opinion, which the moral law demands, and which reason and experience approve, as best fitted to secure the most extensive diffusion of truth ; and in subordination to which all special social organization, civil and ecclesiastical, ought to be regulated. The full solution of this great problem is still among those left to exercise the minds of the men of this or of some future age.

Throughout the forty years of his connexion with the Court of Hanover, Leibnitz maintained his literary intercourse with unabated energy. In this period he settled and extended the foundations of the literary republic of Europe. In 1687, he travelled up the Rhine, ransacked the libraries and archives of Bavaria, Bohemia, and Vienna, and promoted his acquaintance with learned men. In 1689, he went to Italy, and gained free access to the Vatican and Barberini libraries. His intercourse with the Jesuits and other religious Orders, was all turned to the account of adding to his stores of learning. After visiting Rome, he travelled through Italy, and returned to Hanover in 1690, only to resume his labours in the Royal library, of which he had been appointed keeper. In 1700, he was the means of founding the famous Berlin Academy of Sciences, meant by him to be a centre of German literary and scientific intercourse and effort. He was unfortunately unsuccessful in his endeavour to establish at Vienna another institute of the same kind, and on a still more comprehensive plan. He was much interested in the civilisation of the rising

Russian empire, and had personal conferences on the subject with Peter the Great. He busied himself with the progress of education and missionary exertion in Russia, and also in the German States, where he was anxious that the schools and colleges should be seminaries of Protestant missions.

Amid all his diversified projects, and stupendous literary activity, the metaphysical tendency ever preserved the ascendancy in the genius of Leibnitz. His philosophical principles were gradually matured soon after his settlement in Hanover. The doctrine of *Monads* was developed in a succession of publications subsequent to 1680. Some of his most valuable contributions to Philosophy are due to the publication of the celebrated "Essay on Human Understanding," which appeared in 1690, and at once attracted his attention. There could be little mutual sympathy between two philosophers so completely antagonist as the author of the "Essay" and himself. Locke despised what he called the "chimeras" of Leibnitz. The Teutonic philosopher accorded to his English contemporary the praise of perspicuity, but proclaimed his utter ignorance of the "demonstrative metaphysics." In 1703, Leibnitz being disengaged, undertook a formal reply to Locke, which he completed in the following year. The death of Locke caused an indefinite postponement of the publication of this work, which did not appear till long after the death of the author. In 1765, it was given to the world by the industrious Raspe. This work, published under the title of "*Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain*," is his philosophical masterpiece, and

contains the substance of all that has been advanced by him on behalf of his speculative system, against the school of Locke.

The manner of publication adopted by Leibnitz was, for the most part, fragmentary. His "*Système de l'Harmonie Préétablie*" is developed in various small treatises. There is, however, one great work, which is more popular and practical in its style, and therefore more generally known than almost any of his other writings, the preparation of which occupied much part of many years in his life. We refer to the *Théodicée*—a book which holds a front rank in the very small class of works specially conversant with the philosophy of religion. The design of the *Théodicée* is to reconcile the existence and continuance of evil in the universe with the character of God—to remove the difficulty that has been raised in all ages, and in all religions, and that may be reckoned the fundamental metaphysical problem of the Christian philosophy. It has already been indicated that the thoughts of Leibnitz were directed to these subjects from the time of his decided intellectual development. In 1671 he wrote a tract on Free Will and Predestination. The negotiations about Church union perhaps led him to take a greater interest in these speculations, in as far as the circulation of doctrines fitted to harmonize with the dark phenomena of the moral world the biblical view of the character of God, might facilitate the peace of the Church. The avowed purpose of the *Théodicée* is to refute the sceptical principle of Bayle, who denied the consistency of faith and reason,

and thus laid a foundation for universal doubt. The public appearance of the book in 1710, produced a profound sensation. It was received with applause by most of the continental universities, but the prevalence of Locke's Philosophy in England disposed the public mind in this country to receive it with distaste.

The current of speculation, in the mind of Leibnitz, continued to flow during the later years of the philosopher's life. In 1714, he drew up a scheme of his Philosophy for the use of Prince Eugene of Savoy, (*La monadologie.*) This period of his life was also signalized by his correspondence with Des Bosses. The close of 1715 is memorable as the commencement of a still more interesting correspondence. In a letter to the Princess of Wales, he assailed the philosophical and religious principles of the school of Locke and Newton. This called forth Samuel Clarke in their defence. The replies of Leibnitz, and the rejoinders of Clarke contain as large an amount of curious speculation as any work of modern times. The manner of God's relation to the universe—the nature of miracles—the laws of the divine and human will—the ideas of space and time—and the character and limits of the material world, are among the stores of this magazine of speculative discussion. The controversy was continued with increasing zeal on both sides. Inferior in power of generalization and originality to his antagonist, the intellect of Clarke was possessed of an acuteness and logical force which rendered him one of the most skilful of philosophical disputants, and de-

manded a full display of the comprehensiveness and grandeur of mind of his German rival.*

But that mighty spirit was now to close his connexion with this mysterious scene of existence. Leibnitz had suffered from occasional illness during several preceding years. These attacks, however, passed away, and the philosopher resumed his speculations with renewed energy. In November 1716, when he had to prepare his reply to Clarke's fifth letter, his illness returned with great violence. We have no distinct record indicating that the moral sensibilities of the Philosopher were rightly alive to the decisive nature of the awful change. His seventy years are ended, and the lightning seems lost among dark clouds. During the last day of his life, we are told he was busied in conversation with his physician on the nature of his disease, and on the doctrines of alchymy. Towards evening his servant asked him if he would receive the Eucharist. "Let me alone," said he; "I have done ill to no one. I have nothing to confess. All must die." He raised himself on the bed and tried to write. The darkness of death was gathering around him. He found himself unable to read what he had written. He tore the paper, and lying down, covered his face with his hands. A few minutes after nine o'clock on the evening of the 14th

* An English version of this Correspondence was published by Clarke in 1717. By the way, some of the most curious pieces in modern metaphysical literature have made their appearance in the form of controversial "Correspondence." We need hardly refer, as examples, to the "letters" between Clarke and Butler, between Des Cartes and his critics, or between Mendelssohn and Jacobi.

November 1716, Leibnitz ceased to breathe. It is affecting to the imagination to contemplate a human spirit, whose course of thought throughout life was unsurpassed for power of speculation, and daring range of mind among the higher objects of knowledge, and who, at the very period of its departure, was in the depths of a controversy about the mysteries of the supersensible world,—thus summoned into that world, to become conversant in his final relations with the Being who had intrusted him with mental power, and whose nature and attributes had so often tasked his speculative energies.

The effect, upon many minds, of the record of the life of this Philosopher, may be, perhaps, akin to a confused amazement at the spectacle of continued mental exercises so unparalleled in kind and variety. Yet a vague impression of this sort ought not to be the predominant one. A grand unity pervades the seeming confusion in which this man's life seems enveloped. A reigning idea which diffuses a community of principle through the whole cycle of his works, we have traced back in the earliest operations of his reflecting powers. Conversant through his life with those mysteries in proof of which no reason can be given, and with real or seeming demonstrations founded on these "first principles," we find in Leibnitz the type or model of the speculative metaphysician. The present seems a fit occasion for bestowing the notice of a short discussion on this suggested subject, which is connected with an important contribution made by Leibnitz to philosophy. The consideration of

it may, besides, make us advantageously familiar with some of the properties of that atmosphere in which has been gathered the cloud that has darkened subsequent German speculations, and rendered metaphysical science, in one aspect of it, retrograde in that country.

Des Cartes, the reviver and reformer of Speculative Philosophy in modern times, commenced his philosophical career with the practice of universal doubt, as the means of reaching the elements of knowledge. Thus set loose in the microcosm of thought, he found the consciousness of self-existence inseparable from the act of thinking. "Cogito, ergo sum" was accordingly his first principle. Involved in the rudiments of self-consciousness, he found the idea of an all-perfect Being, whose attributes require the certainty of all that is *clearly* and *distinctly* recognised by us. With the help of these assumptions, he thought himself prepared to defend knowledge against the assaults of scepticism. But the supposed foundation was too narrow. The tests proposed for its extension were too vague. The effects soon became apparent. The disciples and admirers of Des Cartes maintained doctrines the most various. Malebranche could not, without the infallible Church, retain an external world. The Egoists, whose existence as a sect is, however, somewhat problematical, having declared their inability to rise beyond the first axiom of their master, rested there amid the fluctuations of a merely subjective universe. Spinoza, unable to defend, by reasoning, our faith in finite substances, absorbed mind and matter in one all-pervading Existence. Des Cartes had, in truth,

proposed to the thinking world an insoluble problem, when he sought to reach the extreme theory of knowledge, self-consciousness alone being given.

Leibnitz saw the insufficiency of the Cartesian principle. He longed to solve the hitherto unsolved difficulty of a First Philosophy. Des Cartes, by directing him to the mind itself, through which we reflect, had, for the first time, clearly shown the *quarter* in which those results of which he was in quest are to be found. The maxim of the school of Locke was "*nihil est in intellectu nisi quod prius in sensu.*" The famous addition, "*nisi intellectus ipse,*" expresses the distinctive peculiarity of Leibnitz. But how is the "*intellectus ipse*" to be distinguished from the "*quod prius in sensu?*" The discovery of a *test* for marking this distinction, is an important addition made by him to the common stock of philosophical principle. He has expressed its nature, among other places, in a letter to Bieling, in which, speaking of Locke, he asserts that he has "no idea of the demonstrative metaphysics. Could he have made the distinction between *necessary truth*, which we obtain by intuition, and those other truths which we reach by experience, he would have found that the senses teach us only what *takes* place, not what *must* take place." All those ideas which we are compelled to think, accordingly, belong to the very structure of the soul itself, and are to be included as articles of our original Faith.* The critical

* *Faith* has two meanings—a metaphysical and a theological. In the former of these sciences, it signifies the belief of principles which, in themselves, are incognizable or irreconcilable by the understanding, and

philosophy of Kant is an attempt, by the application of this principle, to collect the several truths with which the soul is at first furnished, and to view them in their relation to the added facts of experience.

Philosophy has ever been a struggle between the spirit of doubt and the spirit of dogmatism—of which the one declines to admit as true any conclusion that is not the result of logical deduction, and the other assumes, in whole or in part, the principles which the sceptic assails. Men in all ages have been oscillating between these extremes. The many, in whom the love of order and simplicity naturally predominates, and who are likely to be aiming at a philosophy in which every assumption and conclusion is capable of being conceived and explained by the understanding, may find, in the singularly acute “Treatise” of Hume, the results of such shallow metaphysics. A more profound view of what is revealed to reflection, finds an infinity of things which the understanding cannot solve, and which, while not contrary to sense, are yet above sense. A love for the mystic obscurity in which this principle involves the higher truths of knowledge, may confine an enthusiastic thinker exclusively within that region of abstraction, and conduct him altogether away from sense and experience, till, lost

yet unquestionable. In this sense, Faith is the organ of the higher metaphysics. In its theological acceptation, Faith is the hearty belief, on God’s authority, of what God has revealed in His Word. Thus understood, the word expresses the organ of the higher theology. Throughout this Essay, we use it, unless it is expressly qualified, in its philosophical meaning. The mutual relation of these two kinds of Faith, is the object of the philosophy of religion—that much-trodden but, as yet, ill-cultivated field.

in the supersensible forms of thought, he resolves the actual into the ideal ; and thence, in a different direction, reaches practically the very scepticism from which his previous course was a seeming divergence. Faith is, on the one side, lost in the dark abyss of doubt : on the other, it evaporates in the sunny haze of the empyrean of transcendentalism. In either case, a pretended philosophy, instead of guiding the perplexed labourers who are pressing on with their work below, only adds to the fogs which already darken their atmosphere.

It is, notwithstanding, evident that the perfect philosophy must recognise and include a body of first principles, resting on faith, by which all knowledge of things divine and human must be regulated. As, in the material world, the lever needs a *fulcrum* before it can work, so, in the world of thought, these *mysteries* are the indispensable fulcrum of intellectual exertion. To obtain a refuge from doubt, and a sure and rational foundation on which knowledge and action may be based, must always be the aim of the higher philosophy. The tendency of men of earnestness and reflection in this direction, depends on the maxim involved in the very act of reflecting ; for the root of reflex thinking is the consciousness which we feel, that in rigorous search for truth or decisive controversy, we are called to labour for the attainment of an ultimate principle which shall either itself explain that about which we speculate, or else supply a self-evident reason that to us it is inexplicable. Reason would be interminable, if it did not find its ultimate limit in truths which it cannot

prove. Every principle must be either resolvable by the understanding, or must rest on faith ; and as every conceivable question may be thus carried down to faith, all knowledge runs into mystery. An adjustment of *the fact* of this realm of mystery, from which no effort can disconnect us, has ever been the profound difficulty with men of contemplative minds, and one which the labours of thinking men of all ages have advanced only a very few steps towards a solution. Its mal-adjustment in the philosophical system has already wrought havoc with the highest and most solemn interests of men. Along the borders of this shaded land, have arisen the *miasmata* of the schools of Elis and Alexandria, of Spinoza and the new German philosophy, and of eastern mysticism. Hitherto, Scottish thinkers, with a very few exceptions, have tried practically to substitute an analysis of mental phenomena, in place of the real difficulties of metaphysical speculation. But abstract reflection, if legitimately pursued, must in the end place us in contact with these difficulties. If in some minds the floodgates of universal doubt are thus opened, this is a discipline we cannot avoid. Mysteries are needed as means to the attainment of knowledge. They are, moreover, suggested to the soul by all its most prominent objects of thought—by the starry heavens—by the infinite space in which we and they are included—by the awful eternity through which we are passing—by the consciousness of our own existence—by the revelation of Him “in whom we live and move and have our being”—by the sublime realities of a moral law, and a responsible be-

cause personal agency—and by the dark shades of guilt in which a portion, at least, of that created personal agency is involved. Of mysteries like these we cannot rid ourselves. They rise in a thousand forms, and in them all knowledge merges. The question here reverts to deep-thinking minds, How are we to deal with them, and what place is to be assigned to them? We may still “report deficient” the *Philosophia Prima* of Bacon; but with the instructive lesson of the extravagancies of Continental speculation before our eyes, and the sober Christian discipline of the Scottish mind for an additional sedative, we may yet become better prepared for the calm discussion and settlement (as far as man can settle them) of these lofty questions, and for an encounter with the hydra of a perverted speculation, which already shews signs of being within our borders, in the distorted theology of would-be metaphysical theologians, and in the atheism and socialism of our corrupted masses.

We fear we may not have succeeded in rendering very intelligible, and far less in rendering attractive, the nature and scope of the most comprehensive question in philosophy. After any attempted statement of it, the consequent experience of the insufficiency of the words of ordinary language for these refined purposes, must invest with interest the splendid project by Leibnitz himself of a universal language, of which the alphabet should indicate the few original ideas with which all the rest of our knowledge is connected; while overlooking, perhaps, the wide difference of the matter of metaphysical and mathematical science, he held that out of

these simple characters formulas might be constructed, expressive of the various relations between thoughts, and that through them inferences might be deduced, with the same freedom from error, as by the processes of geometry and algebra. But we must leave for the mind of the reflecting reader the entire subject, so imperfectly touched upon in the preceding paragraphs, and return to the books before us.

The philosophical works of Leibnitz are, in bulk, only a small part of the literary productions of a life devoted to almost the whole sphere of possible knowledge.* Professor Erdmann has rendered good service to the thinking world by his edition (the most valuable of those referred to at the commencement of this Essay) of this class of the writings of the father of German speculation. While Leibnitz could on no subject write unphilosophically, yet there are sections of his works which may be extracted and combined for publication as more exclusively and profoundly philosophical, indicating not ripples, extended widely, perhaps, over the surface of thought, but the ocean-swell of an agitation that is far below. This department of his writings is scattered, without much attention to order, through the voluminous publication of Dutens, and is partly contained in the rare edition of his posthumous philosophical works by Raspe. Accordingly, while the life of Leibnitz is an epoch in the

* This may be seen by an inspection of the most comprehensive edition of his works, by DUTENS (Geneva, 1768, 6 vols. 4to.) We observe that a new edition of the entire works of Leibnitz is just now in course of preparation at Hanover.

history of speculation, his speculative writings have been seldom and superficially studied. Besides the materials collected in former editions, Professor Erdmann has enriched his republication with no fewer than twenty-three original documents of Leibnitz, not before published, and which this able and industrious editor has recovered, during an active search in 1836, among the accumulation of manuscripts in the Royal Library of Hanover. Most of these added works relate to that theme, on the subject of which we have already alluded to as the central one of the intellectual life of Leibnitz. It increases the convenience of this edition, that the several works which it includes, 101 in number, have been arranged, as nearly as possible, in the order in which they were written. In this extensive collection, we are glad to recognise the *Nouveaux Essais* and the *Théodicée*.

It is not easy to give even a brief exposition of the very miscellaneous contents of these works. The system and manner of thinking of Leibnitz, is to be gathered from his philosophical works studied collectively, rather than from any separate publication. These collected writings bear throughout one very marked characteristic of inventive genius; for they are crowded with richly suggestive germs of thought, cast forth often in disorder, as it were with intent to exercise the generalizing powers of others. From out of this stimulating variety, there may, however, be extracted two or three more prominent ideas, united, as far as possible, by demonstration, with his assumed first principles; for the main purpose of

this metaphysician was to give to philosophy a mathematical strictness and certainty, and to reconcile its doctrines with those of theology. The universe is contemplated by him in the threefold relation of—1. Its *elements*; 2. Their *manner of connexion*; and, 3. The *end* of their combination. The doctrine of elements, he calls *monadologie*. The mutual relations of these elements, he held to be developed in a *pre-established harmony*. The final end of creation, he represented as an *optimism*. Let us accompany him at a distance, as he is constructing this system of *à priori* universal philosophy, in order to have before us a specimen of a class of systems, foreign, indeed, to Britain, but which may be compared with the doctrines of the Eleatics, the Alexandrians, or Spinoza, in respect of its boldness and comprehension.

Through experience, Leibnitz finds himself surrounded by compound or material bodies of amazing variety. This implies the existence of elements, of which these compounds are the results, and the nature of these elements is to be ascertained according to the laws of thought. An application of the principle of the Sufficient Reason, demonstrates that matter can consist neither of parts which are infinitely divisible, nor of atoms possessed of figure and extension. Its elements must, therefore, be simple, unextended forces, or *Monads*, in which we obtain the *à priori* idea of substance. The individuality of these monads must consist in the different series of internal changes through which each one passes in the course of its existence. In these series,

each successive change is termed a Perception, and every monad is a living mirror, giving forth, after its own fashion, a picture of the universe, which is thus one vast collection of spiritual forces. These necessary elements of all concrete existence cannot all be reduced to one class or order, for they are distinguished by different degrees of perception and active power. Some are destitute of conscious perception, and these are the elements of which the material world is the result. Then there is the animating principle of the lower animals. There are also the self-conscious souls of men, containing in themselves the fountains of necessary truth. And these three classes of created forces or substances must have a sufficient reason for their existence. There cannot be an infinite series of contingents, and, if there could, the final reason even of such an infinite series could be found only in a necessary substance. Creation must thus involve the existence of One Supreme infinite, the *monas monadum*, from whom all that is finite has been derived, and in whose existence it finds its complete explanation. This Supreme Substance is God. He is the fountain of all reality. The attributes of the created monads, as far as they are perfect, result from the perfection of God ; as far as they are imperfect, from the necessary imperfection of the creature.*

* The *Monadologie* of Leibnitz is discussed in the pieces presented for the competition (*Sur le Système des Monades*) proposed by the Berlin Academy of Sciences, and which, with the successful prize dissertation by T. H. G. Justi, were published at Berlin in 1748. Each side in the controversy has its able defenders among the writers of these curious disquisitions.

Having in these conclusions, as he conceived, demonstratively refunded concrete being into its elements, and related all created elements to the One uncreated and supreme, Leibnitz would next find the mutual relations of the several elementary forces of creation. Although the monads have neither figure nor extension in themselves, their co-existence and relations sufficiently account for the phenomena of extension, duration, and body. Space and Time have thus merely an ideal and relative existence. They result from the relation of monads, considered as co-existing or in succession; and are simply modes in which we regard the objects of our experience. Further, the elements of creation being absolutely destitute of parts and extension, cannot mutually influence one another. Inter-causation is thus excluded from the real universe, and is confined to the phenomenal, which is governed by mechanical law. Yet the universe is ideally related in the mind of God, and of each creature, in proportion as his ideas approximate to the Divine. God, "in the beginning," launched the elements into being, having resolved for each one a determinate history throughout eternity, and a history which should harmonize with that of every other. This mutual relation is beautifully illustrated, when we are told that from the given state of any monad at any time, the Eternal Geometer can find the state of the universe past, present, and to come. In the attributes of the Uncreated and Supreme, is to be found the sufficient reason for a Pre-established Harmony in all that He has made. This explains the nature of the changes of creation. The ap-

parent action of finite monads upon each other, is really the result of that original harmonious arrangement of God, in virtue of which He secures, without fail, those ends which He contemplated when the universe issued from his hands. The phenomena attendant on that fruitful theme of philosophical disputation, the union of soul and body,—of the self-conscious monad and the related monads of an inferior order,—are counted capable of explanation on the same general principle. The successive changes of the soul must exactly tally with those of the body ; yet without any mutual action. They are related as two clocks, of which the one points to the hour exactly as the other strikes ; or as separate parts of the same clock,—for Leibnitz likens the whole universe to a timepiece which was wound up in the act of creation, and which thenceforward pursues its own movements harmoniously for ever.* Mind and matter—the realm of final causes, and the realm of efficient causes—are thus in necessary harmony. And a like harmony must obtain between reason and religious faith—the kingdom of nature, and the city of God.

This last harmony links the theological with the merely philosophical part of the system of Leibnitz ; and introduces us to his philosophy of religion. A question may be asked,—If the universe—moral as well as physical—is a self-regulating machine, is not the Creator

* A comparison of this doctrine of pre-established harmony with the late Dr. Brown's Theory of Cause and Effect, illustrating their partial similarity and partial contrast, might tend to excite an important train of metaphysical speculation.

seemingly excluded from the government of His creation ; and, if not thus excluded, how is He related to the sin and misery which it contains ? That the apparent manner of His relations to the creation should be what it is, results, he thinks, from our relative knowledge, which can never rise superior to the condition of time. In reality, this pre-established harmony is a revelation of the Divine perfection in a scheme of Optimism. Every possible universe was, from eternity, conceived in the mind of God. One of these only can be translated from possible into actual existence, and that one must be the best. There is, indeed, included in it moral and natural evil,—the latter the harmonious consequent of the former, and a reaction against it. But moral evil cannot be separated from the best of possible universes, and the will of God is not the fountain of necessary truths. The mystery of sin is not to be explained by the resolution of evil into good, for sin is essentially evil. But sin is necessarily involved in the *idea* of this best of possible universes, which, notwithstanding its evil, it is better to translate out of the possible into the actual, than to have no universe at all. Thus, the created universe must be the harmony of one great Theocracy, expressive of the attributes of the one Perfect Being. From His eternal throne, its several streams of elementary existence must have taken their rise. They have flowed, and they must continue to flow, in the courses into which he sent them in the beginning ; and, notwithstanding the dark shades in which so many of them are enveloped, they are recognised by His Omniscience as the only possible and

therefore most glorious illustration, by creation, of the pure fountain whence they have originated.

If illusory, these are, at least, splendid speculations. There are two modes of thus rising beyond the limits of the imagination in a philosophy of the universe. We may follow the course of the modern astronomy ; or, we may meditate on the facts of metaphysics and speculative theology. He who studies the one, gazes on the starry heavens and ranges in thought over the distant parts of material creation, till, lost in what he observes, his astronomy seems merged in idealism. The votary of speculation, on the other hand, taking in the spiritual as well as the material world, contemplates the Human and the Divine ; and with faculties fitted to judge only of successive and contemporaneous nature, meets the mysteries of an objective world, of personality and free-will, and of the Divine existence, and seems, also, lost in that world of ideas, where physical and metaphysical science thus appear to converge.

By these assumed demonstrations, of which we have given a very vague outline, Leibnitz hoped to deliver metaphysical science from future errors and controversies, and to lead the way to a universal peace, in which Reason should be harmonized with Religion. Whatever we may say of the truth or falsehood of the doctrines to which he attained, we cannot withhold our homage of admiration when we reflect on such an amount of speculative genius in busy operation throughout a long life, —on the amazing sweep of the abstract conceptions which that genius has employed,—on that strong logical

faith in the omnipotence of deduction,—on the richly suggestive ideas which this mighty thinker has contributed to philosophy,—and, on the unity of a system which sublimely designs to harmonize the spiritual with the sensible world.

Leibnitz formed scholars, rather than a school. His system is essentially an eclectic one, and the whole tendency of his mind was opposed to merely national and sectarian distinctions, against which the extreme comprehensiveness of his genius gave him an instinctive repugnance, while his own fruitful mind rendered the most obscure system suggestive, and therefore worthy of being regarded with favourable indulgence. His sanguine spirit delights to discern a progress in the retrospect of the whole history of philosophy. In the early eastern systems, he finds noble ideas of God and the universe. In Greece he sees these reduced to a dialectic form. The early fathers appear to him to cast aside the corruptions of the Greek philosophy, while the schoolmen employ it in the service of Christianity. In modern times philosophy has become more free and ardent, and better directed than ever, and would, he thinks, be more successful than it has been, but for the evil spirit of sectarianism.

“There is only one permitted sect of all,” says Leibnitz, “the sect of searchers after truth. The Aristotelians and Cartesians fail, not for want of talent, but because of their sectarianism. The imagination, which has been long under the spell of a single melody, cannot readily listen to another. He who has for years travelled the same beaten track, becomes unobservant of the sur-

rounding scenes. Just so, those who have formed a habit of subordination to a single mind, are disqualified for the hopeful exercise of their own."

Such was the spirit of Leibnitz; yet, probably the prevailing impression on the minds of any who have studied his writings, is a feeling of the remarkable contrast between the splendid intellectual exertions and enormous learning of this philosopher (combined as these are in him to an unprecedented degree), and the small positive contributions he has made to the register of permanently recognised truths. The vastness of his general principles occasions a corresponding vagueness in the rules for their application. They extend so widely as to comprehend only a few of the qualities of each of the objects that they include. The fact is, they reached too far to become at once familiar to the minds of men. The real spirit of the Leibnitzian philosophy slumbered for more than half a century, during which his nominal scholars under Wolff were starving on the subtleties of a severe yet profitless dialectic, and were evincing that dislike for really vigorous thought which is indicated by the pedantry of an empty imposing philosophical nomenclature. In this period, the earlier Teutonic metaphysics perished as a System, to revive as a Spirit in the later German philosophy, and then to develop fully that germ, in the earlier system, of a perverted speculative idealism, which has shewn itself incompetent to realize in its expositions that positive adjustment for mysteries to which it aspires.

It is impossible here to plunge into the depths to

which a formal criticism of this philosophy would conduct us, implying, as such a criticism would do, a full determination of the province of *à priori* reasoning in its relation to the facts of experience. The practised eye must have observed a connexion with many earlier and later schemes of a kindred description, even in the rough outline of it we have now given.

The attentive student, of the sketch which we have attempted, has perhaps already recognised in the central principle of this system of universal philosophy, a relation to one of the cardinal questions of metaphysical science, and a curious coincidence in the history of philosophy. By his subtle process of reasoning, Leibnitz virtually excludes the possibility of an external world. The last result of his analysis is a created aggregate of unextended spiritual forces, of various orders, and of which the mutual relations, as collocated in bodies, originate the phenomena of the visible creation.

While the author of the *Monadologie* was in this manner resolving all creation into immaterial elements, a philosopher of another country, and of a different school, was approaching, perhaps more consciously, to a similar conclusion by a different course. Trained in the doctrines of Bacon and Locke, but receiving them into a soul that delighted to hold converse with Plato, and ignorant of the high questions agitated in Germany by his contemporary, he deduced from the principles of the English philosophy a system of idealism, which, besides its seductions for the imagination, is urged in a spirit and for a purpose that must ever render venerable

among Christians, as well as illustrious among metaphysicians, the name of Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. His well-known "Dialogues" are, to many minds, perhaps the most attractive display of metaphysical doctrine which the English language contains. This philosopher is, moreover, worthy of notice for more than even his elegant fancy, and refined discussion, and graceful diction. The scenes and music of material nature, which have infused so much poetry into his writings, and which he would connect with something less gross than the cumbersome apparatus of an external world, are all regarded by Berkeley as direct manifestations of God. With this Christian philosopher, visible nature is not an aggregate of merely unconscious substances—the refuge of atheism and materialism—the veil by which God is concealed from man, and then banished from his thoughts. In the seeming solitude of idealism, he finds himself in the immediate presence of the "Father of Spirits," in whom we thus literally "live, and move, and have our being."

Thus, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, there were two philosophers, representing the two opposed schools of philosophy, whose speculations conducted them to immaterialism.* The "demonstrative

* We must not omit a reference to a writer of recluse and studious temperament, who, in the peaceful seclusion of a rural English parsonage, constructed a series of acute arguments in defence of an immaterialism similar to that of Berkeley, and whose recorded speculations have secured the respectful mention of Reid and Stewart. We refer to Arthur Collier, Rector of Langford Magna, in the county of Wilts, from 1704 to 1732. His *Clavis Universalis*, published in 1713, was seemingly unknown, at least in his own country, till a short notice of it was given by Dr. Reid in

metaphysic" of Leibnitz has parted with body and extension before it has resolved nature into its elements. The experimental philosophy of Berkeley fails to extract from the phenomena of perception the evidence of a substance different in kind from the self-conscious spirit which perceives them.

Since, as well as before the epoch of Leibnitz and Berkeley, that vast group of phenomena commonly designated material, and which are so nearly connected with life in this "middle state," has occasioned much speculation. The defence of the doctrine of the essential distinction of mind and matter, has hitherto been a characteristic of the national philosophy of Scotland. That philosophy has to encounter the opposition of three contrary idealistic hypotheses, according to one of which all created existence is resolved, with Leibnitz, into spiritual substances of different orders, and material phenomena are regarded as merely resulting from these immaterial elements—according to a second, the material world is conceived as a series of ideas produced immediately and in regular order by God in the minds of men—according to a third, as a group of the phenomena of our own minds, regulated by an unknown principle. The adjustment of the long-agitated controversy about the nature of Matter is of practical importance, chiefly as it is connected with the refutation of scepticism. There surely remains room for a better-defined

his Essays. Long extremely scarce, it is now generally accessible. Not less than two editions of it have issued from the press within the last ten years, the last of them associated with a curious and interesting biography of this metaphysician, by Mr. Benson. London, 1837.

settlement of the actual evidence of consciousness with regard to a subject which, in all ages, has tended to excite speculation, and which, since the time of Berkeley, has been regarded by acute minds as, at least, an "open question" in metaphysical science.

The most important service, however, which its author hoped to render by his *System of Monads*, relates to the refutation of Pantheism. The *Monadologie*, with the consequent doctrines, is essentially an effort to indicate the metaphysical and moral relations of the Divine Being with the universe. Antagonist to the Cartesian hypothesis of occasional causes, the doctrine of a pre-established harmony has been accused of tending to an atheistic separation of the world from God, while the rival system has been counted open to the charge of an identification of the creature and the Creator, of which there are signs in the system of Malebranche, and which was fully developed in the *Ethics of Spinoza*. We are unable to undertake an elaborate discussion of a subject so profound and complicated as the one suggested by these speculations—a discussion which requires a previous settlement of the limits and canons of metaphysical reasoning—and we would conclude this *Essay* with some allusion to that awful frontier land, where religion becomes blended with the higher philosophy, and where objects have been found fitted to attract educated and uneducated minds in all ages of the world.

Leibnitz, as we have seen, was led by his love of speculation, and also by a desire to repel the sceptical

objections of Bayle, to consider the much-vexed question of the origin of evil. It might be made evident, if we are not mistaken, that, in his attempt to reconcile the dismal phenomena of our own actual experience with what is discovered from other sources of the character of God, we have a fit illustration of the inapplicability, for purposes of useful effect, of principles so extremely general as those with which he was accustomed to deal. We frequently observe also an indistinct apprehension, on the part of the philosopher, of the line by which, in these matters, positive is separated from negative knowledge.

There must be mysteries in a science like theology, which includes among its principal objects, the nature and attributes of God, as related to a class of responsible created agents. An important step of progress has been gained, when what is incognizable is treated as an acknowledged mystery. Much needs still to be done to spread the spirit, and secure the right application of this principle. The region of a new science, or at least of a wider and better application of metaphysical and also of logical science, seems to open before us, when we contemplate in their connexion the series of events which pervade natural and supernatural theology, regarded as the science of the mutual relations of God and man.

The primary truth of theology demands the exercise of philosophical faith. The finite mind cannot grasp the full conception of the co-existence of a responsible creature with the infinite Creator. The existence of a MORAL

CREATION is a fact which man cannot explain. He finds in himself the relics of a Law impressed on him when he was created "in the image of God," which tells of duty and demands obedience ; and this gives evidence that man was created to be governed by, and so was taken into a moral relation with, a personal God. He finds himself a dependent and yet a moral agent, responsible for his manner of acting towards Him from whom he received the power to act. This combination of freedom with derived and dependent agency, includes something beyond the limits of the human faculties. An anchor is needed, by which the understanding may be kept back, on the one hand, from a Pantheistic absorption of the moral creation in the Creator, and, on the other, from suffering the universe to be cast adrift on the dreary ocean of Atheism ; and it is found in the faith which believes what it can neither question nor fully comprehend.

The evolution of the theological system is a further evolution of the mystery into which its first principle retires. As the understanding cannot embrace a reconciliation of the infinity of the divine attributes with the creation of beings free to act, and therefore responsible, neither can it devise a scheme for harmonizing with these attributes the dark history of a portion of that created agency. We find that each member of our own race is born into the world "alienated" from God, and we are told of another race that has fallen, without hope of recovery, into the same awful habit of ungodliness. The continued existence of moral creatures in the universe

has thus added another inexplicable phenomenon to the mystery of their original creation. SIN has appeared. Responsible creatures have become rebels against the law of Him from whom their responsibility was derived. The stream which, in the creating act, was seen to issue from impenetrable recesses, here resumes its subterranean channel, and when it reappears, has become strangely altered.

There is a third evolution of the mystery which pervades theology. God Himself has spoken to us of an extraordinary plan of RESTORATION, of which the operation becomes apparent to us when the "alienated" are "reconciled." The created agent had carried his responsibility through the course of the original estrangement, and his responsibility is continued through the subsequent course of restoration. Yet the subjective process of estrangement commences with his birth, and the subjective process of reunion is conducted by the present living agency of the Holy Spirit. The phenomena of restoration in the spiritual world, displayed in the Church of God, thus, like the two preceding classes of related phenomena, rise out of a region into which the eye of the human understanding cannot penetrate.

A series of strange facts is unfolded in the history of this corner of the universe. Creation, sin, and salvation—the unfallen, the fallen, and the restored moral creature—are revealed to us in events which we may know, while each seems to emerge directly from an abyss whose depths we cannot fathom. Their appearance has been the signal for those controversies of theologians which

have been carried on, and those battles of faith with scepticism which have been fought, for almost six thousand years. In the revealed fact of creation, we find the germ of the questions of Pantheism and Free-will. The existence of sin has suggested the hypotheses of Manichæism and Optimism. The phenomena of restoration are connected with the doctrines of Election and Grace, and their proposed modifications, and with the revealed prospects of the moral creation throughout eternity.

It is ethically important that the mind should become familiar with the general character of that associated group of theological truths which demands the exercise of philosophical faith, and therefore falls within the range of what has to be considered, and somehow disposed of, in a complete system of metaphysical philosophy. That religion *must* be pervaded by this series of mysteries which we have endeavoured to trace, is a principle of which the cordial reception should moderate our polemical ardour with reference to all in theology that is merely human opinion, and conduct us "as little children" to that *practical* solution of them all, which is opened to the soul that has become "willing to do" the will of God. History, which has to record the signs of the moral disorder of man, bears the record of other irregularities, and that even in the series of natural phenomena. It gives evidence of the existence of One who died and rose again, and whose miracles, insoluble by the laws of the physical creation, are connected with the laws and harmony of a higher economy. As the grand creden-

tials of a revelation from God, addressed to a fallen race, and which contains an account of the origin and cure of its disorders, sufficient to satisfy and stimulate a reviving conscience, they are fitted to elevate thought, from the world of sense in which they have been manifested, to man and man's prospects in that moral and spiritual world which we here "see through a glass darkly" in the reflection of a reality that is not yet in itself revealed.

Thus has God sufficiently provided us with a practical solution for the mysteries of theology. Conversant, as we ought to be, with what is beyond the limits of sensible experience, and incapable of comprehension by faculties created for comprehending only the events of contemporaneous and successive nature, we may yet learn, through experience itself, that religious faith in the miraculously revealed law of grace finds the needed harmony of what by us is incomprehensible—a harmony in which the conscience does the work that cannot be devolved upon the intellect, and in which the transformation of the character is found a sure path to the sufficient knowledge of the doctrine. The mysteries of nature and reason thus cease to hinder the gradual restoration of the regenerate to the image of God.

The preceding notices and reflections have accumulated so much beyond our expectation, that we must not extend our limits beyond this point, from which we may look at a distance, with awe and profit, upon the host of speculative questions which the writings of Leibnitz are evidently fitted to raise. Our end has been gained, if

what we have written leads any to benefit by sympathy with the comprehensive spirit of a famous metaphysician and metaphysical theologian—to refresh and elevate their minds by the meditative study of his works—and to be warned of the still prevalent illusions which carried him captive, and, seeming to gain strength and courage from the victory, have carried captive the succeeding generations of German speculators. These lessons are needed in an age in which there are signs that the revival of old controversies, and the rise of new ones,—many of them not remotely connected with these illusory habits of thought,—are about to surprise a generation ill fitted to deal with abstract speculation. We love to anticipate a future history of Metaphysics and Theology in this country more encouraging than these omens seem to forebode ; and to have disclosed before us in imagination, as one of the characteristics of the succeeding age, an ethically disciplined metaphysical spirit, operating according to the canons of a well-applied Logic, under the increasing light of Biblical science, towards the production of a richly intellectual and yet profoundly scriptural theology, and the attainment, for the Christian religion and the Christian Church, of a position among the forces at work in society, which the human agency charged with their maintenance and propagation is not at liberty to disregard.

ESSAY II.

HAMILTON AND REID; THEORY OF PERCEPTION.

ESSAY II.

HAMILTON AND REID.*

EVEN in its unfinished state, Sir William Hamilton's Edition of the Works of Reid† is the most important contribution to the metaphysical literature of Great Britain that the nineteenth century has yet witnessed.

The present publication contains the entire text of Reid. Of the Preface, Notes, Dissertations, and Indices, promised in the title-page by Sir William Hamilton, only the Notes, with six of the Dissertations, and part of a seventh, have as yet appeared. The publication of the remaining dissertations, with the preface and the indices, is, we hope not indefinitely, postponed. Even of the matter included in the volume before us, how-

* *North British Review*, No. XIX. (November 1848.)

† *The Works of Thomas Reid, D.D., now fully collected, with Selections from his Unpublished Letters.* Preface, Notes, and Supplementary Dissertations, by SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, Baronet, Advocate, Master of Arts, (Oxford,) &c.; of the Institute of France, the Latin Society of Jena, and many other Literary Bodies, Foreign and British; Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. Text collated and revised; useful Distinctions inserted; leading Words and Propositions marked out; Allusions indicated; Quotations filled up. Prefixed, Stewart's Account of the Life and Writings of Reid, with Notes by the Editor. Copious Indices subjoined. Edinburgh: 1846.

ever, containing as it does nearly a thousand closely printed pages, at least a third part is contributed by the living philosopher,—and this proportion supplies a very inadequate idea of his share of the elaborate research, and refined and highly abstract thinking, which is comprehended in the book.

Dr. Reid's philosophical works have long been recognised in this country as the type and standard of the Philosophy of Scotland, and they are now regarded by the most thoughtful men of Europe and America as constituting a conspicuous land-mark on the wide sea of modern speculation. Familiar to our academic youth at home, as supplying for the most part the text or outline of the discussions in intellectual and moral science in the Scottish universities, they have recently been translated into French by M. Jouffroy, and made the basis of instruction in philosophy in the schools of France.

The exposition of the doctrines of Reid, and the various ingenious applications of them to explain and amend the qualities of human character and society, which are contained in the works of Mr. Stewart—of which a slight but graceful specimen appears in this volume, in the "Account of the Life and Writings of Reid,"—if they have added little to the speculative intrepidity of the Scottish school, have at least given a diffused popularity to the more abstract speculations of the elder Scottish philosopher.

In consequence probably of his singularly high ideal of what is required in philosophical authorship, the

metaphysical writings of Sir William Hamilton have hitherto been less frequent and copious than his extraordinary attainments demand, or than his wide-spread reputation might seem to presume. Until the appearance of these Notes and Dissertations, his metaphysical and logical doctrines were communicated to the world almost exclusively through the medium of the essays contributed by him, within the last twenty years, to the *Edinburgh Review*; and it ought perhaps to be noted as a somewhat remarkable circumstance, that a series of anonymous articles in that publication established for their author a fame which renders his name illustrious among European thinkers.*

The appearance of the works of the Father of the Scottish School of Philosophy,† accompanied by the biographical memoir of him and estimate of his doc-

* A selection from the series of Review articles referred to has been translated into French by M. Peisse of Paris, and has obtained a high reputation among his countrymen. It comprises the four disquisitions on the "Philosophy of the Absolute," the "Theory of Perception," "Logic," and the "Study of Mathematics." Paris, 1840.

† If not strictly speaking the founder of the Scottish School, Dr. Reid may at least be regarded as its first very conspicuous type or representative. Dr. Hutcheson, who was appointed to the Chair of Morals in Glasgow about 1730, has been usually regarded as the person who has given occasion, by his prelections and writings, to the philosophical activity by which Scotland was distinguished during the past and the earlier part of the present century. Sir W. Hamilton is, however, inclined to regard, as the real founder of the Scottish School, Professor Gerschom Carmichael, Hutcheson's immediate predecessor in Glasgow, a vigorous thinker on ethical subjects, and editor of Puffendorf's treatise, "De Officio Hominis et Civis." Previous to Carmichael, there was, we believe, little independent Philosophy in Scotland. The "Philosophia Moralis Christiana" of Principal Colvill of Edinburgh, for instance, published in 1670, is based on the revelation of Scripture or theological morality.

trines, by one who was the most distinguished of his immediate disciples, all under the auspices of the foremost Scottish philosopher of the present age—a publication which thus associates the names of Reid, Stewart, and Hamilton—is a memorable event in the history of our National Philosophy. It may suggest a brief meditation concerning the new matter now connected by Sir William Hamilton with the text of Reid. Anything like a comprehensive or critical estimate of the contributions of these three Scottish philosophers to the common stock of the world's speculative knowledge, should be adjourned until the remaining portion of this work shall have appeared. We proceed to offer in the following Essay, a few somewhat miscellaneous observations, which may tend to prepare a portion of the public for the independent study of a book that cannot fail profoundly to interest every lover of abstract speculation.

“That,” says Lord Bacon, “will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and strongly conjoined together than they have been—a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets, Saturn the planet of rest and contemplation, and Jupiter the planet of civil society and action.” This favourite doctrine and simile of Bacon, so fitting and urgent in an age whose retrospect was the centuries of scholastic speculation, is not less fitting and urgent, although in an opposite application, to the age and country in which we live. If the author of the “Advancement of Learning” proclaimed it in order to

revive and to associate with philosophy external activity, philosophers may proclaim it now in order to revive and associate with action elevated contemplation. Although in these Dissertations there is an apparent, there is not, we think, a real variance with the doctrine of Bacon, for there is probably all that the principle of the division of intellectual labour will permit a single mind, of exclusive tendencies, to offer towards the creation of a spirit of contemplative activity.

Perhaps the quality of a general kind that is most impressive in the aspect of Sir William Hamilton's portion of this volume is the singular purity of its speculative character, and the exclusively speculative ends which the author seems to have aimed at in his compositions. The phenomenon here exhibited of an immense mass of wonderfully subtle logical distinctions, and profound metaphysical principles, produced and collected apparently by means of the energy of a love of thinking for its own sake, and a love of truth without regard to any of its nearer or more remote applications, is one which cannot fail to impress any intelligent observer of our British literature, were it only in virtue of its present novelty, in this age of extraordinary outward bustle, and in this island whose inhabitants are noted for the extremely palpable and concrete character of the objects that induce them to think and act. The many natural motives, distinct from the love of knowledge on its own account, that incline men to seek for truth, together with the various acquired tendencies having the same direction, which are fostered by the complicated social rela-

tions of this conventional age, and its alleged narrow and utilitarian principles of action, have failed to conquer, or (we refer to this publication) even visibly to affect at least one mind, by inducing any diversion of its power from some of the loftiest regions of human speculation.

It would be difficult to select from the whole range of English literature, a work so distinguished in respect of these qualities. As regards the proportion of abstract speculation, and the rigorous deduction of endless syllogisms, perhaps some of the works of Hobbes, and the earlier philosophical productions of Hume, approach most nearly to the Dissertations of Sir William Hamilton. To these we may add the metaphysico-theological writings of Dr. Samuel Clarke, and those of Jonathan Edwards, the great Calvinistic metaphysician of North America. But while the thought that is presented to us in the works of these philosophers resembles that which is contained in the Notes and Dissertations in its highly abstract character, in the iron logic of its connexion, and in the pervading traces of a strongly-developed faculty for reflection, there is evidence that other motives to intellectual exertion have united with the love of science on its own account in fostering the spirit which incited them to labour. Political motives influenced Hobbes. A love of fame and probably of paradox, not to speak of sentiments of frugality, and a desire for worldly independence, seem to have been considerable incitements of intellect in the case of Hume. A moral regard for those truths which are the bulwarks of religion and duty,

roused the metaphysical genius of Clarke in their defence. In Edwards, the gratification of the logical faculty, by the attainment of a regularly developed, comprehensive, and exhaustive body of science, was entirely subordinate to the gratification of the religious principle, through means of a conciliation of the theory of human activity and responsibility, with the more awful and mysterious doctrines of the Christian revelation.

It is desirable, for the sake of the common good, that society should in each generation possess at least a few men in whom the habit of speculation, and the love of comprehensive thinking and speculative completeness, occupy a very predominant place among the motives which keep the mind in a state of activity. And although a desire for knowledge is a common profession, it cannot be doubted that this sort of mental development is really of extremely rare occurrence. "The abstract love of truth," it has been well said, "is a principle with those only who have made it their study, who have applied themselves to the pursuit of some art or science in which the intellect is severely tasked, and learns by habit to take a pride in, and set a just value on its conclusions. To have a disinterested regard for truth, the mind must have contemplated it in abstract and remote questions, whereas the ignorant and vulgar are conversant only with those things in which their own interest is concerned. All their interests are local, personal, and consequently gross and selfish." In a word, men usually attend to those

fragments of truth, or of mingled truth and error, which are needed to aid them in the attainment of their own ends, and these ends vary with the character or predominant inclinations to action of individual men. Their knowledge consequently is fragmentary, relative and interested rather than scientific. The disinterested love of science and philosophy is a counterpoise upon the tendency of less elevated minds, to pervert the very meaning of the word truth, and to assume that those opinions which are or which seem best adapted to gratify some other active principle of the mind, subordinate to, or at least quite distinct from, the desire for speculative activity, are to be received as a standard of belief.

As human nature and society are constituted, it is however well that instances of an exclusive development of the faculty for abstract or highly generalized science should be rare. A rigorous separation of the speculative from the practical, is apt, by causing a disruption of the complex nature of man, to infuse the spirit of scepticism into the operations of the understanding, and to occasion weakness and vacillation in the conduct of life. The Creator of the human mind has inserted into it numerous and various principles of action, which are besides usually fused together in practice. The search for speculative truth is in all common minds conducted in subordination to, and in all minds should be conducted in harmony with *the law of mixed motives*. The statesman is impelled by political as well as by logical necessity to know and practise the theory of civil or eccle-

siastical government. The devout theologian searches inspired books under the constraint of the Christian motives, and from a conscientious impulse which attracts him with special ardour to that region of knowledge. The practical man, in the common commerce of daily life, over whom a love for the scientific kind of knowledge has little if any influence, seeks only for those fragments of information which may enable him to find his way, through the complicated but very subordinate details, that are required for his worldly business or pleasure, toward those results which are fitted to gratify his love of power, or money, or fame, and to meet the emergencies of his professional pursuit. For the attainment of most of the ends of life, utilitarian rather than scientific knowledge is necessary, and no individual is more likely to be subject to irresolution and exposed to illusion than he from whose mind all the blind and irrational principles of action, which are meant to supplement reason, have been extracted, by the power of the habit of philosophizing, and who submits to the influence only of motives which are regulated by pure intelligence. Without the gravitation of forces such as those we have indicated, the spirit of unmixed speculation would (unless in the case of a genius of extraordinary strength) quit its hold of the lower and more palpable departments of universal knowledge, and find sufficient occupation among the most abstract, and general relations of things. Contemplating the framework which contains knowledge more than the knowledge which the framework contains, the mind is apt

to lose a direct acquaintance with the actual and the individual, in the splendid theory of the possible.

The world of speculative reason differs from the actual world of living men, for man, as he is, differs from man as he ought to be. Philosophical theories are the nourishment of the purely rational principle ; but they tend, unless the influence is counteracted by strength of mind, and an attentive observation of the infinite variety of the existing modifications of the instincts, affections, and other irrational causes of action, to deaden, or at least to distort, the keen perception of the common mechanism of man's practical nature ; and they may in this way expose the retired student of abstract metaphysics, like the astronomer of Rasselas who fancied that he ruled the stars, to the influence of ludicrous, or even of dangerous illusions, in the conduct of life, and in intercourse with living men. The machinery of society is regulated in a great measure by habits and desires, that are only indirectly, if at all, influenced by the operations of the understanding. The moving world of human beings often does not coincide with the hypotheses of human reasoning, while there exists in it much that cannot fail to be overlooked by the man of mere contemplation. His dreams are thus broken, from time to time, by unexpected collisions with living society, and by contact with modes of character which his speculations had not prepared him to expect.

It may be added that, except in the highest order of minds, this excessive development of the scientific faculty—this truth-seeking, only for the sake of knowing truth

as such, and with little or no extraneous tendency to the knowledge of particular departments of truth—is apt to leave uncultivated an order of sentiments which, in the best men, are always mingled with philosophical speculation. The motives of religion and duty, which find their highest appropriate stimulus in the department of truth which regards God and our relations to Him, ought not to be separated from a love for abstract truth. But, on the other hand, it is possible to speculate without any impulse from the conscience, and to find materials of science, among the objects of religious faith, which pervade the whole region of the higher philosophy, without forming the habit of converting the scientific knowledge into practice. An habitual employment, merely as the ministers of pure speculation, of those objects which, of all others, are most fitted to alter the character for good, is appropriately punished in the agonies of religious scepticism.

Another general characteristic of these Notes and Dissertations, hardly less remarkable than the one which has supplied a text for the observations contained in the preceding paragraphs, is the enormous accumulation of the materials of exact learning and historical research which they contain. Sir William Hamilton has long possessed a European reputation for extraordinary erudition. The evidences of his varied and accurate reading which his edition of Reid contains are not confined to one province of literature, although they are of course especially conspicuous in all that is in any way within the margin of the history of philosophy, and particularly of the

speculations of the Peripatetics, the Schoolmen, and the modern Germans. No preceding British philosopher, with whose writings we are at all acquainted, makes any approach to the extent and minuteness of the kind of knowledge by which these pages are characterized. Indeed, with the exception of Bacon and Cudworth, in the seventeenth century, and Stewart and Sir James Mackintosh, in the nineteenth, our more distinguished metaphysicians and moralists have been conspicuously deficient in this important accomplishment. Locke, Butler, Hume, and Reid, made no pretension to a complete and exact acquaintance with the history of speculation.

Reading is valuable to the philosopher chiefly as one means for exciting his own power of thinking. Only a few minds, however, possess sufficient independent force to convert what they read into a source of intellectual nourishment ; and even great intellects have been averse from an extensive acquaintance with books, from an apprehension of their tendency to fetter the independent working of the mental faculties. "If I had read as much as other men, I had been as ignorant as they," is a well-known and memorable saying of Hobbes. But in these Dissertations the vigour of original speculation is preserved amid a boundless accumulation of materials collected out of what is contained in books. Leibnitz and Sir William Hamilton are to be noted among modern philosophers for the mental strength which can unite extraordinary reading with a ceaseless energy of thinking. But the mind of the German philosopher is per-

haps more ready, by a species of mental chemistry, to fuse among the productions of its own intelligence, as the elements of a new and distinctive creation, the materials that are thus presented to it; while in the writings of the Scottish philosopher, the treasures of learned research are oftener permitted to remain in mechanical juxtaposition with the results of his own intellectual activity, in which they are, as it were, visibly embedded like the fossil remains of a stratum of geology.

In both the qualities to which we have referred, as generally characteristic of this recent contribution to our philosophical literature, there is a remarkable deficiency in the current publications in Great Britain. Our literature indicates, for the most part, little exact acquaintance with the ancient or contemporary doctrines which it attempts to criticise; and original speculation is almost unknown. Vague doctrines, assumed to be the productions of recent German thinking, supply its nourishment to the greater part of the "philosophical" mind of this country. Glimpses of Germany engaged in speculation are, however, no substitute for original thought about matters such as those on which the Germans in these times, and Reid, Locke, and Bacon in Britain, in other times, have displayed the highest qualities of intellect. If these specimens, by Sir William Hamilton, of what a profound knowledge of the history of opinion really is, incite some men to an exact study of the books of foreign countries and of former generations, they are also fitted to rouse the still more dormant spirit that seeks direct and independent intellectual contact

with the *real problems themselves*, which have afforded nourishment to the high philosophy of the great thinkers of other ages. It is not the repetition of a faint echo from Germany or France that constitutes the substance of what is contained in the immortal works of the British philosophers whom we have named, who created for us a National Philosophy, with certain invaluable characteristics peculiarly its own. But a chasm intervenes between their age and ours. Notwithstanding symptoms of a revived attention to certain metaphysical questions, often vaguely enough apprehended, it remains true, that during this generation there is hardly any trace in this island of profound and exact thought respecting those abstract topics which are implied in the discussion of the first principles of knowledge. Our repose from effort in the direction of philosophy is now interrupted by this volume, which seasonably presents to us the written results of the life-labours of a sagacious and truly Scottish mind, in the company of fragments which offer a tolerable indication of the more important principles of the Scoto-German philosophy of the great living thinker, by whom the doctrines of Reid have been rendered more refined and definite, and his basis of philosophy made more comprehensive.

There is one other characteristic of these Notes and Dissertations to which we can only refer, although it deserves a copious discussion, and may, we hope, receive for itself a place among the principal objects of the regard of some earnest and thoughtful mind. We mean the peculiar nomenclature and terminology, and indeed the

general texture of the language in which Sir William Hamilton's speculations are presented. A defect of precision and permanence in that whole portion of language which relates to what is not to be classed among the objects of our senses, is an old and often-repeated complaint. Now, in respect of precision, and clearness, and adaptation to the peculiarities of the manner of thinking which it is meant to represent, and especially to the exhaustive conveyance of condensed results of thought, the style of these Notes and Dissertations appears to us unequalled by that of any English treatise in philosophy. It is an especial contrast to Locke, whose vagueness and variation in the use of scientific words has occasioned a large proportion of the thought and discussion that have been expended on his opinions. Here, on the other hand, the matter to be represented by the terms is rigidly appropriated to them ; and if the ratiocination in which they are included sometimes appears to imply a mere involution and evolution of the signification of a series of names, it is all the more remarkable, in such absence of argument about things, to observe the accuracy with which a precise meaning is preserved in association with each name.

These important ends are no doubt secured only by means of great sacrifices. The nicely manufactured terminology and sentences, so charged with meaning when used by the manufacturer, are treasures for the feebler minds who can study that philosophy only which consists in the ability to make a noise with uncommon and imposing words. It may be doubted, too, whether the

resources of our good old native English, with its agreeable suggestions of common or less abstract objects, have been rendered so available as they might have been, with a view to the more general diffusion of the doctrines, and the increase of their influence as means for modifying the public mind. But on this question we cannot now enter. When it is considered that the abuse of words has hitherto been among the most productive of all the causes that have indirectly contributed to the formation of philosophical literature in general, and of abstract controversy and discussion in particular, it must be evident that the theory and use of the proper signs for the statement and most effective circulation of philosophical ideas, is the theme for a volume and not for a paragraph—an appropriate task for the labour of a life, and not one which can be disposed of in an episode in an occasional Essay.

It may readily be concluded that the qualities to which we have referred are on the whole unfavourable to the popularity, and (in many cases) to the intelligibility of these Notes and Dissertations, among general readers. Such condensed results of the highest generalization, and jets of thought cast forth without the amplification and ornament of popular eloquence, and with little reference to any of their various possible applications, are ill-fitted to coalesce with the prevailing mental habits. Most men are unwilling to consent to grope their way, in the lowest depths of intellectual abstraction, where the light of evidence is hardly sufficient for steady progress, and where they must ever be on their guard against the illu-

sion of vague formulas, susceptible of almost any meaning, which occasion that dangerous collapse of the mind upon itself, that is often experienced after an intense effort of thinking with scanty materials about which to think. There seems to be an intellectual necessity that, in the present age of unscholastic and ill-disciplined philosophical taste, this remarkable addition to our literature shall slowly, if at all, find direct admission for its doctrines, possessing, as it does, a selection and arrangement of words unsurpassed among the books of the English language for precision and consistency—a formal clearness and distinctness of method—a singular incapacity to rest contented with a partial or isolated view of any great doctrine—a depth of thought and a refinement of distinction, the very apprehension of which implies the exercise of mental functions hardly ever in these times called into action, and a copiousness of pure argument unrelieved by those lighter graces and ornaments of fancy which are usually needed to seduce men to an exertion of the higher powers of mind. Even students of speculative science may confess the existence of a wish that, amid themes so ennobling and kindred with the most suitable objects of imaginative emotion, the metaphysician had given occasional vent, through the mass of subtle distinctions and profound principles, and the accumulation of passages extracted from his stores of unequalled reading, to the living copious eloquence of which such themes are susceptible, and in which the literature of philosophy supplies so many illustrious examples. The gorgeous imagery of Bacon has done much

to illuminate the ages that followed him with the light of his great doctrines, and his exquisite adaptations to philosophical purposes of the "winged words" of common language have helped to waft his philosophy down the stream of time.

We must now, however, refer more particularly to the materials proper to philosophy itself, that are contained in the book that has suggested the preceding remarks.

Though somewhat an excrescence upon the discussion of metaphysical topics, we cannot dismiss without some notice the ninety pages of the "Life and Letters of Reid," which occupy the opening part of the volume, and which, introducing us as they do to the genius and peculiarities of an individual man, and associating these with the exercise of abstract speculation, may prove to many readers not the least interesting section of its contents.

The letters addressed by Reid to several of his distinguished contemporaries, form the most important supplementary matter appended by Sir William Hamilton to the biography by Stewart. Nearly all of this correspondence may be included in three parcels—(1.) Thirteen letters, written by Reid during the first six years after his removal from Aberdeen to Glasgow, to Drs. A. and D. Skene, physicians in Aberdeen. These interesting documents were furnished by Mr. Thomson of Banchory, and have not before been published. They contain some amusing pictures of Glasgow College in the last century, and "afford what was perhaps wanting to Mr. Stewart's portraiture of Reid—they shew us the phi-

osopher in all the unaffected simplicity of his character, and as he appeared to his friends in the familiar intercourse of ordinary life." (2.) Nine letters addressed to Lord Kames, and already published in Lord Woodhouselee's *Memoirs of that philosopher*. These afford some suggestive thoughts on what we may style the metaphysics of physical science. This and the former body of letters, also illustrate Reid's intelligent interest in the sciences of external nature, such as chemistry and mechanics, on their own account. (3.) A selection from upwards of twenty of Reid's letters to his kinsman, the late Dr. James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh. Of these the most curious parts relate to the controversy on free-will, and to the theory of causation.

Stewart's "Account of the Life and Writings of Reid," is a work so well known to most of those in this country who are even moderately versed in the history of recent philosophy, that we need hardly occupy our readers upon anything like an abstract of its contents. A life of which the greater part was passed in the humble but agreeable seclusion of academical office successively in two Scottish provincial universities, cannot be expected to offer incident for the gratification of the lovers of brilliant external adventure, and must derive its interest from the peculiarities of the mental phenomena which it manifests, and the circumstances by which these were called forth, or amid which they struggled into action. Himself born in the commencement of the eighteenth century, Dr. Reid's ancestors by the father's side were for generations ministers

of the Church of Scotland, in the parishes of Upper Banchory in Aberdeenshire, and Strachan in Kincardineshire, and some of them were not unknown in the world of letters. By his mother he was connected with the most illustrious of the Scottish hereditary aristocracy of talent—the renowned family of Gregory. The name of Reid, and the associations connected with his family, may thus increase the interest of the thoughtful traveller in the beautiful vale of Dee. As the favourite residence of Reid himself, and of his friends Campbell, Gerard, and Beattie, the town and neighbourhood of Aberdeen may be regarded as classic ground in reference to the Philosophy of Scotland.

The early youth of the philosopher does not seem to have given remarkable promise of the eminence which he afterwards reached, but his love for an academic life was soon indicated, and probably increased by his more than usually (in Scotland) protracted residence at Marischal College, and by his subsequent visits to the more splendid academical establishments of England. For fifteen years he was pastor of the remote rural parish of New Machar, where, according to Mr. Stewart, “the greater part of his time was spent in the most intense study; more particularly in a careful examination of the laws of external perception, and of the other principles which form the groundwork of human knowledge.” Gardening and botany were the chief relaxations of the meditative country clergyman. In 1752, he was elected Professor of Philosophy in King’s College, Aberdeen, where he found the opportunity to mature his fundamental doctrine, and

to test it in a course of active public instruction, at the same time that he was one of the founders and leaders of a Literary Society, which then rendered Aberdeen a focus of Scottish intellect. From King's College Reid was, in 1764, removed to the chair of Morals in Glasgow, which he occupied actively for nearly twenty years, after which, until his death in 1796, he was engaged in preparing for the press and publishing his final and more elaborate treatises, in a serene old age, eminently characteristic of the long term of cheerful meditative industry, and the habits of integrity and self-control which had marked his life.*

The Scottish Philosophy of Dr. Reid, and the Scoto-German Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton, constitute together an important stage in the great revolution which metaphysical science has been undergoing since the age of Des Cartes, and as such, they occupy an important *historical place* in modern philosophy. A few sentences of explanation may illustrate this.

Des Cartes is an influential and prominent person in the succession of great thinkers, chiefly because he was

* It may be noted that (except the Tract on "Quantity," which was published in 1748) Reid's first work, "An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense," appeared in 1764,—in his fifty-fourth year. It was followed in 1774 by a "Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic," which originally appeared in the second volume of Lord Kames' "Sketches of the History of Man." Reid's "Essays on the Intellectual powers of Man" were published in 1785, and those on the "Moral Powers of Man" in 1788. These treatises, along with a "Statistical Account of the University of Glasgow," published in 1799, three years after his death, are the "Works of Reid," now for the first time collected in Sir W. Hamilton's edition.

a thorough-going doubter, who, by means of his doubts, got rid of an accumulation of propositions, assumed on authority to be true,—the intellectual division, generalization, and argumentation of the contents of which formed the *matériel* of the preceding or scholastic epoch of philosophy. The Cartesian “scepticism” raked up the foundations of things, and during the lifetime of the philosopher himself, as well as since, it has communicated a corresponding impulse to meditative minds by whom his works have been studied. Des Cartes doubted in order to believe and know. From the foundation down to which his doubts conducted him, he attempted to rear a comprehensive theory of knowledge. But the reconstructive has exerted small influence compared to the destructive part of his teaching, and it is mainly through the operation of the latter element that a revolution in the manner of thinking regarding the first principles of every sort of knowledge is the permanent result of his labours.

The period of the history of human thought that has intervened since Des Cartes, is filled by a series of more or less imperfect reconstructions of philosophy, *i.e.*, of the ultimate theory of knowledge,—out of the confusion consequent upon the sceptical method of the French philosopher. The attempt of Locke, in the “Essay concerning Human Understanding,” is the first of prominent historical importance. That great work is still properly an unfinished one. The metaphysical thinking of the last century and a half has been to a great degree employed in working out the problem suggested in it, which the

author himself had, however, carried a long way towards a satisfactory solution. The name of Locke, associated with the names of Clarke and Butler, distinguishes the close of the seventeenth and the commencement of the eighteenth century as the Augustan era of metaphysical science in the southern division of the island.

The imperfection or one-sidedness of Locke's philosophy, as regards the expression of its fundamental principles, was exhibited, in what is virtually the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, by David Hume, in his "Treatise of Human Nature," where, on the principles of Locke, all knowledge is reduced to a succession of phenomena, while absolute existence and human philosophy are proved to imply a tissue of contradictions.

The philosophical doubts of Hume occasioned another independent effort to find the theory of knowledge. A conservative reaction, against the universal scepticism which he had extracted from the doctrine of Locke, was manifested almost contemporaneously in Scotland by Thomas Reid, and in Germany by Immanuel Kant—in Scotland with a tendency to what is practical and palpable, and in Germany to idealism and pantheism.

The epoch of Reid and Kant is distinguished by making the *original structure of human intelligence* a principal object of scientific attention. Each philosopher sought to find in that quarter a refuge from scepticism, and the only possible ultimate explanation of knowledge. Reid, on the inductive method of Bacon, systematically collected, under the name of "principles of common sense," those inexplicable beliefs, or original living facul-

ties, which must be assumed in all knowledge. His doctrine is formed by means of a reflex attention to that common sense which is spontaneously exercised by the many. Kant, assuming the famous test of *necessity* as the basis of his critical investigation, demonstrated the originality of many of those notions which Hume had rendered up as the illusions of a universe of mere phenomena. He thus exhibited a theory of subjective knowledge, seemingly self-consistent and permanent; while Reid exhibited those beliefs which are the security, if not the explanation, of all knowledge, subjective and objective. Both supplemented Locke. The "Essay concerning Human Understanding" had furnished an important analysis of what is contributed to our knowledge by experience, marked by the freshness of an independent thinker, who subjects old assumptions to a renewed act of careful observation. But in his desire to find, by means of induction, the limits within which the human mind may be advantageously occupied, Locke had omitted to examine critically the original structure of intellect that is implied in the ability to gain such experimental knowledge as he had noted and analyzed in his survey of the mind and its stores. The schools of Reid and Kant have given the prominence, which Locke neglected to assign, to this object of investigation in the prosecution of the theory of knowledge. The common sense of Reid is the object of Scottish inductive investigation; the categories of Kant of German formal criticism.

The philosophy of Sir William Hamilton is to a large

extent a fusion of the spirit and doctrines of Reid and Kant, wrought by an independent and highly speculative mind, and adapted to the stage in the progress of the theory of knowledge which follows the last seventy years of German thinking. The philosophy of Reid was pointed against a scepticism that, as we shall afterwards show, was the result of a doctrine of representational perception. The philosophy of Sir William Hamilton is fitted besides this to meet the virtual scepticism of the German *absolutists*, by a demonstration of the necessary limitation of all possible human knowledge to what is relative and conditional. The old Scottish philosophy maintained, against those who deny that science is possible, the existence of a body of vital beliefs, which are sufficient to infuse reality into our knowledge. The new Scottish philosophy uses the original beliefs and notions of the mind, at once against the sceptics, and against the philosophers who arrogate to man a knowledge of the infinite and the absolute. In the eighteenth century the citadel of human knowledge, and the ultimate foundations of human action, were assailed by Hume, on the principles taught by Locke and adorned by Berkeley. In the nineteenth century the assault is conducted by Schelling, Hegel, and the Continental transcendentalists, on principles suggested by Kant and Fichte. The Notes and Dissertations of Sir W. Hamilton are a refinement of our older national philosophy, and an expansion of its basis, fitted to adapt its doctrines to the rational defence of the knowledge that is gained by man, in his progress of inductive research along that *via media* between Pyr-

rhonism and Transcendentalism—extremes that virtually meet—which alone is open to him during his sojourn on this “isthmus of a middle state.”

But we must be more definite in our account of this stage in the Cartesian revolution. For this purpose three central ideas of the new Scottish Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton, selected from a host of others, presented in these Notes and Dissertations, which, with their text, embrace problems in the whole circle of the sciences of metaphysics, logic, and morals, may be employed as the basis of the remaining part of this Essay.

I. The theory of *Common Sense*, regarded as at once supporting and limiting human knowledge, which is developed in the first and most extended of the dissertations, and suggested in various of the footnotes throughout the work.

II. The theory of *immediate or conscious external Perception*, expounded in the four dissertations on “presentative and representative knowledge ;” on “the various theories of external perception ;” on “the distinction of the primary and secondary qualities of matter ;” and on “perception proper and sensation proper.” It is also referred to in the footnotes, especially those on the “Inquiry,” and the *second* of the “Essays” on the intellectual powers.

III. The germs or scintillations of a theory of *Free-will*, or responsible agency, which are contained in the footnotes on Reid’s essay on “the Liberty of moral agents.”*

* Materials sufficient to suggest thoughts for a separate Essay may be

The characteristic distinction and professed aim of the old Scottish philosophy is, as we have seen, the refutation of Hume's scepticism, and the recovery of the First Principles of knowledge out of the ruin which it had occasioned. Dr. Reid himself, in an often quoted passage of one of his letters to Dr. Gregory, asserts indeed that his peculiar merit lies "in having called in question the common theory of ideas or images in the mind being the only objects of thought." But the two statements are not opposed, and it may be interesting to some of our readers to have the opportunity of reflecting upon their coincidence. The course of thought along which we propose to conduct them with a view to afford this opportunity, as it implies an intelligent apprehension of the Scottish refutation of philosophical scepticism, may also suggest in its progress some important questions regarding the value of a philosophical vindication

found in the notes on Reid's "*Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic*," which are remarkable for the severe precision and accuracy of the notices they contain, of the nature and province of that science which may be designated *Formal Logic*,—or the theory of the laws of thought regarded in abstraction from the things about which thought may be exercised. Here Sir W. Hamilton differs, in his estimate of the Aristotelian doctrine, from the older Scottish school—especially Campbell, Stewart, and Brown—and indeed from the general current of opinion in Scotland on this subject from the Reformation downwards. The Peripatetic doctrines were dislodged in a great measure from their place of authority in our Universities by Andrew Melville, and the Ramist Logic was in his time introduced into Glasgow, St. Andrews, and Edinburgh. Although the popularity of Ramus soon declined, Aristotle has never since recovered his former influence in this country. See M'Crie's "*Life of Melville*," vol. ii. ch. 12. In Germany, the fortune of Aristotle has been different, and the logical treatises of the Kantian school should be consulted in connexion with the notes on Reid, to assist the apprehension of the limits and development of the science there referred to.

and explanation of human knowledge in general, and the influence of such treatment of it upon the establishment and extension of particular departments of science, and especially of that science which regards man in his most sacred relation.

The philosophical tendency may be popularly described as the question-putting tendency. Of every ascertained or alleged fact philosophy seeks the explanation. Science is a species of knowledge. The scientific kind of knowledge includes the possession of a precise and comprehensive acquaintance with its particular objects, and their relations. Thus we are said to know the solar system scientifically, because we can allege the law of gravitation in explanation of the various mechanical phenomena which are thereby connected. Other portions of our physical knowledge approach more or less nearly to the dignity of scientific, in proportion as their parts are joined in the tie of defined relations which, as the first principles of the science, at once unite and explain them.

But such explanations as those that are supplied even by the most advanced of our physical sciences are evidently incomplete, and the knowledge which they convey can hardly be styled philosophical. The last answers they afford to us only suggest more questions. Gravitation itself, for instance, or polarity, or electricity, need still to be accounted for, in order to satisfy philosophy, and explanations of them, if obtained, are only steps on the road of an infinite regress of analogous questions. But as an infinite number of receding ex-

planations is in itself an absurdity, and at variance with the limitation of the human understanding, there must be some point into which the answers shall finally converge. That ultimate point must be admitted to be *the original structure of the mind of man*.

What we have illustrated of physical induction holds good also of the results of deduction. Every explanation must rest on the inexplicable, and every demonstration must rest on the indemonstrable, while the last alleged inexplicable and indemonstrable belief is an instinct of human nature.

If all the sciences must thus converge in first principles, of which the only possible explanation is a statement of our own original mental structure, that structure itself may, it is evident, be made an object of the question-putting tendency. Though we cannot transcend our original notions and beliefs, we may at least collect or criticise them. Those ultimate faiths, which cannot themselves be theorized, may be made the objects of metaphysical contemplation, as the mysterious foundation of human knowledge, and thus, as Mr. Hume profoundly remarks, "the most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer, as perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it."

Questions regarding the nature and number of the *ultimate answers* that can be given to the principle in man which suggests questions, are not likely to be put in the infancy of the human understanding, although

answers to them are craved by the developed faculties of knowledge. The account of the manner in which these inquiries were fairly raised in modern times, is a remarkable chapter in the history of the mind of man and of philosophy, which we now proceed to sketch.

The modern metaphysical controversy with scepticism has turned upon the prevalent doctrine with regard to what is the *immediate* object of knowledge—a very curious part of the general theory of the intellect. An acquaintance even with the works of Dr. Reid is sufficient to render the reader familiar with the fact of the very general reception, previous to the time of that philosopher, of the doctrine of representative images or ideas, to account for all knowledge, except that which we have of our own mental operations, of which last it was usually granted that we are directly conscious. Mind, it was supposed, can be conscious only of itself, and the hypothesis of a representative knowledge was invented to explain the phenomenon—which theorists regard as the grand difficulty of intellectual psychology—of a conscious intelligence, a large part of whose knowledge is not exclusively *self-contained*.*

The hypothesis of mental representations, distinct at once from the percipient mind and from the object per-

* We refer the reader to Reid's essay on *External Perception*, and to Sir W. Hamilton's dissertation on the *Various Theories of Perception*, for copious illustrations of the prodigious activity of thought and invention in different ages, in creating varieties of the representative hypothesis; and we would especially ask attention to the distinction, explained in the dissertation, between the cruder or more palpable, and the more refined theory of representation—between *egoistical* and *non-egoistical* idealism.

ceived, seems to have been, in some form or other, a very common one previous to the publication of Reid's philosophical treatises; although Des Cartes, Arnauld, and most of the Cartesians, Leibnitz, and probably Locke, understood by mental ideas, only modes of the mind itself in their representative capacity. The *ideas* assailed by Reid were, however, *entities distinct from the act of perception*, and they were employed to account for our knowledge of the material world, and for the phenomena of memory, imagination, and reasoning. These intellectual phenomena were supposed to have become more intelligible when—on the basis of self-knowledge, and without any critical account of what other notions and beliefs are implied in the ability to observe, experiment, remember, and compare—the existence of such representative images was assumed by the philosopher, in working his theory of knowledge from within the region of the mind outwards, to independent and permanent realities.

The inadequacy of this supposed intellectual machinery to afford an ultimate explanation of knowledge is manifest, especially in two respects. 1. In its opposition to the belief that has been inserted in the structure of our mental constitution, that we have a *direct* knowledge of the qualities of matter—this hypothesis regarding the understanding as in immediate connexion only with what is representative of these qualities. 2. It is implied that the philosophers who maintain this doctrine, thereby overlook the need, or at least superficially perform the process of a comprehensive inductive exa-

mination of the first principles of knowledge and belief, apart from which no real progress can be made towards the philosophy of knowledge.

The issue of philosophical scepticism is the analysis of knowledge into a succession of isolated phenomena, or into a series of notions of which no one can be predicated of another. The method employed by the pyrrhonist is to show that a radical contradiction is implied in every attempt to collect phenomena into science, or even into fragments of science, thus paralyzing the grasp of those beliefs and notions which create and cement our knowledge. But although David Hume worked this sceptical method with success against a metaphysical hypothesis which resolves all knowledge into experience alone, and accounts for its entrance, and its various kinds, by means of *representations*, the practical part of our nature always declares, by continuing in a state of activity, that human knowledge *is* in itself susceptible of a consistent defence, and at all events of a relative explanation, for a sane man hardly ever *acts* the sceptic, at least in the affairs of this life. It is for the philosopher to reconcile the speculative and the practical part of human nature, either by giving evidence that all our beliefs and notions are explicable, or else by exhibiting those of them that are mysterious in contrast to those of them which can be explained.

To do something towards the accomplishment of this task was the aim of Dr. Reid. With a view to this, the prevalent doctrine of representative perception must be overthrown, because it is inconsistent with experience,

and with the fundamental notions and beliefs which belong to the original structure of the human mind, as an agent consciously capable of knowing, and coming into direct and practical contact with, objects that are independent of itself. An inductive enumeration must, besides, be made of those first principles which the older philosophy had overlooked and in consequence traversed. And Reid has set himself to effect each of these tasks. He has exploded the favourite hypothesis of representative images or entities, by showing that it is destitute of the evidence of internal experience, irrational, contradictory to the immediate dictates of our faculties, and, therefore, by vitiating the testimony of our original mental structure in one department of its utterances, and thus precluding any decisive appeal to its testimony as the ultimate criterion of truth in any other, fairly resolvable into universal scepticism. He has also, both in the "Inquiry" and the "Essays," in the course of an analytic examination of the phenomena of the external senses, memory, imagination, and reasoning, collected many other specimens of judgments of which we cannot rid ourselves, while, at the same time, we cannot explain their presence in the mind by means of any derived origin. To a faith in these utterances of our nature he had cleared a road by removing the hypothesis of representative perception, and thus enabling philosophy to return, *in that particular*, to an acknowledgment of the credit of the common sense. In a word, Reid removed the excrescence of representations, which, in spite of common sense, the philosopher had introduced into the

theory of perception, and demanded the homage of the speculative world to the other judgments of the violated principle, which he had noted and treasured up in the course of an experimental investigation of his own mind.

But the powerful tendency of the habit of self-observation to lose the way that conducts out of self-consciousness, has, notwithstanding Reid's protest, retained its sway, and led its victims through paths of illusive idealism more retired and seductive than any of those against which he had warned them. The hypothesis of images numerically distinct from the percipient mind, which constitute the entire material world of Berkeley, has indeed been almost banished from philosophical literature by Reid, but only to leave all the room for a more refined hypothesis of representation, which is still very generally received by Continental and British metaphysicians. The exposition and criticism of this subtle species of the doctrine of representative knowledge is one of the principal novelties of the philosophical works of Sir William Hamilton, and his disquisition deserves study, were it only as the most elaborate specimen of purely speculative ingenuity that modern British philosophy has yet produced. We can afford only a few sentences to this subject, and must refer the reader to these Dissertations.

A quality or phenomenon of mind, *e.g.*, a sensation, judgment, or desire, is evidently an object of knowledge to the mind itself not less than a quality or phenomenon of matter is. On the doctrine of the representationalist philosophers to whom we have referred, the observing

mind is in fact in closer connexion with its own observed qualities than with the observed qualities of matter, and, in the opinion of many of them, we know the latter through the medium of the sensations which they occasion in the former. According to Dr. Thomas Brown, for instance, we know immediately, *i.e.*, are conscious of, all our mental states, whereas any external object is known only by means of certain modes of mind (external states or sensations) which its presence has somehow occasioned. In this view of perception, the intercourse of the mind with the external world is *through the intermediate sensations* which alone are perceived by it; but in self-consciousness it is in direct intercourse with its objects. As in the less refined hypothesis of representation, the sphere of immediate knowledge is still confined within the mind itself, only instead of a succession of representative entities, distinct at once from the percipient mind and from the material object, the understanding is presented with a succession of its own states. Each of these evanescent modes of mind, is, according to the relation in which it happens to be regarded, either an object or an act of perception. Now, it is argued by Sir William Hamilton that the germ of universal scepticism is latent in this more subtle, as Reid had proved it to be latent in a less refined, hypothesis respecting our knowledge of matter. On neither hypothesis do we get directly beyond the objects of self-consciousness, and, therefore, as each is said to violate that utterance of the original judgments of our nature which declares that we do, on neither can we get beyond the succession of our

own thoughts and feelings, while in both even this self-knowledge itself becomes illusory, and must fall with the original faith that has been, in both hypotheses, assumed to be deceitful.

Sir William Hamilton deals by the mental modes of this refined or egoistical idealism as Dr. Reid had dealt by the representative entities, which are not mental modes, of non-egoistical idealism. Discarding the interposition of any state of the mind as the immediate object of perceptive knowledge, or of any reflex act of mind upon its own sensations as a requisite for our first apprehension of the outer world, he maintains that certain of the qualities of matter are the direct objects of a mysterious *insight*, and thus that the mind is conscious of material as well as of mental qualities. On this theory we become immediately acquainted, at least in certain limited relations, with the material world that is outside and independent of us, and on the foundation of this direct apprehension of a very limited portion of its contents—to wit, its Primary Qualities—we gradually reach, in the light of our former information, by means of abstraction and reasoning aided by habit and association, that growing knowledge of its properties, which in the earlier stages of its progress collects some of the secondary qualities of matter, obtains the notions of distance and form by means of sight alone, educates the general senses to an indefinite acuteness, and rises at last to those varied and recondite properties, characteristic of the different objects, by a precise acquaintance with the nature and laws of which, the physical sciences are con-

stituted. An inductive history of this whole process is a principal part, as it is still a desideratum, in psychology. Much that is valuable for the explanation of its earlier stages has been contributed in the Dissertation on the "*Primary and Secondary Qualities of Body*," a dissertation which appears to us to form an important step of progress in this department of mental science.

The opposite to this theory of a consciousness of certain qualities of matter, which is itself styled Natural Realism, is the doctrine of Absolute Idealism, which denies to the material world any external independent existence. Intermediate between the two are the various hypotheses of representative perception or Hypothetical Realism.

It is evident that this alleged *immediateness* of our knowledge of the qualities of matter is to be contrasted, not merely with that sort of mediate knowledge which is implied in the possession of the results of inductive or deductive reasoning, but also with that other kind of mediate knowledge which, according to some philosophers, (and among others Sir William Hamilton, who has rediscovered and revived the old scholastic distinction of presentative and representative knowledge,) is implied in every act of memory and imagination. It is a more subtle analysis than the familiar one, which divides the propositions that compose what we believe, into those that are the result of reasoning, and those that are known by us intuitively, and it suggests some curious questions regarding the nature and economy of certain of our intellectual functions.

One characteristic of the view of this economy that is taken in the Dissertations, is the development of a distinction—open to reflex observation and investigation—between that knowledge of the phenomena of matter, now and here present, to which the name Consciousness is exclusively appropriated, and which is asserted not to involve any act of mediate self-consciousness, and that other knowledge—of the past and possible—which is, on the contrary, maintained to imply an act of the mind conscious of its own state *as representative* of something separate from the state itself. Thus, when I imagine a scene described in the Iliad, or when I remember the events of yesterday, the immediate objects of my knowledge are certain phenomena of my own mind. Let the siege of Troy, or the events of yesterday be enacted before my senses, and the immediate objects of my knowledge are radically qualities of matter. When we know the possible and the past, the very operation of knowing is the only object of which the mind is conscious. But when we know the present states of our own minds, or the present primary qualities of matter, these states and qualities are known in themselves, and not through the medium of a representative mental state. Memory and imagination is thus each of them a species of self-consciousness, in which the intellect has for its immediate objects those phenomena of self, which form, in the one the acts of remembering past objects of perception or self-consciousness, and in the other of apprehending the creations of the poetical faculty.

This theory of the knowledge of what self once was

conscious of, in the modes or qualities of self, contrasted with the more direct sort of knowledge of consciousness, suggests a variety of questions, and, among others, an inquiry into the laws according to which those objects of the mind that are at first observed, in a direct experience of the inner and outer world, become, as objects of memory and imagination, converted into mental modes, and pass into the current of our associated thoughts. This field of investigation may, perhaps, be illustrated by the well-known doctrine of Leibnitz, regarding latent states of consciousness, to which Sir William Hamilton often refers in the course of his philosophical writings.

The theory of perception maintained by Sir William Hamilton is not likely, we think, to exhaust discussion in a province which experience has proved to be so fitted to kindle metaphysical genius, and to give scope to speculative ingenuity. The new and revived doctrines of which his philosophy is composed, have uncovered too many unsolved difficulties to permit such a result; and we are inclined to expect an increase rather than an abatement of the intellectual gladiatorship which has hitherto been associated with the theory of our knowledge of matter, as the result of a more diffused acquaintance with the assumptions and arguments of these Dissertations.

It should be remembered, however, that it is as the arena of the struggle with philosophical scepticism, that this region of speculation has attracted combatants,

earnest in the defence and development of the theory of human knowledge, as well as in the endeavour to reconcile intelligence with practice, and to maintain for man the possibility of sciences, relative and limited, yet solid and suited to his circumstances. It is when regarded in relation to a specimen in one department, of the manner in which the war against this scepticism is to be maintained in all, that the question respecting a presentative or representative knowledge of the external world is likely to be studied with most seriousness, and that it connects itself most nearly with our natural feelings and desires.

The science of metaphysics—in its polemical aspect, the controversy with the Pyrrhonists—is a region into which those are forced who seek the ultimate answers that can be given to the inquiry, as to how much man is capable of knowing in any of the sciences. “Reasoning,” says Pascal, “confounds the dogmatist, and nature the sceptic.” It is the aim of the metaphysician to compose this difference—a task which the philosophy of Common Sense accomplishes in the only manner in which it can be effected by man. That philosophy seeks for, and renders prominent the inexplicable feelings, judgments, and notions in which reasoning and nature meet; and in doing this, it ascends to the highest elevation that the human mind can reach, so long, at least, as man is constituted as he is. It is here that man gains the most comprehensive survey of the sciences, and were it not that the elevation is likely to dim his vision of the separate objects of which the panorama is composed, it is

from thence that each science receives for him its most pervading illumination. There all his knowledge tends towards the organized unity—the *σοφία* of the old Greek—to which our understandings can only make an approach; and, as regards which, man assumes his highest function when it is the object of his love and aspiration, according to the original eloquent meaning of the *word* philosophy.

It is as much for the sake of this illumination, as for the purposes of defence, that we need to foster those habits which send us in quest of the First Principles of metaphysics. Nature is usually sufficiently strong to defend, for all the uses of life, those portions of knowledge which the powerful original motives of human activity require to be converted into practice, and she can always silence, by means of action, the objections of the few sceptical adventurers who seek to find their way behind the scenes, and ingeniously contrive literally to lose *themselves* in the attempt. “All sceptical reasoning,” says Sir James Mackintosh, “is merely blowing up the ship, where you and your enemy go into the air together.” But the speculative consistency and completeness of those sections of knowledge, which form the various sciences, is materially diminished, and the sciences themselves must inevitably undergo a process of gradual deterioration, if human thought is not sometimes turned towards those remote outworks, whence so commanding a view may be gained of what is knowable, in contrast with what cannot be known. If the comprehensiveness of the knowledge that is possessed by the students of the

subordinate sciences is increased, as wider laws are, in their several provinces, gradually revealed to observation and experiment,—if the discovery of gravitation, for instance, is perceived to be valuable because it has illustrated the whole region of mechanics—this analogy may help to explain the effect, upon what we may call the *style* in which we hold every kind of knowledge, of a habit of intimacy with those highest laws, which, as ultimate propositions, mark the frontier that may not be passed by the human intellect. The progress of physical discovery upon this planet has become more enlightened since men have learned its figure, and the limits within which their exploration has been confined by the Creator. The fears of the followers of Columbus are now unknown, nor is El Dorado any longer searched for. In like manner, the more nearly the metaphysician is able to find the precise sphere within which our researches must be confined, the more successfully may we expect knowledge to be converted into science, and the more submissive should be our reverence, when we turn to those mysteries which are created for us by the limitations of human thought, which are disclosed to metaphysical investigation. The elements of philosophical faith—or, in the language of Reid, the principles of common sense—which are acted on by all, but to which the metaphysician alone directs an intelligent attention, as the special objects of his own science, are the materials of the foundation on which must rest that Classification of the Sciences, towards which so much thought has been directed since the publication of the “Advance-

ment of Learning." This survey and arrangement of these definite, solid, and self-consistent sections of knowledge, appears to be the appropriate business of the philosophers of the ensuing age. It implies a clear account of what that is which entitles any portion of knowledge to the designation of scientific, what the methods are by which vague, and narrow or imperfect knowledge may become science, what the principles may be which mark off one science into a province distinct from another, and what the bond of connexion among all the sciences is, with the scale of their relative value and importance, and the place of each as a part of that organic whole into which the philosophic mind seeks to mould all its knowledge. The strength and precision of mind needed for a task like this, must be, in a great measure, regulated by the success of metaphysicians in detecting First Principles.

Sir William Hamilton has greatly illustrated metaphysical science by the clearness and distinctness which he has infused into the theory of common sense expounded by Reid, and maintained by him in common with the great majority of ancient and modern philosophers, it being, "notwithstanding many schismatic aberrations, the one catholic and perennial philosophy," while the very name common sense "is the term under which that doctrine has been most familiarly known, at least in the Western world."*

* See, in the Dissertation on "Common Sense," 106 testimonies to this effect—a singular document, illustrative of the "succession" of metaphysicians, and of the analogy of metaphysical speculation, during three

There are two statements connected with this doctrine which should be carefully noted and reflected on by the metaphysical student. Of these the one is a question of terminology, and relates to the precise object, or collection of objects, that is signified by the technical term "common sense," when it is used as the term expressive of the proper province of his science. The other is a question of scientific method, and enforces the necessity of the labour of analysis and criticism for the discovery and arrangement of the genuine principles of common sense, purified from the prejudices and conventionalisms with which they are apt to be confounded, and by which they are almost always marred.

Common sense, as a term of science in metaphysics, expresses those notions and beliefs which are essential to man regarded as an intellectual and moral being. The existence of such original convictions is assumed when man is declared to be capable of collecting knowledge from experience; but they are not themselves built up of the materials of experience. Reflective induction may observe and systematize them, but it is not as the results of induction that they have gained an entrance into the mind. The phrase Common Sense, when used in the higher philosophy, is to be entirely dissociated from its more vague and popular meanings, in which it expresses natural prudence, or acquired skill in the management of common affairs and in the intercourse of society. These unscientific significations, while they are expres-

thousand years, from Hesiod and Heraclitus down to Schelling, Hegel, and Cousin.

sive of mental qualities which, on their own account, very much deserve the attention of psychologists, are likely to be productive of confusion when the term is used metaphysically, inasmuch as many popular principles of common sense are far indeed from having any proper claim to the dignity of ultimate notions and beliefs. Instead of the collected original judgments of the human mind, appeals to common sense are often directed to the prejudices of individuals, which must be analyzed not into the inspirations of the Author of our mental structure, but into the perverseness of him on whom that structure has been bestowed.*

The detection of the genuine principles of common sense is therefore the result of an intellectual effort which requires qualities peculiar to the philosopher, and the argument from common sense is no irrational appeal to vulgar feeling. The reflex criticism which distinguishes the primary from the other qualities of matter, and which appropriates the former exclusively to the external world, is an illustration, from the phenomena of perception, of the difference between an intelligent and an unscientific appeal to the ultimate criterion of truth. Analogous illustrations might be quoted, from other provinces of knowledge, of the manner in which prejudice is sifted, by the application of this test, and these also may be made to prove that the purport of the Scottish philosophy is by no means to encourage the mob to carry away the ark of metaphysics.

* It is against these *spurious* principles of common sense that Locke's polemic against innate ideas may be beneficially applied.

In short, we may admit with D'Alembert, quoted in the Dissertations, "That the truth in metaphysics, like the truth in matters of taste, is a truth of which all minds have the germ within themselves; to which, indeed, the greater number pay no attention, but which they recognise the moment it is pointed out to them. . . But if, in this sort, all are able to understand, all are not able to instruct. The merit of conveying easily to others true and simple notions is much greater than is commonly supposed; for experience proves how rarey this is to be met with. Sound metaphysical ideas are the common truths which every one apprehends, but which few have the talent to develop." "The first problem of philosophy," adds the Scottish philosopher, "and it is one of no easy accomplishment, being thus to seek out, purify, and establish, by intellectual analysis and criticism, the elementary feelings and beliefs, in which are given the elementary truths of which all are in possession; and the argument from common sense being the allegation of those feelings and beliefs, as explicated and ascertained, in proof of the relative truths and their necessary consequences, this argument is manifestly dependent on philosophy as an art, as an acquired dexterity, and cannot, notwithstanding the errors which they have frequently committed, be taken out of the hands of philosophers. Common sense is like common law. Each may be laid down as the general rule of decision; but in one case it must be left to the jurist, in the other to the philosopher, to ascertain what are the contents of the rule; and though in both cases the com-

mon man may be cited as a witness for the custom of the fact, in neither can he be allowed to officiate as advocate or as judge. . . We may, in short, say of the philosopher what Erasmus, in an Epistle to Hütten, said of Sir Thomas More: ‘*Nemo minus ducitur vulgi judicio ; sed rursus nemo minus abest a sensu communi.*’”

We have referred to the efforts of the Scottish school to extract, by means of analytic criticism, those principles of common sense which relate to our knowledge of the qualities of matter, seeing that, as already stated, it is chiefly in this province that the contest with philosophical scepticism has been maintained in Britain, and especially because the theory of external perception is the central point of Sir William Hamilton's re-statement and vindication of the conservative philosophy of common sense. But if our metaphysical science in this country has hitherto been chiefly suggested in that region of research, we must not forget that the struggle with scepticism has, in the most profoundly thoughtful nation of Europe, been transferred for us from the arena of our beliefs about matter to the arena of our beliefs about religion. These last have in Germany been put through an ordeal as severe as that which this volume contains evidence that the former have passed through at home, and scepticism is much less able practically to distort the mind of man with regard to what concerns the present life than with regard to what concerns the life to come. A critical application of some of our higher minds to those principles of common sense that relate to

our faith in God, and our notions of the relation between God and man, which should bring back to its origin this part of our knowledge, would correspond, in the region of theology, to the task attempted by Reid and Sir William Hamilton in the metaphysics of perception.

The Scottish sceptical philosophy of Hume is, indeed, throughout irreligious. But his antagonists in this country have as yet attempted little for the satisfaction of the scientific principle by a statement of the metaphysics of religion.* In Germany his doctrines have formed part of the seed that has there produced, during the last two generations, the rank crop of religious scepticism, which is now imported into the popular literature of Britain and America, in the new species of infidelity which makes a virtual excision of those principles of common sense that lie at the root of our religious knowledge. An intelligent attention is due, on the part of those who are the authorized teachers of religion, to the progress of a form of scepticism which, while it sublimates the Divine personality into the illusion of the Absolute, excludes the *possibility* of all positive theological knowledge, by discrediting the original or derived faculties for obtaining ideas of the supernatural, nullifying the argument from final causes, and refusing to receive alleged miraculous events as by possibility creden-

* We, of course, except the invaluable contributions to the philosophy of religion contained in Dr. Chalmers' Treatises on "Natural Theology" and on the "Evidences of Christianity,"—so full of comprehensive conceptions, and abounding in vigorous metaphysical discussions.

tials of what is divine, and which thus descends with the elementary controversy about religion, from the actual objective evidence to be sought for on its behalf, to—what is clearly a lower stratum—a criticism of our subjective faculties for the apprehension of natural, and especially of supernatural and positive revelation, and of the possibility of finite phenomena of any kind yielding evidence regarding what is infinite. An adjustment of these questions, capable of explaining the manner in which the human understanding is enabled to rise, on the ladder of available evidence, from the relative and finite phenomena of the mental and material worlds, to the region of religion or the supernatural, and which should also be in analogy with the Scottish philosophical account of our notions and original judgments respecting the qualities of mind and matter, would supplement what is still a defect in our national metaphysics.

A mental experience of the divinity of the gospel system, which is gained by acting it out in the details of a holy life, is certainly a *practical* escape from those questions of science. Without this, even the speculative task of the theologian cannot be accomplished, and it is chiefly in order to foster and render intelligent that habit of life that the task is worth his toil. But his work is not then done. Those to whom the written word is the centre of all truth, regarding the “things unseen and eternal,” and the moral mystery of human life, cannot count valueless, thoughtful answers to such questions as refer to the manner in which the positive evidence of religion

is reached by man, so that his thought, even while confined, by the necessity of its original structure, to the level of the relative and the conditioned, may be exercised on the objects of a religious faith, that precisely meets the wants of the human intelligence as well as of the human conscience.

The comment on Reid's essay on "The Liberty of Moral Agents," is the part of the notes and dissertations that is most nearly related to the theory of religion and morality. Some account of it, and estimate of its value, as a contribution to the ceaseless controversy of metaphysicians and theologians on the mysterious topic of responsible agency, may interest those of our readers who are inclined to pay attention to the *questiones vexatæ* of the nature, possibility, and explanation of free-will. We must, however, restrict our reference to this subject within very narrow limits, having already more than exhausted our space.

Sir William Hamilton, in common with his predecessors of the old Scottish school—Reid and Stewart—is a firm defender of the possibility of free-will. He maintains that the reality of a power or liberty, *to will what we will*, is testified to us indirectly, if not directly, by the experience of our own consciousness, and that the possession of it is essential to all activity of which the modes are properly objects of praise or blame. Such freedom is the root of man's personality, and constitutes his power of self-control over the desires and affections that have been inserted in his mind and committed to his government.

Amid much obscurity and diversity in their account of the *nature* of free-will, a doctrine of liberty has, with few exceptions, till recent times, been maintained by the most religious and earnest of our British philosophers. Cudworth and Clarke attacked the opposite hypothesis of necessity as a citadel of the Atheists and Materialists of that age, and as interwoven with the speculations of Hobbes and also of Spinoza. In the eighteenth century, the assault on free-will was conducted by the Unitarians Priestley and Belsham, and the system of necessity has since been used by the Socialists and Communists of our own times, as a popular engine for the defence of their doctrines. It is also important to note that the modern doctrine of universal necessity is apparently at variance with what is said concerning free-will, and particularly with the prominence which is given to the fall, in the doctrinal symbols of the Reformation. These creeds assume the *possibility* of a free-will, when they assert that human freedom was lost, "as to any spiritual good accompanying salvation," in the fall of Adam.* The loss of freedom clearly implies the possibility of it, for

* See, as illustrations, the *tenth* of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the *ninth* chapter of the Westminster Confession, or symbol of the doctrine of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. In the latter document, we read expressly that "man in his state of innocency had freedom and power *to will* and to do," &c. The condition of the fallen human will is a distinct province of discussion. Some of the *problems* that may be raised in this latter department may be found, *inter alia*, in a rather curious little book, Everard's "Creation and Fall of Adam Reviewed, or a Brief Treatise wherein is discovered Adam's indowments in his Creation, and what he became by Degeneration." London, 1649.

what is lost must once have existed. But on the system of universal necessity, free-will must be denied to man, whether fallen or unfallen, and even to God himself; and the fall cannot consist in the loss of what is in itself radically inconsistent with the tie which connects all the phenomena of the universe.

Yet the doctrine of free-will has, during the last and the present century, been exposed to the attacks of men of an aim and spirit very different from those of the infidel necessarians to whom we have referred. A system of universal necessity, substantially the same with that of Hobbes and Collins, was employed for the defence of some of the more peculiar doctrines of the Calvinistic interpretation of Christianity, by one of the most vigorous of the thinkers who in modern times have consecrated intellect to the service of revealed religion. President Edwards of New England, in his well-known "Inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of the Will, &c.," adopted the necessarian hypothesis, as a foundation on which certain portions of the interpretation of Scripture, contained in the Reformed Confessions, might be unanswerably vindicated from the attacks of the philosophers.

The substance of the argument thus adopted by Edwards is likely to be familiar to most of those who are interested in this discussion. The essential part of his reasoning may be condensed within a few sentences, although, owing to the expansion needed for the application of it to meet the various forms of objection, philosophical and theological, by which it had been or might

be assailed, it has been diffused through a treatise of considerable size. The fundamental assumption of the whole book is the unlimited application of the law of causation, and the consequent existence of an infinite succession of derived causes or antecedents. The phenomenon to be thereby explained is the origin of our rational and responsible volitions. On the hypothesis assailed by Edwards, these acts of will are accounted for in each case by means of the assumption of a previous determination of the will itself, which was asserted to be possessed of the power of self-determination. The inconsistency of this explanation is clearly demonstrated in the *first section* of the *second part* of the "Inquiry," which may be regarded as a summary of the argument which the modern antagonists of liberty are accustomed to present as an unassailable defence of a scheme of universal necessity, in which all acts of will, Divine as well as human, are included.

The series of syllogisms contained in the passage to which we have referred is irrefragable as against the conceptions of free-will at which it is pointed, if indeed an hypothesis of liberty such as is there assailed was ever distinctly maintained by any philosophical theologian of repute. But in truth, although the defenders of freedom have united against fatalism, they are far from being lucid or unanimous in the statement of their own doctrine. Even Reid's writings on free-will can hardly be made to yield a consistent theory.

The most important advance, as it seems to us, that has been made by Sir William Hamilton, in the discus-

sion of this problem of philosophy, consists in the account which he has furnished of the very nature of the debated question, and of the real assumptions which every argument regarding it must imply. To gain a clear understanding of a disputed question, and of the conditions which must be conformed to before a true answer to it can be obtained, while it is usually a more painful and less manifest stage in the progress of a science or a doctrine, is often a more important one than the subsequent solution of its difficulties. It helps to fill the intellect with suggestive hypotheses of a kind appropriate to the peculiarities of the phenomena which are exposed for scientific explanation. The solution itself is frequently obvious when a new general principle has been obtained ; and it is easier to attempt to account for fresh phenomena by means of old hypotheses than to find others which are at once new and true. Disputants have long been obliged to struggle with the haze that has invested the question regarding the meaning of moral agency, and that philosopher has rendered an important service who has in any measure dispelled the mist.

Dr. Reid maintains that liberty is conceivable. Sir William Hamilton asserts the fact of moral freedom as a possible but inexplicable mystery.

Unless the freedom which is maintained is only necessity under another name, there can, we think, be no question that it is a mystery, and as such inconceivable. But even when liberty is resolved into unlimited necessity, the mystery is only made to recede. It is more out

of sight, but it still remains. The argument of the modern Necessarians, contained in the treatise of Edwards, takes for granted the inconceivable hypothesis of an infinite series of derived causes; for the Divine volitions, in common with all acts of created will, are conceived as links in an endless chain of antecedents and consequents. The defenders of this necessity easily prove the self-contradiction of that counter-hypothesis, which explains freedom by means of what is virtually either an infinite series of self-determinations, or else a series which ultimately merges in a necessity that is *outside* of the will. But on the latter, which is the selected alternative, they virtually assert the existence of an infinite series of derived causes *in the universe*, in order to account for the acts of will which constitute a part of the phenomena of the universe. Now this hypothesis is in itself as inconceivable as that of the self-origination of volitions, and has besides been proved contradictory and absurd in various of the arguments in behalf of the first principles of natural theology.*

The modern Necessarians, represented by Edwards, have thus failed, even by means of the accumulation of ingenious and conclusive argument which they have produced, to raise this problem, regarding responsible actions, out of the region of the insoluble. The application of the theory of causation which they have made, is sufficient for a relative explanation of the phenomena

* As, for instance, in Proposition Second of Dr. Clarke's "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God."

of the physical sciences, because these sciences deal only with limited sections of the phenomena of the universe, regarded in those immediate, invariable, unconditional relations to one another, which have been fixed for them, and to which their objects are adapted, by the free First Cause and Governor of all, and which are commonly spoken of as the "laws of nature." But the hypothesis of a chain of mutually dependent sequences, which is sufficient for the explanation that the sciences of external nature ask for, regarding the particular orders of phenomena which are their objects, implies the absurdity of a chain without a beginning, when brought, as it is before it is capable of yielding the Necessarian inference, to give a conclusive explanation of *all* the phenomena which may be made the objects of investigation by man. It cannot, therefore, act as an insurmountable bar against the possibility either of an uncreated or a created free-will.

In a word, on the side of liberty, man is lost in the mystery of absolute commencement. On the side of universal necessity, he is lost in the mystery, or rather the contradiction, of infinite dependent succession. And thus it seems a conclusive inference, that this long-debated problem is indeed insoluble by man, or by any other being whose power of thought is limited like his. It is, however, practically solved, as similar problems in regard to other objects of our speculative nature are, in the existence of those feelings, by which we are compelled to assume, as a first principle,

our own responsibility for our acts of rational will. Possessing these, even without the possibility of any ultimate theory of moral agency for the gratification of the logical faculty, or finite understanding, men may consistently "follow after holiness," and also receive, as possible, though inexplicable, the supernatural account which has been conveyed to them of the historical origin of that tendency to sin of which they experience the power, as well as of that free restoration from the "fallen state," which, revealed in the Gospel, is mysteriously bestowed on the regenerate. This agrees, too, with the analogy of Scripture, for the Bible is full of both ideas—absolute commencement and derived volition—but it essays not to explain nor to reconcile them.

If the finite power of reasoning may be proved incapable to grasp the theory that is sufficient to account for responsible actions, consistently on the one hand with our belief regarding causation, and on the other, with the limitation of the series of causes which is assumed in those principles of the theistical argument that are at variance with the hypothesis of an infinite chain of derived causes, common sense includes among its other beliefs the conviction that we are created by God moral agents, responsible for those actions which we perform in relation to Him and to one another. This belief is sufficient to sustain our moral activity, even although the limits of the human intellect lay an arrest on further speculation, and therefore render it impossible for us to

retain in the vocabulary of our purely intellectual conception such words as Free-will and Responsibility, except, indeed, for the purpose of having finger-posts, as it were, for guiding us to points of view where we may have some of the most impressive aspects of that realm of mystery, by which human thought is encompassed on all sides, and on which we may "break the spirit" in metaphysical contemplation. The problem which these words suggest, as far as it is exclusively speculative, is truly one which, when we attempt to develop it, stirs the mind to its profoundest depths, as it offers to us the alternatives of self-origination, or an infinite course of dependent acts of will.

With this negative rather than positive account of the theory of liberty, which, after all, only amounts to a statement of *the reason* why no conclusive solution can be given to the problem raised by the fact of moral agency, we leave the adjustment of the other questions connected with it to those who are ready to bestow additional thought on the ideas of causation and responsibility which are those that are most peculiarly involved in the subject. And with this brief reference to a single department of the argument regarding the theory of moral agency, we abruptly and reluctantly close our account of the struggle of the *Philosophy of Common Sense* with *Scepticism, Idealism, and Necessarianism*. We regret, for the sake of the science in which we have been expatiating, the necessary concentration of thought and expression, which is manifest in this Essay,

as we fear that the preceding disquisitions may thus appear, except to persons previously familiar with such thoughts, to be addressed only to those "small hooks of the mind" which catch at and apprehend mere illusive abstractions, and to have little or no connexion with that knowledge which penetrates nature, and finds real inductive axioms in her phenomena.

We have reason to offer our cordial thanks to the distinguished author of these Notes and Dissertations, for providing among them so many paths and recesses in which the inquisitive student may reflect on phases of our knowledge, there presented to him, that will very greatly add to the number of his queries, on such topics as those which have occupied our attention in the greater part of this Essay, and where he may also gather no slight contribution to his stock of answers to such queries. The pages of this volume supply ample evidence that the graspings of the mind of man, after the first principles of physical, theological, and self-knowledge, are not confined to one generation of the history of the world. These are founded on tendencies which are permanent as the race of man. They are the seeds of a nature fallen from its high original and destiny, but which was not adapted only or chiefly for this earthly life between two eternities. From Thales, Xenophanes, and Pythagoras in the Greek philosophy, and the still older inspired complaints of the patriarch of Idumea, down to our own century, the apparent discord of the

theory of knowledge, arising from the real limitation of its sphere ; the great objects of knowledge—God, self, and the world ;—together with the riddles of creation, and of independent moral action, which these involve, have attracted, with a scientific interest, a succession of minds of different schools. Of this fact, the fragments of thought that are expressed in the accumulation of philosophical paragraphs, sentences, and references which enrich the learning of this volume, as well as its original matter, form a remarkable confirmation and illustration. Though ever and anon the calls of the circumstances through which men are passing may divert the attention of generations to the arrangement of affairs that are more pressing, if they are less sublime and imposing, the like aspirations will continue to ascend, and not the less passionately as the world approaches its catastrophe. They are worthy of reverence as the emanations of the human spirit in the direction of the permanent, the infinite, and the eternal, the nourishment at once of nobleness and humility of mind, even although often the baffled efforts of a desire to break the barrier by which its own structure confines the thought of man, who finds instincts instead of explanations when he endeavours to form *such* science. This perpetual, yet broken struggle, after what must in the end elude his grasp, when become habitual and too exclusive in any individual, tends to weaken his judgment in common affairs, by abstracting it from clear and distinct sciences, and palpable individual realities, and

tempts his mind to sink into itself in the vain effort to find there that explanation which shall leave nothing to be explained. The check of nature thus imposed upon the unrestrained indulgence of speculation, affords an emphatical illustration of the sentiment which pervades the "Pensées" of Pascal, regarding the mingled greatness and littleness of man.

ESSAY III.

SCOTTISH METAPHYSICS: THEORY OF CAUSATION.

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SCOTTISH METAPHYSICS : THEORY OF CAUSATION.

It seems a common opinion that there is little connexion between the subtle reasonings of recluse thinkers, devoted to abstract speculation, and the actions, or even the discoveries which are important to mankind. Books of Metaphysics are thus cast aside as void of human interest. The philosopher, notwithstanding, pursues his vocation, without expecting to convert the multitude to his manner of life. In each generation we find meditative minds, struggling to obtain the most comprehensive survey of the boundaries of knowledge, the deepest insight of the foundation of human beliefs, and the truest interpretation of the life of man. And when we look beneath the "show of things," into the great heart of literature and social life, we find also that the intellectual agitation of these recluses has not really been unconnected, as it seemed to be, with the pulsations of that heart ; that, on the contrary, those who have main-

tained the vitality of philosophical discussion have—as by a social law—contributed the force which has kept the sciences in movement. The small band of labourers on these remote mountain summits of thought, have guided opinions and affairs among the busy multitude in the valleys below. Their adventures and employments on the misty margin of human knowledge, whatever its success may have been in adding to the store of definite and immediately applicable information concerning the grand objects of the survey, will not be overlooked by a profound student of the literature and institutions of a generation.

Abstract Philosophy—the expression of the deepest thought of the present, and the pioneer of popular opinion in the future—is a permanent intellectual want of the human mind. Its high speculations, even if conversant with an absolutely indeterminate problem, are always important in their effects, as a chief cause of the changes for good or evil in the literary, social, and ecclesiastical expression of the current tastes and tendencies. Philosophical labours, pursued amidst colourless abstractions, deeply tinge the results of every other department of intellectual action. History, in short, goes far to confirm the profound remark of Coleridge:—“To the immense majority of men, even in civilized countries, speculative philosophy has ever been, and must ever remain, a *terra incognita*. Yet it is not the less true, that all the epoch-forming revolutions of the Christian world, the revolutions of religion and with them the civil, social, and domestic habits of the nations concerned,

have coincided with the rise and fall of metaphysical systems.”*

Those who possess these convictions, cannot fail to regard with interest the kind of stream which, in any given period, is issuing from this remote well-spring of opinion. They will recognise some connexion between the topic of Scottish Metaphysics,† and those literary, scientific, theological, and even political questions which usually engage popular interest. Scotland has, in the past, added not a few classic books to philosophical literature. Our country has produced some of the most eminent speculative workmen of modern times. A careful analysis of the present opinions—especially theological and political—of Western Europe and America might trace back some of the most remarkable and influential of them to the workings of these Scottish minds.‡

* “The Statesman’s Manual: A Lay Sermon.” By S. T. Coleridge.

† The Literature of Scottish Metaphysics, regarded as a whole, has still to be collected and reviewed, and its history has still to be written. A valuable critical and historical essay might be founded on a review of that collective literature, including a summary of its performances, and a report of its “deficiencies” after the manner of Bacon. But a work so ambitious, and which needs so much research, is unsuited to an ephemeral Essay.

The reader may be referred to a comprehensive and masterly sketch of the Philosophical Literature of Scotland, which has this year (1856) appeared in the “Revue des Deux Mondes,” from the pen of the Comte de Rémusat, entitled, “L’Ecosse depuis la fin du xvii^e Siècle, et la Philosophie de Hamilton.”

‡ We are glad to notice pleasing indications, even since this Essay has been written, that our philosophical literature is in a state of growth. We may refer, among others, to a Treatise on “The Philosophy of the Senses: or, Man in Connexion with a Material World,” by Robert S. Wyld: (Edinburgh, 1852;) and an “Inquiry into Human Nature,” by John G. M’Vicar, D.D. (Edinburgh, 1853.) Mr. Wyld’s book contains the contribution of an unprofessional student of philosophy, and may be taken for

We cannot return to this metaphysical region more appropriately than through the academic avenue formed by the writings of Sir William Hamilton. Nor can one more suitably foster the old Scottish taste for that study, than by inviting the attention of readers to some of the phases of our national speculation, in association with the most recent performances of the distinguished representative of Scottish Philosophy. No well-informed person needs to be told of the connexion between the name of Sir William Hamilton and the most elevated intellectual service of this age. During more than twenty years he has, by precept and example, recommended abstract speculation to a generation by whom such pursuits have been almost unanimously proscribed as valueless, and has laboured, in the isolation of his chosen walk, to redeem those products which are exclusively intellectual from the popular charge of uselessness. For many years he has been one of the chief philosophical powers in British literature, and he is now recognised as the solitary Scottish conqueror in the realm of speculation. The volume of his "Philosophical Discussions,"* together with the a symptom of some popular revival, at the present time, of a philosophic taste. Dr. McVicar has issued an ingenious Essay, which contains some curious disquisition, and much suggestive thought. We recommend it emphatically to the attention of all our philosophical readers.

Pre-eminently worthy of attention is the work of our able countryman, Mr. Alexander Bain, "The Senses and the Intellect," (1855,) which displays an uncommon clearness and ratiocinative power,—in the special department to the cultivation of which Mr. Bain has devoted himself.

* "Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform." By Sir William Hamilton, Bart. London and Edinburgh, 1852.

Notes and Dissertations conjoined with the author's edition of the works of Reid, contain more speculative thought and curious learning than has ever before been discharged into literature by any single Scottish mind.

The world is indebted to the "Edinburgh Review" as the original channel of the most important British contributions to Philosophy of recent times,—the comparatively popular Essays of Sir James Mackintosh, and these profound Discussions of Sir William Hamilton. The present volume includes the celebrated papers contributed to the "Review" from 1829 to 1838; and a remarkable Appendix of new matter which now appears for the first time. Six of the sixteen republished Discussions, as well as a considerable portion of the Appendix, are devoted to Philosophy. In the present Essay we shall confine our attention to the philosophical parts of the volume. We make no allusion to many important questions in theology, church history, and the theory and practice of education, which are discussed in its pages. We must, moreover, beg the special indulgence of our readers, while we try to conduct them towards the territory,—hitherto little frequented in Scotland, in which Sir William Hamilton has pursued his intellectual work as a philosopher. We do not ask them to take a part in the remote labour of lonely metaphysicians. But we do wish to induce them to join us in an exploring journey in that direction. If, before that journey is done, we have witnessed, as in a sunny haze, the champaign country, which a slight historical survey of modern British thought may disclose,

that more animating scene may perhaps make some amends for our having to pass through one or two metaphysical tunnels of more than usual length and darkness, which lie between us and a satisfactory view of the structure which has been reared by this latest labourer in the region of Scottish speculation.

(1.)

In what degree, it may be asked, has the literary and social atmosphere of Scotland been charged with the elements of intellectual life, during the QUARTER OF A CENTURY within which Sir William Hamilton has been giving his philosophical opinions to the world? The answer to this question, involving, as it does, some reference to the earlier Scottish and even British systematic thought, may carry us over a considerable part of our present journey. In offering it, we shall view the intellectual character of this epoch in its connexion with the historical antecedents of which that character is partly the result, and then describe, in some of the doctrines of Sir William Hamilton, the most recent expression which our insular and national speculation has assumed.

The first of Sir William Hamilton's Discussions was published in 1829, when the sun of Scottish Philosophy seemed about to set. In the preceding year our country had lost in Stewart the most accomplished and least abstract expounder of the doctrines of Reid. Nearly ten years earlier, the brief and brilliant career of Thomas Brown was ended. Mackintosh still remained, his speculative ardour interrupted by the temptations of public

life, although no narrow strife of party had defiled the purity or clouded the grandeur of a mind too capacious for mere sectarianism either in Philosophy or Politics, and whose literary fragments excite regret only because they are so scanty and desultory. The eminent intellectual ability of the elder Mill is, notwithstanding his Scottish birth, more properly associated with South Britain, and neither the acute work of Ballantyne, nor the empiricism of the phrenologists, requires any exception to the statement, that with Stewart, Brown, and Mackintosh, Scottish Philosophy seemed, twenty-five years ago, to be passing away.

Nor does a greatly different verdict seem called for, as regards the national life in intellectual pursuits, when we consider the productions of the country, either in general literature or speculative theology, now and in the intervening period. With the operations of Scott and Jeffrey, the most obtrusive and characteristic Scottish action upon modern literature ceased. Since Hume, there has been no Scottish movement among the principles of philosophical theology, of a diffusive influence extending over Europe. Chalmers introduced the vitality of a magnanimous and genial mind into doctrines in divinity, which, in the spirit of the national theological conservatism, tended, philosophically speaking, to assume a dogmatic rigour of the scholastic type; and, like Arnold in England, illustrated the suitability of Christianity to the ever-changing social and intellectual condition of the successive ages of mankind. It is well if the watchmen of public opinion can still discover symptoms of

Scottish progress in the career which he commenced,—congenial efforts of Christian manliness in the cause of high thought and expansive Christianity, which might guard our theology and ecclesiastical life from the perilous isolation of a merely protesting, instead of an advancing and reconciling power. Must we say that Scotland, which in these years has been the scene of so much social, ecclesiastical, and religious activity, is, in the calmer sphere of meditation and learned research, to follow passively in the wake of Europe or America, or, with abated mental energy and progress, to repose amid her old traditions? May we not put a more liberal interpretation upon the present phenomena of her intellectual life,—one which recognises the peculiar character of the nation, with its proper function in the history of opinions, and judge that, in an age of the dissolution of doctrines into their elements, it is good to find symptoms of the action of a law of doctrinal cohesion, even at the expense of the more enlarged philosophic sympathies? Whatever answers may be rendered to these questions, it must be congenial to those who are interested in them, to study the character of the new type of Scottish speculation, which has been in the course of formation in these twenty years, by an intellectual giant, who is all the more conspicuous and remarkable as he now stands so nearly alone, in the ebb of literary activity in Scotland which has been apparent during this generation.

We cannot affirm that a corresponding ebb has been going on in England. The condition of reflective studies in the southern part of the Island seemed hardly more

propitious than in Scotland twenty-five years ago. English Philosophy had been a blank almost since the early years of last century. It was needful to look across the gulf of more than a hundred years, to discover in the distance the great monument of speculation reared by Locke. Hartley, Price, and Harris are indeed eminent names in the interval. But for several generations, philosophic thought had lost its charm for the leading minds of England. It was expressly discouraged by her universities, where the Modern Philosophy was at no time regarded with special favour. Yet, on the other hand, a quarter of a century since, the Scottish mind exhibited chiefly symptoms of a speculative decline; while England was beginning to abound in the seeds of fresh thought, which have since produced no inconsiderable harvest, not only in metaphysics and logic, but in poetry, the social science, theology, and other departments cognate to Philosophy. It was then a period of transition. The aged Bentham stood almost alone, as the prophet of the worldly utilitarianism which was nourished by the philosophic teaching of a former generation. But England was summoned to a course of meditation, transcending her wonted mental experience, by the dreamy sage of Highgate; and invited to muse on the deep meaning and beauty of nature by the recluse of Rydal Mount. To these two fountains, aided by some tributary streams, no small part of what is peculiar to the national thought and literature in this generation may be traced. But even with the help of Scottish

gravitation towards the British metropolis, the generation has not sent forth a master mind of mark enough to take a place in Philosophy in the ranks of the intellectual grandees of England, beside her own Bacon or Locke.

An important chapter in modern intellectual history might, however, be formed out of the materials presented in the social and literary history of South Britain during these years. Strange tides of opinion have been passing through many minds, moving old institutions and traditions, and gradually depositing a literature as different in its character from that to which the preceding period was accustomed, as the external arrangements of life in this country now are different from their state in the days of our fathers. It has been to England a period of the revival of theoretic principles, good and evil, into life, all over the substratum of the national mind. These principles, with their implied logical consequences, have been struggling into practice, with not a little of that force and consistency of purpose which earnest conviction directs against the seductions of ease and present expediency. Theories—the upheavings of the philosophic mind, have risen in greater number and force in England in these times than since the great Revolution. The present fermentation of opinions is, indeed, a signal illustration of the power of general principles, to modify even the practices and institutions which are discovered to be at variance with the logical results of speculation; and to produce an epoch which can least of all dispense

with those comprehensive minds, whose function is to guide wisely the revolution needed to reconcile concrete social institutions with abstract doctrines. Free reflection is directed towards the depths of political, ecclesiastical, and theological questions. The organization of labour, and of national and international society, is discussed in many quarters in a manner which forces the disputants within the province of Philosophy. The recent history of ecclesiastical affairs suggests many applications of the meditative habit of mind to the problems of the Church. Nowhere, perhaps, on the ecclesiastical horizon, can the philosophic observer discover an object which better deserves his patient study than the Church of England, with its singularly complicated and anomalous external and internal relations; and containing elements now galvanized into a mutually destructive life, after the almost unbroken slumber of nearly two centuries. It is probably the region of theological controversy which presents the most obvious signs of the spread of a bold and novel intellectual life. The old questions of the criterion of certainty and the rule of faith, are raised by learned ecclesiastics and by philosophical religionists, in such a way as to manifest a tendency towards a state of opinion in which the principles of the Reformation seem destined to undergo a more searching scrutiny, by Romanists on the one side, and Rationalists on the other, than they have experienced in this country since the Western Churches revolted from Rome.

Nor is the change in Continental less than it has been in English thoughtful literature, during the last quarter of a century, but it has gone in an opposite direction. In the earlier part of that period, Schelling and Hegel were conspicuous, among a host of less notable names, as philosophical leaders in Germany; and Cousin was the centre of the most brilliant and numerous circle of thinkers which France has known since the decline of the Cartesian school. Now, after a course of speculation the most active, and in some respects the most extravagant which modern times have witnessed, Philosophy appears at last in a state of collapse in Germany, and, with the illustrious exception of Cousin, who, however, has in a great measure ceased from active labour, possesses no original representative in France. For the valuable reflective research of the future, as for the other seeds of human progress, we are apt, when we look around, to turn from the country of Leibnitz and that of Malebranche, to the land which produced Bacon, and Locke, and Reid.

But symptoms of the action of recent German and French Philosophy upon the British mind are notable in the present intellectual literature of this country. The philosophical methods and language which have originated in Germany, in the last seventy years, so fill the vision of some of the minds devoted to this study in Britain and America, that they seem to have forgotten the fact,—concealed in the past behind the cloud of German metaphysics, that we have a characteristic Bri-

tish philosophical literature of our own ; and moreover, that many of these foreign doctrines, in spreading among us, are only returning to the land of their origin in a sublimated form. Modern Philosophy may, notwithstanding, be vaguely described as developed according to the British and the Continental type ; and the old Scottish was a modification of the British, with some important peculiarities. The following paragraphs, in describing the *rudiments* of English and Scottish speculation in the early history of each, may in part illustrate this statement.

When we ponder the deep convictions by means of which the majestic spirit of Bacon roused the mind of England, we find him guiding men in another step of that series, alternating between dream and waking— notionalism and realism, which the history of human intelligence presents. His works were designed to recall men from illusions to reality—to lead them to descend beneath words to their true meaning, beneath changing appearances to the unchanging generalities which mere phenomena may either conceal or conduct to. But the call of Bacon was addressed, so to speak, in the national dialect ; and in the tone of one conscious that the function of man is patiently to *seek* truth, rather than dogmatically to assume that he has found, and may systematically expound it. Man cannot, he would say, ascend at once to the apex of Being, and form an *à priori* science of existence, as if the knower were the lord of the knowable. He must ascend by slow degrees and, as the servant of *experience*, surrender the luxuries

of dogmatic hypothesis. Such was the spirit of Bacon. Instead of a finished system of his own, he characteristically offers a series of aphorisms and historic illustrations, which enforce the impossibility of exhausting Being in knowledge, the inferiority of the knower to the knowable, and open up the path to a real though partial intercourse between man and nature. We cannot now pause in his company. But the reader who wishes to imbibe the spirit of that philosophy of which Experience is the watchword, may profitably return often to the *De Augmentis* and the *Novum Organum*.

We pass down the stream of time well-nigh seventy years, to exchange the art and spirit of Philosophy—the principle of progress contained, in the form we have alluded to, in these works of Bacon, for the scientific theory concerning Experience, presented in the writings of Locke. The triumphs of Experience were becoming illustrious in physical discovery. But the illusions against which Bacon warned thinkers had not disappeared. Man was still lorded over by preconceptions through which he vainly tried to conquer his way to reality. Even the current Philosophy of the age appeared to Locke to provide, in the famous dogma of *innate principles*, a refuge for notions which could not be traced back to what is real. Bacon had urged men to explore appearances in search of universal truths, and to abandon their preconceptions. But Des Cartes, Lord Herbert, and other leading thinkers seemed to say that universal truths might be found among human preconceptions, without the

labour of a previous inductive scrutiny of appearances. The relation of human knowledge to Experience must itself, therefore, be scientifically determined. Their mutual adjustment, by means of an inductive study of our knowledge in its most general aspect, was the design of the imperfectly-performed work of Locke.

With Locke and his associates the proper Philosophy of South Britain terminates. Bacon impelled men to search for a knowledge of the real through the seeming ; and Locke offered an ambiguous solution of the question, whether Experience is the only cause, and its sphere the utmost limit of human knowledge. The grand glimpses of Bacon, and the solid thought of Locke, are the chief excitement which the higher mind of Britain supplies, in the earlier period of its modern history, to the speculative tendencies of Europe. Careless of subtlety, and averse from what is mysterious, Locke has probably promoted Philosophy as much by the controversies for which the doubtful parts of his writings have afforded room, as by the doctrine which they unambiguously contain.* A psychological analysis of these two memorable minds would be a study of the English intellectual character. So delicate a process must not be interposed in this superficial survey of the main stream of speculation in

* We of course refer here only to the purely philosophical works of Locke, and especially to his "Essay," which Sir James Mackintosh ranks as one of the four books "which have most directly influenced the general opinion of Europe during the last two centuries." But if Locke's "Letters on Toleration" are taken into the account, how greatly must the estimate of his influence upon subsequent opinions and legislation be increased !

Britain. We go on to describe an important passage in its course. That course was changed when the Essay of Locke became the aliment of a few Scottish thinkers towards the middle of last century. The circumstance seems to illustrate some of the points of difference in the character of the minds of the two divisions of this Island.

When we consider the national character, we perhaps expect to find, in the higher intellectual operations of the Scottish mind, the tendency to test or verify dogmatic assumptions, rather than to seek for principles which may be assumed. We look for a searching logical analysis of theories, instead of the application to practice of opinions received although unconnected with first principles and void of the symmetry of system, which is more characteristic of the English mind. We also expect to meet, in the productions of Scottish genius, a greater congeniality with what is purely abstract, a more entire submission to the march of merely speculative reasoning, and less facility to compromise with the other tendencies of human life, or to subordinate speculation to action. On the whole, one might anticipate in North Britain more angularity of philosophical doctrine, and a nearer approach to the extreme margin of knowledge, with perhaps a less genial development of the entire humanity, and less satisfaction in the *practical* solution of intellectual difficulties than might be exhibited in the south. England is likely to have a series of liberal thinkers, presenting various modifications of opinion; Scotland, a system of doctrine, definite and dogmatic

enough to form the foundation of a school. The substratum of good sense, common to both nations, is perhaps more logically refined and purely intellectual in Scotland; richer, more pliable, and better adapted to practice in England.*

These somewhat sweeping generalities concerning the character of communities often fail in the application of them to individuals. But the quality of the intellectual work performed by leading philosophers of the two divisions of this Island, seems to us to illustrate some of the mental features which we have attributed to their inhabitants. It has been the function of the Scottish mind to supply, if we may so say, the logical digestion needed by the aliment which the great English philosophers have provided. If the works of English guides of thought exhibit freer and richer developments of all the elements of man's complicated being, and communicate through more numerous channels with practice, the fruits of Scottish reflection are fetched with more patient care

* The Scottish mind—its love for what is logically definite and exhaustive—its tendency to employ itself in the analysis, verification, or defence of dogmas, rather than in seeking for them without any prejudice, may be partly the cause and partly the effect of the popularity of that systematic type of Theology which has educated the national mind since the Reformation. The Christian science of Calvin, with its moral weight and logical tenacity, has defined the limits of system within which religious thought has been conducted by the Christian guides of the nation. The consequent difference of national character seems to be illustrated, in respect to religion, in the small prominence of the reference to *doctrinal orthodoxy* in the English popular mind, when compared with the acute, if often dogmatic, recognition of "sound" doctrine which has been associated with so much that is valuable in the better class of the Scottish peasantry.

from a narrower field, and are better adapted to satisfy a single tendency. Minds like Bacon and Locke occupy a point at which man and the world may be surveyed with a more ample sweep, in all the variety of sea and land ; Hume and Reid explore, the one with a keener scrutiny, and the other with a more patient attention, the remote boundaries and intricate recesses of the province of intellectual Philosophy. These two Scottish thinkers may be said to have passed Locke's theory through the winnowing mill of the logical understanding and the common sense, and to have reached results which were overlooked in the more discursive range of Bacon, and with the less purely speculative aims of Locke.

We do not mean here to resume the old story of the doctrines of these celebrated persons. A passing suggestion concerning the meaning of their respective performances, in the intellectual evolution of the national mind, is all we profess to offer. The successors of Locke in the South resolved Experience into sensation, and yet professed to give a scientific account of all human beliefs. A more rigorous interpretation of the English Philosophy, with a determination to pursue its principles into their logical issues, marks the singular specimens of Scottish subtlety involved in the scepticism of Hume ; which originated, by a reaction, the "school" of Reid, and also, through Kant, directed the modern mind into a career of speculative action that is not yet ended. It is of course true, as regards practical conviction, that a system of universal scepticism can never be more than an "amusement" of the understanding ; but every con-

siderable effort by man to make his knowledge an object of scientific attention, and to discover its elements, is influential in human affairs, as well as intrinsically interesting. The great influence of these writings of Hume, upon the subsequent course of modern opinions in philosophy and theology, proves that his bold attempt to find what was implied in the current speculative opinions of his age may be regarded as more than a mere "amusement." And no one who wishes to study the different genius of the English and Scottish styles of British speculation should neglect to compare the "Essay on Human Understanding," with the "Treatise of Human Nature."

If the "Treatise" was founded upon principles to which the "Essay" may be said to have given currency, it originated in its turn a series of philosophical writings, which profess to discover other mental phenomena than those accounted for by the theory which Hume had found to hang together so loosely as to render a universal speculative doubt unavoidable. In Hume's interpretation of the current Philosophy, we see how British speculation, which awoke at Bacon's summons to men to cast aside *idola*, and to search for the real among the seeming, has, in the act of reviewing the real extent of human knowledge, condemned men to perpetual banishment from truth, by resolving knowledge into illusion. Faith must be revived and vindicated. Experience must be explored more patiently, in quest of witnesses to realities which transcend the "impressions" into which the Scottish penetration and subtlety of Hume

had analyzed the account of human knowledge given in the English Philosophy. The recognition of dogmatic first principles was eminently a Scottish task. It engaged Reid and his associates. The retirement of a Scottish manse nourished the leading mind in this new school. For obvious reasons, the field selected by Reid, in his search for an evidence of reality which might repair the ruin occasioned by the recent explosion of speculative scepticism, was chiefly that part of human knowledge which relates to the world of the senses. Amid our very sensations we find ourselves, through perception, face to face with external realities which do not pass away when the sensations cease. Perception is the watchword or symbol of a dogmatic faith, which the reflective mind can vindicate, and which every mind must experience. "There is really something in the rose or lily which by the vulgar is called smell, and which continues to exist when it is not smelled. . . . Hardness and softness are neither sensations nor like any sensations; they were real qualities before they were perceived by touch, and continue to be so when they are not perceived. . . . Upon the whole, it appears that our (British) philosophers have imposed upon themselves and upon us, in pretending to deduce from sensation the first origin of our notions of external existences, of space, motion, and extension, and all the primary qualities of body—that is, the qualities whereof we have the most clear and distinct conception." These, and very many similar passages indicate the style in which Reid searched the human mind, in order to illus-

trate that kind of faith and intuition in which the mind gains a direct intellectual intercourse with the world of Matter.

It was thus that the speculative ingenuity of one Scottish mind employed the received principles of the English Philosophy to effect a dissolution of human beliefs; while the patient judgment of another revealed a profounder meaning in Experience than Locke had recognised. The philosophic ore discovered in England was, as it were, transmitted to Scotland, to be there tested by sceptical subtlety, and thus indirectly to give occasion to an energetic expression of the national dogmatic faith or common sense.

The period of the decay of the old Philosophy in England and Scotland respectively, has some analogies with the period of its manhood. The incipient decline of Locke's theory in the south is connected with the name of a writer, who merits credit for his attempt to apply an important psychological law to account for our knowledge. We refer to David Hartley, author of the "Observations on Man," an expounder of the phenomena of mental attraction or association, noticed by Hobbes in the previous century, and the laws of which have since been popularly employed, in a sort of chemistry of *ideas*, to explain some mental facts supposed to be imperfectly provided for in the doctrine of the Essay of Locke. Hume has recognised the value of the principle, in the constructive portion of his speculations. And it is curious to remark, that this law of the mechanical association of mental states, which, entangled

as it was with physiological hypothesis, engaged English Philosophy in its dotage in last century, was discussed in this century in Scotland by Dr. Thomas Brown ; and, freed from the incrustation of these hypotheses, has been by him applied as an almost universal solvent, in the formation of the ingenious system by means of which Brown beguiled not a few acute minds from the doctrines of Reid. Scotland thus again filled its characteristic office in the evolutions of British opinion.

But we have symptoms of a new type of abstract speculation in Britain, even before the old Philosophy of the country had exhausted itself. Germany, instead of England, now presented material to the Scottish logical intelligence. The name of Kant is associated with a revolutionary epoch in the history of modern European thought. The formalism of Kant, and even the absolutist dreams of his German successors, began everywhere to supersede the doctrine of the eighteenth century ; and Germany was regarded by not a few as rendering a service in the modern somewhat similar to that rendered by Greece in the ancient world. Cousin, more than any other writer of the age, and in the noblest and most liberal spirit, was giving a diffused popularity to the study of the new systems. It was in these circumstances, amid influences to which his extraordinary familiarity with what has been written by philosophers peculiarly exposed him, that Sir William Hamilton presented, in successive instalments, his Philosophical Discussions to the British public. In these Discussions, the student of philosophical literature may note conclusions,

and methods of searching for them, which recall Aristotle and Kant oftener than Locke and Reid. Their very language seems to warn the reader to transport himself to an intellectual position remote from the one occupied by the guides of thought whose works we have been tracing; and to indicate that, in the silence of the old questionings which had busied thoughtful Englishmen and Scotchmen in preceding generations, the great Continental movement in metaphysics, which had reached its height twenty years since in Germany and France, was helping to give a voice to a new representative of our insular Philosophy. The problems of the universe and of absolute knowledge, suggested by the terms "unconditioned" and "conditions of the thinkable," are substituted for those more homely researches into the history of consciousness, expressed by the once familiar terms "intellectual powers" and "mental states." Yet the reader of these Discussions may also discover in them some marks which attest not merely a British, but even a peculiarly Scottish parentage. He is thus reminded of their nationality, and also of the cosmopolite influences amid which they were produced, in the decline of British, and the crisis of Continental and especially of French philosophy.

(2.)

At this point we should be prepared to offer some satisfaction to a variety of QUESTIONS. What are the principal fragments of philosophical doctrine placed before us in the new Scottish writings? Do they fit together

into an organized body of Philosophy? What is the relative proportion of original and derived doctrine which they contain? What is the method according to which that doctrine has been sought for and obtained? What the arrangement of the philosophical studies and sciences which they suggest? What the negative and the constructive value of that Philosophy, regarded as a whole, and also in respect to one or more of its subordinate ramifications? What important links of connexion may be described, between these extremely abstract discussions, and some of the more interesting and obvious pursuits of mankind?

With these questions more or less in our view, we shall in the first place try to describe the chief philosophical opinions of Sir William Hamilton, within the compass of a few brief paragraphs, and with some regard to what seems to be the mutual relation and relative importance of principles presented in his works in a fragmentary form. We may remark, however, that the occasional manner in which these doctrines have been introduced to the world, and the dense brevity of style which marks a writer who scorns to render himself intelligible to unreflective and illogical minds, combine to increase the difficulty of investing with a general interest a course of reasoning and contemplation sufficiently difficult to repel the multitude even in the most favourable circumstances, conducted as it is almost uniformly in the remotest and least accessible regions of speculation. Then, the systematic use of a nomenclature, constructed with a rigorous precision suited to convey

philosophical meaning with singular efficiency to minds prepared for receiving it, unavoidably confines the stream of abstract discussion within a channel from which it cannot speedily escape to deepen the common opinion or literature of the age. Symbolic language, moreover, may be stereotyped after this fashion in the narrow department where thought, as in the mathematical sciences, is conversant with necessary truth; but the scientific language of one age must be outgrown by the results of observation, and of fresh experiments in meditation, in the next, in those truly human studies which deal with probability, and in which knowledge, while advancing, is still imperfect. The general reader is on the whole apt to miss in these Discussions the plain and sometimes ambiguous language of daily life, through which the ample volume of the thoughts of Locke is discharged, or the natural grace and beauty in which the most subtle and original opinions of Hume are presented in his Essays. He cannot meditate freely when the evolutions of his thought must be fitted in to the movements of a complicated machinery of words. But, after all, the inborn thinker finds congenial companionship in Philosophy, whether she appears in easy negligence or in her academic robes.

(3.)

The object singled out for investigation in the NEW Scottish philosophical writings is HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. The more precise purpose of a large part of them is, to unfold the most general and abstract Law or Condition

to which our judgments must conform, and by which therefore they are limited. The problem more immediately examined in them is perhaps rather the *limitation of human intelligence*, than that which, under the designation of the *origin of knowledge*, has more or less determined all the chief systems of modern speculation. But the one of these problems is essentially implicated in the other, and both of them are involved in the discussions of Sir William Hamilton.

It is the uniform lesson of his Philosophy, that human consciousness admits only a limited knowledge, and that the Absolute and Infinite are merely "names for two counter imbecilities of the mind of man." The philosophic axiom, that an unconditioned consciousness, and an unconscious knowledge, are alike impossible, is everywhere proclaimed; and the assumption is formally defended and illustrated in the discussion devoted to the "Philosophy of the Unconditioned." That intellectual point of view from which the *limits* of intelligence or consciousness may be studied seems, in short, to be the one which affords the most comprehensive and harmonious view of these new Scottish speculations.

The task of the thinker, who occupies this position for his study of thought, is, to exhibit—if possible systematically and exhaustively, the necessary laws by which human consciousness, as such, and also in each of its different modifications, is limited. In this respect, the work of Sir William Hamilton is the supplement and counterpart to that of Locke. If Locke describes the various sorts of "ideas," which are the immediate *objects*

of our judgment, together with the most general classes into which they may be resolved; the Scottish thinker studies our judgments themselves, to find the *conditions* which must be fulfilled, in order that acts of intelligence may be performed in relation to *any* objects. If the objective element in knowledge was appropriated, and, in a measure, psychologically analyzed, by Locke; the subjective and necessary conditions of all conscious intelligence are selected for logical and metaphysical study by Sir William Hamilton. In British philosophy, Locke and Hamilton thus divide between them the two departments which belong to a complete reflective review of knowledge,—the *objects of knowledge*, and the *subjective limits of intelligibility*.

The Scottish philosopher assumes two distinct kinds of necessary limits to human knowledge:—First, the *logical*, or those conditions to which all valid thinking must be conformed, and which regulate, moreover, existence in general; secondly, the *metaphysical*, consisting of a series of laws manifested in certain relations among existences, but not exhausting those relations, or reaching to a reality that transcends human thought; in a word, to the Unconditioned. The violation of the logical laws renders thinking a nullity, and existence an impossibility. On the other hand, the metaphysical conditions of knowledge have only a finite application; they do not enclose all being, but, though not containing, they yet allow the reality of the transcendent and the absolute. LOGIC is, in short, the science of those conditions of conscious intelligence which cannot be violated either in

thought or in existence, and the fulfilment of which yields merely the *not-impossible*. What is conformed to these laws of logic is thinkable, and may be real; what violates them can neither exist nor be conceived in the mind. METAPHYSICS is the science of those limitations to thought which are not absolutely limitations of existence. In the realm of existence, though not in that of thought, there may be that which transcends the metaphysical limits of intelligibility, and which, while not intelligible, is real.

A large part of these Philosophical Discussions, and of the comments connected with the author's edition of Reid, may be said to be occupied with an analysis of the *metaphysical* limits of intelligibility; combined with *psychological* descriptions of certain alleged faculties or modifications of metaphysically conditioned consciousness, which are revealed in the mind of man, (*e.g.*, perception, memory, imagination, with the laws of mental association, &c.) The Metaphysics is a Scoto-German supplement to Locke, and the Psychology is a scientific refinement on Reid and Brown. (The Pure Logic, meantime, we cast out of the account.)

A *metaphysically-limited consciousness of phenomena* is thus in a manner the *element*,—the “*cogito, ergo sum*” of Sir William Hamilton's constructive philosophy. His task, as a metaphysician, is to find and classify the conditions by which consciousness must be limited. As a psychologist, he should discover and describe the various modes or faculties of our conditioned consciousness.

Consciousness is realized only under Relations. This relativity is twofold: of Knowledge, and of Existence. —The relativity of human knowledge, *i.e.*, the metaphysical limitation of it, implies, we are told, the relation of a subject knowing to an object known. Existence as known must be *qualitatively* known, inasmuch as we must conceive every object of which we are conscious, in the relation of a quality depending upon a substance. Moreover, this qualitatively-known object must be *protended*, or conceived as existing in time, and *extended*, or regarded as existing in space; while its qualities are *intensive*, or conceivable under degree. The thinkable, in its last analysis, is thus the Relative, or Conditioned — being realized under limitations that lie either in thought itself, or in existence. With the help of these data, may we not discover and define the highest law of intelligence, and thus place the key-stone in the metaphysic arch?

When, for example, we try to conceive Time or Space —in order to determine the grasp of our power of conceiving, we find that we cannot realize either an *absolute* or an *infinite* conception of them. We can as easily “think without thought,” as construe to the mind an absolute commencement or an absolute termination of time; that is, a beginning and an end beyond which time is conceived as non-existent. Nor can we conceive either an infinite regress or progress of time; for such notions could only be realized by the infinite addition in thought of finite times, and such an addition would itself

require an eternity for its accomplishment. If we dream of effecting this we only deceive ourselves, by substituting the *indefinite* for the infinite, than which no two notions can be more opposed. Time can thus be conceived only in a conditioned interval between two opposite, (an absolute and an infinite,) unconditioned, contradictory extremes or poles, each of which is inconceivable, but of which, on the (logical) principle of *excluded middle*, one or other *necessarily* is.

The law by which our notion of time is thus conditioned may, it is assumed, be taken for the type of the *universal* law of the limitation of human intelligence. We cannot think *any* object or event either Absolutely or Infinitely. *All* thinkable existence must, in the act of thought, be limited by the mental conditions implied in an exercise of thought confined between these two contradictory, unthinkable extremes.

But the speculations of Sir William Hamilton are not merely negative, analytic, and polemical. They may also be illustrated on their positive, synthetic, and conciliatory side. They may be represented as the fruitful seeds of metaphysical discovery. Judgments, hitherto regarded as ultimate, may be accounted for by means of this elementary law of the limitation of thought. Philosophy itself may be advanced by the simplification and consolidation of its doctrines. Thus, the hitherto unaccountable mental necessity of attributing every quality to a SUBSTANCE, is merely a result of the Law of the Conditioned. And we experience an irresistible mental impulse to believe the existence of a CAUSE, when any

change is observed by us. But the theory of the conditioned virtually implies that we cannot conceive an Absolute commencement of existence. As a consequence of this intellectual inability, thus derived, we cannot conceive any change as a *new* existence, but only as a new form of an old existence ; we are thus under an intellectual necessity to refund every new appearance into a previous one. But this mental weakness, and consequent necessity, is only the causal judgment in its most abstract form. That judgment is thus only a special result of the necessary limitation of thought ; and the virtue of this theory of causality is said to lie in the possibility, which it reveals, of a reconciliation between the doctrine of FREE-WILL or moral liberty, and the axiom that every change implies a cause,—thus opening a new vista of progress to the metaphysician and the scientific divine.

These are specimens of the principle of metaphysical progress which is alleged to be contained in this scientific demonstration of the limitation of human knowledge. They are presented in conjunction with a mass of subtle psychological doctrines, concerning the specific differences of the acts of human consciousness. If the mental phenomena are all “conditioned,” they are not, on that account, entirely similar. Reflection, on the contrary, reveals characteristic features by which they may be grouped into classes ; and reflective analysis, of a very refined sort, is applied to them by Sir William Hamilton, in the discussions which relate to experimental Psychology. In common with the elder Scottish

psychologists, he confines his attention chiefly to that modification of conditioned consciousness which Reid calls *perception*. But he also examines, with singular acuteness, the laws by which conditioned consciousnesses are *associated*, and the marks by which the *representative* knowledge of memory and imagination may be distinguished from the *immediate* consciousness of perception.

The preceding paragraphs contain a slight outline of the *scheme* within which Sir William Hamilton may be described as exhibiting, in *fragments* in his various philosophical writings, his doctrines concerning the metaphysical or necessary conditions of human consciousness, and the psychological modifications which that consciousness is discovered to manifest when it is studied experimentally. In the view we have given, it may appear that, on the whole, this new doctrine issues in a definition of abstract intelligibility, and a metaphysical determination of its necessary contents; rather than in a psychological induction of our varied and vital acts of cognitive intercourse with real existences—physical, human, or divine. The judgment, that Matter exists, is represented as unaccountable, and the theory of perception is cut short on the margin of most interesting questions. In regard to speculative theology, we are told that “the only valid arguments for the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, rest on the ground of man’s moral nature.”

But what definite judgments, it may be asked, should be pronounced concerning this curious and highly ab-

stract speculative theory, the parts of which seem to be formally united with the tenacity of the strictest logic? Scotland has presented, in David Hume, just one other reviewer of knowledge in its First Principles, who can be associated with Sir William Hamilton, in respect of his undaunted resolution to tread only and at all hazards on its extreme margin, as well as his perfect acquaintance with every part of the ground he occupies;—and of the speculations of Hume, we may affirm, that their intellectual force is not yet exhausted, nor has their design and meaning been fully interpreted. But what is the intrinsic value, and probable historic influence of this new, all-embracing theory? What does its presence in the great manufactory of opinion augur for the future?

(4.)

It must be grateful to persons endowed with any expansive intellectual sympathy,—even apart from the question of their positive truth, to contemplate the existence, in our British literature, of new speculations, tending to excite the action of the higher mental faculties. Any book which is fitted thus to increase the quantity of active thought in the world should be welcomed. He who does not look to the philosophical writings of Sir William Hamilton, as to an INTELLECTUAL GYMNASIUM, forgets the chief office of all truly philosophical writing and discourse. The philosophic reader will not inquire first concerning the number of true propositions contained in a speculative work; he will

look to the amount of reflective power which the study of it discovers or tends to generate. Indeed, a contribution to society of fresh and better-disciplined intellectual action, rather than the disclosure of hitherto unknown truth, has been, and perhaps must continue to be, the chief service rendered by this department of literature. The thoughtful reader of this class of books does not, it may well be, review the list of new doctrines which his reading has communicated to him, until he has reckoned up some of the changes in his mental experience which it has promoted. He will look within, to find the intellectual movement which the writing has favoured, as well as without, to learn the propositions it has denied or demonstrated. When he wants to know its character, he will ask, not only what satisfaction, but also what dissatisfaction it has occasioned in his mind,—what fresh longing to go beneath the surface of words and common opinions has been awakened—what ideal associations have been kindled—what new conviction of an end in life has been formed, and what old one deepened. Nourishment of this sort is what the truly philosophical taste craves for, and what the best guides in Philosophy have sought to supply. The vain show, or even the reality, of much miscellaneous information was the sham science against which the old Greek sages waged unceasing war. And they carried it on less by presenting to their disciples systematic intellectual results, than by making them feel the need for such, and the impossibility of the attainment, except through reflecting often and long upon familiar judgments, and the meaning of forms

of words which might be current among them. When we watch the evolution of a dialogue in Plato, instead of obtaining at its close an answer to the question with which we started at the commencement, how often do we learn only that we have *not* gained it,—not that it cannot be found at all, but that the chase is longer and harder than we had supposed, that one discussion, or even a series of discussions, cannot convey it, that sometimes it cannot be conveyed at all from without, but must be drawn forth by reflection from within, and that this very work of reflection itself, to be successful, must not be the work of merely a day or a year—that it is rather the work of life, to be persisted in from day to day and from year to year, the symptom of a growing strength in man's reason, but of a strength which must become weakness, if it is separated from moral courage and calm devotion of the heart and will to God.

We believe it must be the opinion of every reader of these Discussions, who can rise above the sedative influence of system, penetrate through their novel nomenclature to its living meaning, and pass in succession the speculations they contain through a series of independent critical judgments of his own, that,—whatever be the truth of their doctrine, they at least tend powerfully to cherish the philosophical life. But this remark cannot well be dismissed without some comment. Two obvious qualities in the writings of Sir William Hamilton may appear on the surface hardly to agree with their possessing or diffusing intellectual vitality and power. One of

these is, his extraordinary familiarity with the philosophic opinions of all ages and nations ; the other, the method of doctrinal discovery employed by him in the formation of his own theories, which seems to press the life out of the very speculations to which it gives birth. Each quality has a close relation to the intellectual character of this age, as well as to the value of the new doctrine regarded as the science of knowledge.

The extraordinary number of proper names and quotation marks, accumulated upon these pages—especially obvious when they are compared with the pages of Locke, Hume, Reid, or indeed any of the other masters of British thought—indicates, even to the superficial eye, how frequently the fresh flow of original discussion is interrupted by allusions to Greek, Mediæval, Continental, or the earlier British literature ; and by criticisms of the nature and originality of particular opinions held by philosophical writers. The author's own views are seldom projected in complete freedom from the course of previous opinion, and usually they are blended with, or appear to be suggested by, some disquisition which has been found in books.

But these facts do not really subtract, so much as they seem on the surface to do, from the originality of the philosopher, while they even illustrate the relation of Sir William Hamilton to the History of Philosophy in advantageous contrast to a prevailing fashion. We know not any other writer who has proved in how great a degree books may stimulate the intellect into independent action ; nor any recent philosopher who has inter-

preted the theories of the past and the present less biassed by an exaggerated opinion of the exclusive importance of history, or by preconceptions of the historic course of speculation, in its manifold phases in each successive age.

The speculations of Schelling and Hegel in Germany, of Cousin and the eclectics in France, the popular writings of Lewes and Morell, and even the ingenious work of Maurice, illustrate the manner in which the study of Philosophy is becoming a study of History, and how *theories about the past and future course of speculation* are substituted for *abstract speculation itself*. But this exaggeration of the important truth,—that the material to be examined by the philosopher includes the course of *social* thought as well as the phenomena of *individual* self-consciousness, may be apt to realize the fable of the dog and his shadow, by annihilating in the end Philosophy and its History. We must take care not to distort the opinions of the past, in an attempt to fix them down on the Procrustes-bed of an *à priori* theory of what the course of Philosophy in the human race *must* be. One feels as if he were breathing an unhealthy intellectual atmosphere, when he is invited to search, in a narrow modern speculation regarding history, for all the liberal thought which has been produced by the meditation of three thousand years; and he is apt, when thus confined, to long for the bracing exercise of a critical hunt over the open fields of the literature of the past. We cannot avoid suggesting this caution with reference to a prevailing inclination to substitute a preconceived

history of speculative and theological opinions, in the place of the mysteries of philosophy and the revelations addressed to faith in theology, which constitute the proper intellectual and moral aliment of the thinker and the divine.

The reader of the philosophical writings of Sir William Hamilton is in little danger of being seduced into inaction by either of these illusions. Jets of original thought find their way through innumerable crevices in the massive and beautiful structure of references to the literature of the speculations of the world, which remind us that old philosophical opinions are not the chief part of Philosophy. And while the author often indulges in the luxury of a classification of systems, an induction of passages ample enough to vindicate the arrangement is usually presented. Matter extracted from previous writings, without reference to any artificial arrangement at all, is exhibited on almost every page, and in a way likely to cast the seeds of fresh thought in the minds of well-prepared readers.

(5.)

But we must not be tempted into any discussion of the principles with which the remarks we have made bring us into contact—the relation of previous results of human thought to the fresh thinking of the world, the crystallization of old opinion in its connexion with the safe formation of new, individualism or private judgment in contrast with the history of the collective human intelligence. We have still to consider the METHOD in

which the speculative structure we have been describing has been reared.

When we explore the literature of Philosophy, we find that some minds have tried to solve the perennial problem of knowledge and existence, by a series of demonstrations based on abstract metaphysical axioms, after the fashion of geometry and the other *à priori* sciences; and others, on the contrary, by a course of inductive inferences, founded on experiments pursued in their own minds, in analogy with the method followed in physical research. At present we only refer to this fact. We do not raise the question, to what extent, by either of these methods, the objects of philosophic study have been transferred from the indeterminate region of doubt and mere opinion to the narrow territory of certainty,—whether, in short, there is a nucleus of *certain* knowledge already formed within the proper province of the philosopher. But we may affirm that the philosophical aspirations of Europe, in the last two hundred years, have supplied illustrations of the experimental or inductive, and also of the speculative or demonstrative, type of philosophic investigation.

The mental science which is proposed in the Essay of Locke is virtually an Induction of the intellectual phenomena under the name of *ideas*. In that treatise Locke states, and then attempts to verify, the inductive hypothesis—that *experience* is sufficient to account for human knowledge. The statement is contained in the opening chapters of the second book; and the author afterwards tests his hypothesis upon some of those mental

facts, (*e. g.*, our ideas of space, time, number, infinity, power, substance, the material world, and the Divine Being,) which seem most difficult of solution by means of experience. We find Reid, too, in all his principal works, engaged in an observational scrutiny of selected acts of his own mind, which thus yielded to him information and inferences that Locke had failed to note. The region in which the observations and experiments of these and other congenial inquirers were carried on is not, indeed, as with the astronomer or chemist, one which abounds in solid and extended objects. Notwithstanding, it is the method of inductive research which is applied by them to its evanescent phenomena.

But we follow a different method when we accompany Spinoza and Hegel, or even Des Cartes and Leibnitz, from their principles to their conclusions. We are not now putting an inductive interpretation upon mental events; we seem instead to be evolving a series of Demonstrations from assumed abstract principles. We have quitted the region of contingency and probability; we have entered on, and are confined within that of *à priori* speculation. But in the endeavours to exclude mystery from philosophy, by rendering a perfect logical explanation of knowledge, have we not separated knowledge itself from reality, and converted individual life itself into a step in the sublime demonstration? Hegel's extraordinary deduction of All out of Nothing, may be taken for a logical reduction and exposure of the attempt to solve the problem of knowledge and existence merely by abstract speculation; just as Hume, in the last cen-

ture, illustrated the insufficiency of the merely physical Philosophy of his age, by using its principles to dissolve mind and matter into a series of "impressions."

We incline to think that some of the more important differences between the new Scottish doctrine and the older Philosophy of the country, may be traced to the METHOD which Sir William Hamilton has employed in the interpretation of human knowledge, and the formation of the philosophical sciences. We refer, it must be added, rather to the manner in which the views in his writings that are of chief moment have been actually developed, than to the principle of progress or mode of considering the objects which he studies that has been formally announced by him. In the definitions which he has given, and more especially in his elaborate contrast of Philosophy as conversant with "contingent matter," and "to be pursued on the hunting-field of probability," with Mathematics, which treats of "necessary matter," to be reasoned out in the iron chain of demonstration, he seems expressly to ally himself with those who have treated the principles of knowledge as a collection of mental facts, which might be resolved into classes through induction. Psychology is here the root, and the other philosophical sciences (logic, metaphysics, ethics, &c., and whether *à priori* or *à posteriori*) are the branches which grow out of it. Human knowledge, accordingly, whether its ultimate principles consist of "necessary" or "contingent" judgments, is only contingently known by the philosopher, through the reflex observation and classification of these judgments.

But when we turn from these general statements and controversial discussions to study the actual texture of the new doctrine, we find in many parts of it a synthesis of necessary notions and judgments, and not a body of inductive generalizations drawn from mental experience. In some places we seem to be in intercourse with the most illustrious of the scholastic commentators on Aristotle, and not with a writer who lives two centuries after the revolution in the method of physical discovery which was inaugurated by Bacon, and announced as the principle of progress in the mental sciences too, by those masters who formed the rudiments of British Philosophy. On the whole, we appear to be in company with a guide in whose teaching the analysis and synthesis of abstract notions and judgments, as contrasted with the induction of real mental facts, holds nearly the same proportion as it does in the teaching of Des Cartes, whose *constructive* Philosophy is of the demonstrative type.* We feel that we need, in these circumstances, to guard ourselves from the risk of accepting demonstrative consistency in thought, as a ground for belief in doctrines which can only be contingently known; and from thus weaving a web of abstract speculation, instead of unravelling the

* The English reader may now, for the first time, provide himself with a version of the chief philosophical works of Des Cartes. The excellent translation of the "Discours de la Méthode," (Edinburgh, 1850,) done by a young Scottish thinker—Mr. John Veitch—who has studied Des Cartes in the spirit of a true metaphysician, has been followed by a carefully edited translation of the "Meditations" and some parts of the "Principia" from the same pen. This illustrates the comprehensiveness of spirit and enthusiasm with which Philosophy is beginning to be studied in Scotland.

actual web of the human mind. Sometimes, too, when the reader expected to be hunting for legitimate assumptions, with help from the rules of probability and elaborate verification, he finds that he is asked to consign well-defined quantities of meaning to appropriate words, to connect in propositions the words thus carefully freighted with signification, and then to discharge and distribute these meanings, by the aid of logical definition and division, in the shape of highly-refined conclusions. On the whole, probably no other British philosopher can be named who has drawn so large a number of derived propositions from so small a number of assumed ones, using definition, division, formal induction, and syllogism so often and so successfully for awakening his readers to a distinct consciousness of what has been already assumed by implication; who has opened so many paths of argument too narrow to be discerned by common minds, and shed on each a light which reveals their formal connexion with the centre from which they are derived; who, in short, conducts so irresistibly to his numerous conclusions all who have come within the magic circle of his premises. Neither, on the other hand, can we mention any other recent British thinker whose doctrines might more probably stimulate discussion and encounter opposition, if they are criticised as the final metaphysical adjustment of the great problems of the intellectual life of man.

Perhaps this curious discordance between the logical texture of the doctrine and the conviction which it carries,—and which justifies its character as an intellectual

gymnastic, may in part be accounted for by the inclination, especially manifest in his latest writings, which seems to draw our Scottish philosopher away from the old British occupation of adding, through an induction founded on reflection, to our contingent knowledge concerning mental phenomena and first principles,—into his favourite sphere of evolving deductively the necessary consequences of judgments which are assumed to be axiomatic. In saying so we do not mean to deny either the value of such speculative discussions, or that they may, indirectly, promote powerfully an experimental study of the origin, principles of growth, and limits of human knowledge. If only we observe faithfully “the constitutive truths which consciousness immediately reveals,” before they are assumed for axioms in reflective science, we enter without doubt a rich mine of truth in this region of philosophic demonstration, and one likely ultimately to yield valuable inductive classifications regarding man. But it is a mine into which the elder British philosophers have seldom entered; unless Samuel Clarke and his school of philosophical theologians, or Hume, who employs deduction negatively to illustrate the logical incongruity of the received dogmas, may be said to have done so; and it is, moreover, one in which thinkers may go far astray if their first step be a false one. He whose course of philosophical study consists principally in an evolution of the necessary consequences of such judgments, and who is thus elaborating a science of *what must be* in Thought, is in danger of excluding from his regard not a little of *what is* in Man, including

those intellectual powers through which man gains his knowledge of things. He thus virtually separates Belief from Thought; and, finally, having eviscerated knowledge altogether, his Philosophy, instead of an inductive study of man regarded as a knower, becomes an elaborate deduction of the logical contents of a few abstract metaphysical axioms. But is there not a *something* among the First Principles of human knowledge—call it a nucleus of belief in real things or what we will—which cannot be derived by demonstration from the abstract and necessary conditions of thought, and which, when it is made an object of reflex study, must be collected in an inductive examination of the living mind by the psychologist?

We cannot, in our narrow limits here, pursue to a satisfactory conclusion these hints concerning the law of doctrinal discovery in Philosophy, far less apply that conclusion for critically appreciating the massive specimens of the fruits of research in the different departments of reflective labour which this wonderful volume exhibits. It is sufficient to indicate that it seems to contain the seeds of an *à priori* science of human knowledge, and that these seeds have so germinated in the more recent and elaborately developed parts of the book, that the experimental study of Man is well-nigh overshadowed by the elaborate structures of demonstrative metaphysics. The realities of existence are discharged out of knowledge; the abstract conditions of thought, with their necessary consequences and conclusions, are exhibited as a sufficient substitute. The illus-

tration of our meaning must occupy nearly all the remaining part of this Essay.

But before we offer that illustration we may just refer to a great and as yet ill-adjusted theme, which is nearly related to the principle or method of doctrinal progress in philosophical studies,—we mean the theory of the Classification of the Sciences, and especially of the philosophical sciences. This speculation becomes more needful as the division of intellectual labour is accumulating fresh scientific knowledge in different provinces of research ; and, indeed, it must always be interesting to the truly philosophic labourer in any department. Additions to the number and bulk of those organized masses of knowledge, to which the name *science* may be appropriated, generate confusion, if their respective landmarks be not preserved, and if their mutual harmony be disturbed, by the development in one of principles which contradict those alleged to be discovered in another. The philosopher, moreover, is dissatisfied so long as he confines his thought within the province appropriated to any one of the subordinate systems of knowledge usually called by that name ; he seeks for the One Science which absorbs every other, or, if that be unattainable, for the “*Philosophia Prima*,” which deals with the axioms of each, and justifies their separation into distinct yet united provinces. The modern mind has not been uninfluenced by these considerations. Perhaps the most suggestive and luminous of all the works of Lord Bacon is that in which he reviews the condition, prospects, and mutual relation of the various parts of know-

ledge. The progress of knowledge has occasioned many similar surveys, in Britain and on the Continent, in the interval since Bacon. It is the speculation to which some of the most eminent minds of this generation have devoted themselves. We cannot now discuss their suggestive questions or conclusions. Our readers may refer, for example, to the small treatise on "Method" by Coleridge (which was meant to govern the arrangements of the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana,") for the germs of much which has been taught since, in English literature, concerning the laws which govern progressive knowledge, and the classification of the sciences.

We should have been grateful to Sir William Hamilton for more help in answering a question so appropriate to this age, but especially to the present condition of philosophical studies, and to the important modifications in the old Scottish method of philosophic research which his writings sanction. Is Metaphysics conversant with *man*, or with *necessary abstractions*? What is the connexion between the study of the mental phenomena—the inductive generalization of the *mental powers*, commonly called Psychology, and a metaphysical criticism of the *necessary conditions of thought*? What is the ground, in the structure of the living human intelligence, of the *dogmatic assumptions* which stand at the head of the demonstrations of formal logic and metaphysics? Setting out with their respective axioms, the mere logician and metaphysician may construct *à priori* sciences, in a mood of mind as alien from the philosophic spirit as is that of a mere mathematician. We should

regard an exhibition of the connexion between either of these studies and the great philosophic stem, of which they are represented as branches, as a valuable addition to the teaching contained in this volume; in so far as it might contribute philosophic vitality to animate the study of the symbolic formulas of the one and the abstract speculations of the other. This is a service, as regards the former, not rendered by Aristotle, nor by Kant, and which is nevertheless needed, if the Ancient Logic, remodelled by Kant and Sir William Hamilton, is ever to coalesce with the inductive psychology, which has hitherto been characteristic of the philosophical sciences in Great Britain.*

(6.)

But we must bid adieu to these general questions of method, in order that we may study the tendency of the New Scottish doctrine, in the definite metaphysical DISCOVERIES to which it lays claim. The ultimate law of the limitation of human thought—the Law of the Conditioned—is alleged to yield these discoveries. When we are investigating the consequences which are referred

* In this connexion we must recommend the study of an important work in the higher literature of philosophy—the “Prolegomena Logica” of Mr. Mansel. (Oxford, 1851.) In any critical discussion of recent *English* philosophical books, this acute and learned work should occupy a large space. Along with his other writings, it entitles Mr. Mansel to a foremost place among living British psychologists and logicians. With several other recent philosophical works of merit from the same University, it proves an increasing energy and expansion in these studies in Oxford, since the period of a century ago, when Archbishop Whately published his “Elements”—a book which has done much to render logical studies popular.

to it, we may gain some insight into the spirit of that system of doctrine which they contribute to form.

Obvious illustrations of Sir William Hamilton's theory of the weakness of human intelligence are of course supplied by these perennial mysteries of thought—Space and Time. Their attributes have converted them into standing retreats for metaphysical contemplation and logical subtlety from age to age. Through these sublime avenues to the inconceivable, speculative minds have ever been ready to permit thought to wander, and to exhaust itself in the act. The varied specimens of the weakness of intelligence which are exhibited when the mind endeavours either, on the one side, to exhaust Space and Time, or, on the other, to realize their infinity, supply the chief proof alleged in the celebrated controversy with Schelling and Cousin, of "the impossibility of a knowledge of the unconditioned."

But a more familiar kind of mental experience than any afforded by such necessary judgments concerning these mysteries is represented as also the fruit of the intellectual weakness which they so palpably illustrate. If, on the rare occasions on which we formally make the attempt, we find ourselves mentally unable to *exhaust time*, we daily experience the mental inability to *isolate a change*, that is implied in the judgment which inevitably forces us to connect every change with a CAUSE. The "causal judgment" is the most familiar and frequently repeated of all our judgments. It is one which we are forced, whether we will or not, to entertain, whenever we contemplate *changes as such*; and it is on the

tide of this irresistible mental impulse that we may be said to be carried towards the inferences of common life—the general lessons of the physical sciences—and even the august truths of natural and supernatural theology.

This *irresistible mental tendency to attribute every change to a cause* is a specimen of the kind of FACTS which engage the study of metaphysicians. It has been an object of reflective scrutiny by philosophers for ages.* What do we *mean* when we judge that every event must have a cause? Why is this judgment *necessary*? The discussion of these two questions is especially associated with the early history of Scottish Philosophy. It may be said to have occasioned a third question, which is partly involved in each of the others, with regard to the *kind* of necessity of which this famous judgment is the expression. We may glance at the modern history of the controversies immediately connected with the two former questions, before we examine the speculation of Sir William Hamilton.

It was the doctrine promulgated by Hume—that causation is only succession, and that the alleged necessity of the causal judgment is the result of the custom, generated by daily observation, of associating events in orderly sequences—which roused Kant from his “dogmatic slumber,” and also added not a little to the bulk

* A history of opinions concerning the Theory of Causation, in ancient, mediæval, and modern times, in the Indian and Arabian Schools, might fill a volume, and include nearly all the great questions of metaphysical science. We meant to have illustrated this assertion, but our space confines us to a slight reference chiefly to *Scottish* opinions. In its deepest relation, the philosophy of Hume, in all its ramifications, is a peculiar and characteristic Theory of Causation.

of our British philosophical and theological literature. The speculation did good service after its fashion, by proving the impossibility of discovering, through observation, more than various uniformities of succession in the changes of the universe. Does a "cause" mean a *tertium quid*, which may be perceived *through the senses* to be distinct from the mere succession of events? The illusion which might suggest this question, Hume, Brown, and Mill have helped to remove; and they have thereby dispelled a haze which had previously obscured the provinces of experimental research. Observation of successive nature can only reveal phenomena succeeding one another. The practical recognition of this obvious maxim of the Scottish philosophers has illuminated the atmosphere which surrounds scientific observers.

But is the "causal judgment," then, the *gradual* issue of our experimental intercourse with an external universe, in which the events succeed one another in constant and orderly sequences, and is it formed in the mind, in these circumstances, either by induction, or by the force of habit? This favourite hypothesis, in harmony, as it is, with Locke's solution of all mental facts by means of the direct or indirect action of the objects of experience upon the mind, seemed insufficient to account for the irresistible force and the universality of the causal judgment; nor can observation, which only reveals successive events, account for the peculiar ingredient in the meaning of the word *cause* which is not contained in any modification of *succession*. Accordingly, the leading Scottish philosophers since Hume, with Kant in Ger-

many and Cousin in France, have recognised, in this irresistible causal judgment, attributes which cannot be explained either by induction or by the habit of observing events, and far less by any single act of observation. With various modifications, they wisely hold in common the opinion, that this curious mental state is due to something deeper than a perception of the changes in the external world, or even than the consciousness of volition and its results. Causality is, in short, a *necessity*, which, according to Reid, compels the mind to recognise a cause ;" according to Brown, a "constancy in sequences ;" and which, according to Kant, connects events in thought as a condition indispensable to our thinking about them at all. But it is a necessity which they unanimously regard as an *unaccountable* law of the mind—"a primary datum of intelligence."

Sir William Hamilton coincides with these philosophers in the opinion that any modification of experience is insufficient to explain this mental phenomenon of causality. But he differs from them too. He professes to solve the difficulty which has so long puzzled the metaphysicians, by means of that law of the necessary confinement of all thought "in the conditioned interval between unconditioned contradictory extremes or poles," which, as we said, he has copiously illustrated in our judgments concerning Space and Time. This alleged discovery is, perhaps, the most characteristic expression of the genius and tendency of the new Scottish Philosophy. Those who wish to interpret that Philosophy in its deeper relations to the future history of opi-

nion, must here be willing to descend beneath those forms of expression in which we daily give utterance to our irresistible causal judgment, in order to appreciate the subtle and ingenious interpretation put upon them by Sir William Hamilton. We shall here quote the passage in the Discussions which most effectively expounds the proposed theory:—

“The phenomenon of causality seems nothing more than a corollary of the law of the conditioned, in its application to a thing thought under the form or mental category of *existence relative in time*. We cannot know, we cannot think a thing, except under the attribute of *existence*; we cannot know or think a thing to exist, except as in *time*; and we cannot know or think a thing to exist in time, and think it *absolutely to commence*. Now this at once imposes on us the judgment of causality. And thus:—An object is given us, either by our presentative, or by our representative, faculty. As given, we cannot but think it existent, and existent in time. But to say, that we cannot but think it to exist, is to say that we are unable to think it non-existent,—to think it away,—to annihilate it in thought. And this we cannot do. We may turn away from it; we may engross our attention with other objects; we may, consequently, exclude it from our thought. That we need not think a thing is certain; but thinking it, it is equally certain that we cannot think it not to exist. So much will be at once admitted of the present; but it may probably be denied of the past and future. Yet if we make the experiment, we shall find the mental annihilation of an

object, equally impossible under time past, and present, and future. To obviate, however, misapprehension, a very simple observation may be proper. In saying that it is impossible to annihilate an object in thought, in other words, to conceive as non-existent what had been conceived as existent,—it is of course not meant, that it is impossible to imagine the object wholly changed in form. We can represent to ourselves the elements of which it is composed, divided, dissipated, modified in any way ; we can imagine anything of it, short of annihilation. But the complement, the quantum, of existence, thought as constituent of an object ;—*that* we cannot represent to ourselves, either as increased, without abstraction from other entities, or as diminished, without annexation to them. In short, we are unable to construe it in thought, that there can be an atom absolutely added to, or absolutely taken away from, existence in general. Let us make the experiment. Let us form to ourselves a concept of the universe. Now, we are unable to think, that the quantity of existence, of which the universe is the conceived sum, can either be amplified or diminished. We are able to conceive, indeed, the creation of a world ; this, indeed, as easily as the creation of an atom. But what is our thought of creation ? It is not a thought of the mere springing of nothing into something. On the contrary, creation is conceived, and is by us conceivable, only as the evolution of existence from possibility into actuality, by the fiat of the Deity. Let us place ourselves in imagination at its very crisis. Now, can we construe it to thought, that the moment after the

universe flashed into material reality, into manifested being, that there was a larger complement of existence in the universe and its author together, than, the moment before, there subsisted in the Deity alone? This we are unable to imagine. And what is true of our concept of creation, holds of our concept of annihilation. We can think no real annihilation,—no absolute sinking of something into nothing. But, as creation is cogitable by us, only as a putting forth of divine power, so is annihilation by us only conceivable, as a withdrawal of that same power. All that is now *actually* existent in the universe, this we think and must think, as having, prior to creation, *virtually* existed in the creation; and in imagining the universe to be annihilated, we can only conceive this, as the retractation by the Deity of an overt energy into latent power.—In short, it is impossible for the human mind to think what it thinks existent, lapsing into non-existence, either in time past or in time future.

“Our inability to think what we have once conceived existent in *time*, as in time becoming non-existent, corresponds with our inability to think what we have conceived as existent in *space*, as in space becoming non-existent. We cannot realize it to thought, that a thing should be extruded, either from the one quantity or from the other. Hence, under extension, the law of *ultimate incompressibility*; under protension, the law of *cause and effect*.

“I have hitherto spoken only of one inconceivable pole of the conditioned, in its application to existence in time, of the absolute extreme, as absolute commence-

ment and absolute termination. The counter or infinite extreme, as infinite regress or non-commencement, and infinite progress or non-termination, is equally unthinkable. With this latter we have, however, at present nothing to do. Indeed, as not obtrusive, the Infinite figures far less in the theatre of mind, and exerts a far inferior influence in the modification of thought, than the Absolute. It is, in fact, both distant and deliquescent ; and, in place of meeting us at every turn, it requires some exertion on our part to seek it out. It is the former and obtrusive extreme,—it is the Absolute alone which constitutes and explains the mental manifestation of the causal judgment. An object is presented to our observation which has phenomenally begun to be. But we cannot construe it to thought, that the object, that is, *this determinate complement of existence*, had really no being at any past moment ; because, in that case, once thinking it as existent, we should again think it as non-existent ; which is for us impossible. What then can we—must we do ? That the phenomenon presented to us, did, as a phenomenon, begin to be,—this we know by experience ; but that the elements of its existence only began, when the phenomenon which they constitute came into manifested being,—this we are wholly unable to think. In these circumstances how do we proceed ? There is for us only one possible way. We are compelled to believe that the object (that is, the certain *quale* and *quantum* of being) whose *phenomenal* rise into existence we have witnessed, did really exist, prior to this rise, under other forms. But to say that a thing

previously existed under different forms, is only to say, in other words, that *a thing had causes.*”—(Pp. 591-4.)

It is further maintained by Sir William Hamilton that the inability we experience to separate a *phenomenon* from its *substance* in thought, may be accounted for by the Law of the Conditioned, which forbids us to conceive existence unconditionally limited. But as he has not formally expounded the process through which the judgment of substance is thus imposed upon the mind, we shall confine our attention, in the remarks which follow, chiefly to his proposed reduction of the causal judgment.

This proposed analysis of the judgments of Causality and Substance is a singularly ingenious speculation, and one as comprehensive in its scope as is human knowledge, with which the mental facts, for which it professes to account, are universally blended. But some difficulties seem to lie in the way of a recognition of this new doctrine among the articles of philosophic faith, as a perfectly satisfactory account of the *meaning* and *necessity* of these judgments. A few of these we shall now take the liberty to indicate. But before doing so we must remark, how difficult it is to infuse a common meaning into the words and phrases proper to philosophic discussion, and to retain that meaning there in its original integrity. Nowhere are writers more apt to be at cross-purposes with their readers, than when they are employing the small stock of abstract words which are the instruments of speculation, but which living thought so seldom visits. The meaning which has been lodged

in the words is apt to ebb away, even while the thinker himself is in the act of using them; and the mob of critics, who do not send the living stream of reflection appropriate to the vocables of philosophy through the pages of a philosophic discussion, necessarily reject, as unreal, a meaning which transcends the level of the state of mind in which they address themselves to the discussion. In our comments we must not forget this general principle, as we hope ourselves to have the benefit of it.

When the great modern astronomer would verify the application to the planetary system of that law of motion upon earth which is illustrated in the fall of a stone or an apple, he vindicated its applicability, by proving that the rate of motion in the celestial and the terrestrial bodies corresponds. After Locke had announced his proposed generalization of human knowledge into Experience, he sought—in the spirit of the inductive method—for what we may term *crucial instances* of his proposed induction, that he might thereby vindicate experimentally his proposed theory. Now the explanation of the “causal judgment” proposed by Sir William Hamilton, which carries consequences so weighty in its train, may be studied from the point of view of that *inductive method* from which the Science and Philosophy of Britain thus drew their inspiration in the past. We may here accordingly refer to the Facts of mental experience. We may investigate that third question already raised,—what is the character of the “mental necessity” of which we are conscious in every causal judgment;

and, especially, does it correspond with those acts of intelligence and belief which illustrate the highest law of the weakness of thought? There is one species of necessity with which we are familiar, in our notions and judgments concerning space and time. Thus we *cannot imagine* "an absolute commencement of time," or "an absolute boundary of space," although we may put in words an expression of the implied unthinkable judgments;—and we *cannot imagine* "a square circle," for any proposition in which the implied judgment might be expressed is only an empty sound. The science of Geometry may be roughly said to supply a collection of specimens of *this sort* of necessary judgments. The contrary of these geometrical truths cannot be conceived or imagined.

Now it is here that, in the spirit of the British Philosophy, we may apply the scrutiny of the inductive method to the proposed theory of causality. Is the causal judgment the efflux of a mental necessity, similar in kind to this, for example, which reigns in the region of mathematical demonstration? Are we unable to conceive the absence of a cause, when a change is perceived or imagined by us, in the same way as we are unable to conceive a square circle or an absolute commencement of time? Sir William Hamilton has pointed out the weakness of the attempts to resolve the causal judgment into the Principle of Contradiction, which have been made in the opposite schools of Locke and Leibnitz;—a method of proof in which it is virtually ranked among merely logical judgments, (analytical

judgments *à priori*;) and in which the metaphysician argues in a circle when he would make good his point. That every *effect* must have a cause may be proved after this fashion ; but that every *change* must have a cause is not so implied in the meaning of the word change that the contrary proposition is a logical contradiction. But, while we are satisfied that the *causal necessity* is thus to be distinguished from a merely *logical* or *formal necessity*, we are not equally satisfied that it may be regarded as precisely similar in kind with the necessity which belongs, for example, to our judgments concerning space and time. We can only indicate in outline our view of some lines of thought which cannot here be described.

First of all, then, we hesitate to recognise the truth of the assumption that we are unable to represent to ourselves *in imagination* an absolute commencement—an unconditional limitation of *existence* ; even as without doubt we are unable to conceive an absolute commencement or unconditional limitation of *time*. We do not feel that existence, as applicable to causality, can neither be added to nor taken from in imagination, just as time or space can neither be absolutely increased nor absolutely diminished in thought. We do seem to be able to imagine an absolute negation of existence at one moment and the existence of the universe in the next. In short, we do not feel, in the illustration drawn from “creation,” that we are compelled to recognise the necessity—for the imagination of a “previous form of existence,” as often as a change is perceived or imagined. And we are con-

firmed in this hesitation by the express testimony of Hume and the implied testimony of Reid.

In the next place, is not the relation of an effect to its cause conceived to be different in kind from that of a contained part to a containing whole out of which it has been evolved? Is the universe of *changes*, as known, merely a variety of forms implicitly contained in an absolute identity of existence? Varied illustrations might be offered, not easily to be reconciled with a description of the causal judgment, which asserts that no more is implied in it than simply an assertion that the object in which the change is manifested must have previously existed under a different form; or than an inability to “deny in thought that the object which we apprehend as beginning to be really so begins,”—with the implied necessity to affirm “the identity of its present sum of being with the sum of its past existence.”—(P. 586.) Is not this to represent the causal judgment as an affirmation that every “change” must be only an apparent, and not a real commencement of existence—that it must be one of the many forms common to the only real, and yet unknown existence, which underlies them all? But does that expression truly exhaust, or indeed adequately represent, the meaning of the word *cause*, and of the affirmation that all changes must be caused? Here we must distinguish, it is true, between creation and new modifications of created existences. But take any actual instance even of the latter. We witness the movement of a planet, and the phenomenon occasions a causal judgment. But does that

judgment signify merely our inability to avoid imagining that the motion previously existed in a different form? Rather do we not, through that judgment, express a belief, of which we *can* conceive ourselves rid, concerning things or real existences:—that there must be *more objective existences* in the universe than merely the changing object which we observe? The conviction of a cause is elicited, not merely by a constant succession of events, but also by a single or isolated event; and Dr. Brown has doubtless misunderstood the question, in so far as he has confined his regard to the contemplation of “invariable succession.” On the occasion of a *single* change, belief is projected, as it were, into the realm of things not yet observed, and of which we may never have any observation; but though we may, in consequence, remain always in ignorance of the special conditions of the supposed change, the conviction that *objective conditions there must be* still abides in the mind. This belief, or indirect perception, propels scientific research in quest of them. And it has the characteristics of a mental state, different in essential particulars from that which is experienced when we try to realize in imagination an absolute beginning of time, or the contrary of the mathematical axioms and of any of the necessary deductions from them. Farther, that *change of form with an identity of existence* does not satisfactorily represent what is believed in (what may be called) the *causal* state of mind, might be suggested by the circumstance, that the question concerning the *cause* of this universal flux and reflux of existence, and of each separate element in

it, remains in unabated force, after each new manifestation of existence has been thus recognised in imagination to have existed previously.

Causality thus appears, in our actual mental experience, not as an inevitable *manner of conceiving*, but as an inevitable expression of *a human belief* regarding real things. And does not this belief forbid us to transform *what is judged to be real whether conceived of or not*, into the subjective issue of a mental impotence to imagine either of two contradictories—an Absolute or an Infinite Existence? Surely something has been omitted in any description of the causal judgment which seems to imply that a cause is merely a result of the abstract conditions which hinder human thought from realizing unconditioned existence. Are we not conscious of believing, and therefore of knowing, in the finite causes of the finite effects around us, realities, which may not, except by discharging the very life of its proper conviction out of our causal judgment, be withdrawn from this part of our knowledge? Are not the objects which suggest that judgment anchored, as it were, in a sphere, not beyond knowledge, where they resist the stream which carries the parts of space and the periods of time into the negation of an Unconditioned? If so, they cannot be virtually created through the impotence of man to realize the Absolute in existence. Nature is known as a collection of finite existences, real although finite, and not as the result of a series of ineffectual struggles, by the imagination, to realize unconditioned limitation of existence in time. Are we then to recognise

as specimens of the same universal mental law, on the one hand, the inability to exhaust *time* in imagination, and on the other, this alleged inability to exhaust *existence* in time, with its implied abstract necessity for conceiving every new phenomenon to be only another form of an identical existence? We are carried irresistibly, by a sublime force of the philosophic imagination, towards an Unconditioned time, when we try to conceive any finite period as the whole; this is, as it were, a wave of the philosophic imagination, surging up to its extreme limits. But it is surely on more than a mere wave of the imagination that we are carried back from a real event to its real cause. It is on the solid ground of the intellectual common sense, where we find ourselves in cognitive intercourse with existences, which the very causal judgment itself, as one of the manifestations of the common sense, forbids us thus to sublimate into the Unconditioned.

If, then, we contemplate the proposed Law of the Conditioned, in analogy with the spirit of the British type of philosophic method, as an inductive generalization, gathered through a series of mental experiments on our necessary judgments concerning *space*, *time*, and *existence*, it does not seem that we can include in that induction, a mental fact, which is virtually a judgment concerning real things,—a belief, suggested by every real event, that there is more real existence in the universe than itself. Belief cannot subsist in an absolute negation of knowledge with respect to that which is believed; although the needed knowledge may some-

times be only a bare judgment of objective existence. To know or believe that an object *really exists*, implies the addition of a new mental element, which seems to exclude the mental act in which it is essentially contained, from the range of a law that may account for acts of mind which relate to space and time.

In brief, it might seem that the causal judgment is *not* necessary to thought, if the word "necessary" means that we cannot realize *in representation*, an object non-existent now, and in existence an hour hence. But the causal judgment *is* necessary to thought, in the sense that we cannot realize *in belief* that there is no cause of a perceived change. Every object in which a change is observed, suggests the inevitable belief, that it is not the *only* object in the universe, and that the changes which it manifests are dependent on the existence of other objects. This inevitable belief, with which the causal judgment is charged prior to all experience, is a part of the mental phenomenon to be accounted for; and we may not assume that this belief *in objective existences* is contained under the abstract conditions of the thinkable, just as a belief in the speculative truths of mathematics is involved in the inability to realize *in imagination* the reverse of the successive conclusions contained in that science. In regard to causality, the problem seems to be,—to account for a necessary belief concerning objective existence, which, although not contained in the abstract conditions of the representable, is yet forced upon the mind even when it is in ignorance of *the* cause of any particular change. As in Logic, we find speci-

mens of analytic judgments *à priori*; and, in Mathematics, of synthetic judgments *à priori*, which we may call speculative; is not the Causal Judgment a specimen of a class of judgments prior to experience and synthetic, yet not merely speculative or ideal, but charged with a conviction concerning what is real, and the absence of which can, moreover, be realized in thought?

But even if the causal judgment be evolved, like geometrical necessity, so that we cannot conceive a change, except as a new form of a previous existence, it may be doubted whether an inability to *conceive* implies, or is equivalent to, a necessity to *believe*. In this view, we might proceed to follow the new speculation *deductively*—as we have already suggested how it might be examined *inductively*, and endeavour to determine the connexion between a conviction of real existence on the one hand, and a mathematical or ideal necessity of thought deduced from the abstract conditions of the thinkable on the other. Assuming the operations, in the mine of *à priori* abstractions, to have been successful, in the discovery that the ideal existence of a cause is implied in any possible mental representation of change, it is still a question whether we can firmly cross from the ideal to the real and objective on these lines of abstract thought. We shall not here engage in a kind of discussion which has often been already raised, for instance, by the abstract proof of the divine existence proposed by Des Cartes, or the abstract demonstrations of the foundation of Natural Theology, by Dr. Samuel Clarke and others. We are content thus to suggest speculations which bear

some analogy with this new scientific demonstration of the necessity of a cause on the occurrence of a change.*

But what *is* the true Theory of Causation? it may be here asked. If the causal judgment can neither be resolved, by psychological induction, into the Law of the Conditioned, nor deduced by scientific demonstration from that abstract Law, may it not be at least associated meanwhile with some other recognised order of our mental phenomena? We do not here profess to offer *any* theory for the satisfaction of this question. But perhaps we may gain a deeper insight of the question itself, if we contemplate it in association with the universal tendency of man to believe in the existence of a Supernatural Being, whose attributes transcend human imagination. Every event which can be imagined—every conceivable addition, through the causal judgment, to our knowledge of real objects, leaves the mind dissatisfied. All visible changes “cry out” for an origin which transcends imagination. We do not, of course, in thus referring to them, account for either of these beliefs—far less for the one by means of the other. We only suggest, as a topic for meditation, the analogies between the conviction which is inevitably experienced when a change in any object is observed, and the mysterious faith in the existence of a First Cause, which

* In reference to the preceding criticism of the derivation of the causal judgment from the doctrine of the Unconditioned, the author desires to state, that he hopes on a future occasion to expound and illustrate, in more detail, the views given in the text; supplying at the same time such modifications as more matured thinking may suggest.

underlies human life, and is developed in the study of those indications of intelligence with which the arrangements of nature are charged. Might not the recognition of this causal belief, with its manifold forms, help to relieve the theological argument founded upon the exhibition of design in a finite universe, from the inconsequence of professing more in the conclusion than was implied in the premises? The primary theistic judgment is perhaps just one of the many modes in which our rudimentary conviction concerning the relations of real existence expresses itself. In its lower form, that rudimentary conviction may be manifested in what is called the judgment of Causality. In its higher or theological forms, it expresses our faith in the existence of a Cause which transcends imagination, and fully satisfies the craving which every perceived change suggests. But, apart from experience, each form of the belief implies a knowledge of *existence* and nothing more. It is an expression of our conviction that every conceivable change—every phenomenon which begins to exist, is dependent on something beyond itself, so that if that “something” had no real existence, the change could not have been realized. And the profound conviction of the universal dependence of conceivable changes on an inconceivable Being or First Cause, might be elicited both by the act of Creation, and by the phenomenal modifications of the created universe subsequent to creation. The study of the particular antecedents of particular consequences by degrees adds intelligence to our original causal belief. Our vague supernatural judgment, too, is

gradually matured into a conviction of the Personal God, through reflection on our own moral agency ; through the study of the plans of the Divine Free Agent, whose designs constitute that *meaning* in Nature of which Science is the interpretation ; and, finally, through intercourse with God in His miraculous revelation. That our elementary beliefs may be thus educated into an intelligence which far transcends their original dimness, we have ample proof, in the contrast between the rudimentary perception of matter, and the comparative blaze of light which physical research has shed upon the outer world.* Let us add, that this suggestion of the connexion between the belief developed by every change, and the belief in a Supernatural Cause of the universe may, of course, be combined with more than one special hypothesis concerning the precise relation of the Divine Being to each separate successive change. The rival theories of Occasional Causes, and a Pre-established harmony, at variance, as they seem to be, in regard to a problem which is perhaps indeterminate, may continue their controversy, if it be really more than a merely verbal one ; and different philosophical hypotheses concerning the transcendent meaning of a miracle, founded on these rival schemes, may continue to find favour. Thoughtful minds may meantime consider whether a study of the Causal, in association with the Theistic judgment, be not fitted to yield some nourishment for the growth of a Philosophy, spiritual yet not illusory,

* The study of Berkeley's *theory of vision*, and similar speculations, may illustrate this sentence.

physical and yet not merely mechanical, and which might interpret the Ideas of Plato and the Forms of Bacon, in analogy with the style of thought peculiar to this age.

But we must return from this digression. We have pointed to some of the difficulties which may seem to meet us, when we apply either an inductive or deductive test to Sir W. Hamilton's solution of our judgments concerning Cause and Substance. But apart from the question of its consistency with the facts of our mental experience, some readers may be unable to reconcile parts of these memorable speculations of Sir William Hamilton with the other principles of his own Philosophy. A recognition of the faith and intuition named Perception, for example, is represented as a safeguard against Scepticism, and perception is described as a direct cognitive intercourse of man with the material world. But what virtue or meaning is there, it may be asked, in this faith, if a deeper insight reveals a higher law, which resolves substances and causes, and thus all finite realities, into results of negative judgments, involved in the abstract conditions of the thinkable by which existence is, so to speak, *fnited*? The Unconditioned becomes the only reality; and yet the Unconditioned, as a negation of all knowledge, and thus of the knowledge of its own reality, cannot be an object of human belief. Even the vista of moral liberty seems to open upon us, only that we may witness the moral agents disappearing, with substances and causes, mental and material, in the darkness of the negative and Unconditioned.

A full development of the Philosophy of the Conditioned might, we believe, remove many of these difficulties respecting its harmony with mental facts, and its internal consistency. In the present slight sketch of the recent evolution of Scottish metaphysics, we have only indicated some tendencies which seem invincible, if an exhaustive theory of the necessary conditions of pure thought is gradually to become the universal solvent of the mysteries of mind. When the thinker withdraws himself into the sphere of abstract metaphysical demonstration, and yields to its influences, he is perhaps apt too soon to be persuaded that, when thus engaged, he has been solving the relations of our real knowledge and putting actual human judgments through the ordeal of philosophic criticism. At any rate, a metaphysical evolution of the ideal conditions of thought, which does not coalesce with our experience of the intellectual life,—which divorces thought from Existence—and seems to recognise a Belief that is wholly void of intelligence, has only imperfectly developed the theory of human knowledge.

Here at the close of this long disquisition, we find that we are hardly upon the threshold of our subject. In our course we have fixed our attention chiefly upon the principle of progress which distinguishes the Scottish National Metaphysic, as that is revealed even in its historic rudiments; and we have referred to symptoms in the speculations of Sir William Hamilton that may seem to some of his readers to imply a departure from

the method of doctrinal research by which reflective studies in Scotland have hitherto been characterized. Even on this comparatively narrow foundation of historical criticism, we ought, with a view to an adequate appreciation of these new elements of Scottish speculation, to study them in connexion with the critical method and system of KANT and the school of rational psychologists. And a just judgment of the elevated place which SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON occupies, as the representative of the national intellect, applied to speculations more abstract and comprehensive than any in which that intellect has hitherto been engaged, requires some favourable comparison of his philosophical fragments, and of the system into which they tend to form themselves, with the opinions of two other great masters of modern speculation—SCHELLING and COUSIN. But we should be giving a proof that we have not yet learned the most precious lesson which can be drawn from metaphysical contemplation, if we ventured, especially in what must be the closing stage of our present journey, to explore these labyrinths.

The Philosophy of the Conditioned is exhibited in these Discussions in some of its *applications* as well as in its abstract character. But our space is more than exhausted. An interesting course of thought might be pursued, in reference to the great outstanding phenomena presented in past controversies of opinion in Philosophy and Theology. As it is, we would only suggest the value of some more precise and available canon of conciliatory criticism, than the mere proclamation of *human ignorance* concerning all

which transcends contemporaneous and successive nature. How can faith be maintained amid an absolute negation of knowledge, which implies a total suspense of judgment? Belief *may* consist with an imperfection of knowledge, but how shall it be applied at all to that of which we can know nothing, and which, on this ground, admits a conciliation of all doctrinal affirmations that do not involve logical contradiction? Philosophy and theology, in as far as they are regions of faith, and yet regions of mystery, can neither, on the one hand, be wholly consigned to the unknown, nor, on the other hand, be conquered by reasoning. Are they not eminently the middle ground, from which we wander, alike when we indulge in a universal suspense of judgment, and when we demand *premises* for *every judgment* which we accept as an article of faith? Sir William Hamilton promises that "a world of false, pestilent, and presumptuous reasoning, by which philosophy and theology are now equally discredited, would be abolished" in the recognition of *our impotence to comprehend what however we must admit*. But this principle has not yet been pursued by him, in its articulate application to the chief doctrines of theology. In itself it might suggest more than a long Essay. It is a great but profoundly interesting research that is needed, in order to determine whether beliefs, *apparently* discordant in intelligence, may be *really* in harmony, and to detect those doctrines which, as mutually contradictory, cannot co-exist. The sanguine mind may fondly imagine Philosophy to contribute some help, in the Christendom of

the Future, to undo, by a comprehensive conciliation, a part of its own work of excessive elaboration of dogmatic forms of thought and expression in the Christendom of the Past; and thus to atone for the increasing anarchy of sects, which speculation has encouraged in the Church, by a revision of theological science which should distinguish dogmatic forms that are *essentially exclusive* from those which *may* co-exist in thought. For conducting the Church towards this Ideal of Christian Science, we look with more hope to the presence and slowly-diffused influence of individual minds, of the comprehensive type and animated with the Christian spirit, than to any synod or conclave of theologians formally met to adjust doctrinal differences.

We close this Essay with an expression of our gratitude to Sir William Hamilton for the help which the results of his many years of labour must yield, to those who desire to promote expansive thought and the philosophic spirit in every department in which the human intellect may be employed. Whether or not the leaders of Scottish thought, in coming generations, shall see in all the philosophic watch-towers which he has reared for the reflective review of human knowledge, the points from which a complete and satisfying survey of the mysteries of our intellectual life may be attained, at any rate, every true lover of such enterprises, in time to come, must wonder when he meditates on the logical symmetry of the intellectual work of Hamilton, or when he is led to occupy a contemplative position on any one of its un-

finished monumental pillars, adorned so richly with memorials of the philosophic labours of former ages. Even if he should terminate his study of this unfinished structure of Scottish speculative genius, in the opinion that it affords only an inadequate position for a full review of Human Knowledge, he must still go forth from his meditations among these master-works of one of the most extraordinary minds of modern times, in a humbler spirit, and move thereafter with a more cautious tread, when he has returned to take his part either in the vexing controversies of common life, or in those deeper questions which perplex the spirits of men from age to age.

ESSAY IV.

THE INSOLUBLE PROBLEM: A DISQUISITION ON
OUR IGNORANCE OF THE INFINITE.

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CAN GOD be known by man?—If a *negative* answer must be returned to this question, our deepest feelings are, it seems, founded on illusion, and human regard should be contracted within the limits of this earthly life. Religious belief cannot exist when its nominal object is wholly unknown; and all the words which express what is called theological knowledge should be excluded from language as unmeaning sound. We cannot obtain such knowledge either naturally or supernaturally. Can a Being in any sense be “revealed” who is absolutely incognisable? Is not the revelation impossible, or at least incapable of being attested by evidence?—But if this result is at variance with our moral aspirations, and even with the necessities of reason, an *affirmative* reply seems, on the other hand, involved in inextricable intellectual difficulties. How can the infinite God be in any way an object of our thoughts?

* See *North British Review*, No. XLIII. (November 1854.)

To conceive an object is in some sense to define it. Definition implies limitation, and an infinite object cannot be limited. Moreover, unlimited Being is not only inconceivable Being. His very existence does not logically consist with the existence of any other being besides. In every act of knowledge I must distinguish myself from the object known by me. Every object that exists must therefore be either limited—by the subtraction from it of my finite being, or, as infinite, must absorb me and all the universe into itself. An infinite Being, existing in plurality—as One among many, seems an express contradiction; while the only logical solution of the difficulty lands us in the doctrine of Spinoza. Atheism or Pantheism are thus the only alternatives, when the response to our question is logically weighed.

The mental habits of the majority of mankind permit them to evade the horns of this dilemma. The unreflecting multitude are not disturbed by the intellectual horn; the decay of religious belief unhappily relieves some acute reasoners from the pressure of the other. But is the *harmonious* development of religious faith and speculative reason impossible? Neither Scepticism on the one hand, nor Fanaticism on the other, can silence this question. Faith in God has, in all ages, been the stay of men. But the history of mankind also proves, that subtle speculation has more than once withdrawn the object of that faith from the reason, and therefore from the hearts of thoughtful men. In modern times, Spinoza* has directed a remorseless logic to the Theory

* See the "Ethics" of Spinoza: Part I. The force of Spinoza's rea-

of the Universe. The mind of Europe, especially of Germany, has been influenced by similar trains of reasoning within the last half century, in a manner which ought to satisfy the guides of theological belief, that the dilemma now referred to may be a serious obstruction to the religious, because to the intellectual life of some. The condition of mind occasioned by the discussion of Theism, after this fashion, has so much affected even our own insular habits of thought, that some form of the dilemma is, at the present day, the chief force which draws grave and earnest persons among us into the metaphysical arena. They want to escape from the contradictions which speculative reasoning has accumulated on their course of religious faith,—and that not by the dishonest process of shutting their eyes to them, but by the manly and candid one of thinking more deeply.

soning depends upon the assumption implied in his definition of the word "Substance," (*i.e.*, *id quod in se est et per se concipitur; hoc est id, cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debeat*), joined to his definition of the word "God." Hence "*una substantia non potest produci ab alia substantia*, (Prop. VI.) *Omnis substantia est necessario infinita*," (Prop. VIII.,) and *PRÆTER DEUM NULLA DARI NEQUE CONCIPI POTEST SUBSTANTIA*, (Prop. XIV.) The *First Part* of the "Ethics" should be studied by philosophical theologians, as an illustration of the consequences of assuming that the logical faculty of man is co-extensive with Being, and able to solve the problem of unconditioned existence. We can here only name the "*Réfutation de Spinoza par Leibnitz*," just published for the first time from the Hanoverian MSS., by an accomplished French scholar, M. Foucher de Careil, (Paris, 1854,)—an interesting recent addition to our continental literature of philosophy.—The real significance of the theology of Spinoza is the great metaphysical question of this age. For an account of this singular recluse, see his "Life" by John Colerus, minister of the Lutheran Church at the Hague; and also the "*Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de Spinoza*," by Amand Saintes. Editions of the works of Spinoza have multiplied in this century. Germany has supplied three, and in France they have been translated by Saisset.

A motive of this sort has at least given birth to the Essay of Mr. Calderwood.* It is the latest, and a significant addition to our Scottish speculative literature. The author has betaken himself to that highest part of the metaphysical field which our earlier Scottish philosophers had not overtaken, and into which our living ones have now advanced. This small volume represents the fact, that Scottish metaphysicians of this generation are preparing to investigate a more comprehensive question than that which busied their predecessors, in the last and early part of the present century. Here a word of explanation may be appropriate.

METAPHYSIC is the study of reason † in its ultimate relations to Being. (Metaphysics and Logic are the two cognate departments of intellectual philosophy, or the theory of human knowledge. The metaphysician views knowledge in relation to *existence*, and thus as a collection of beliefs; the logician as *pure thought*, and therefore without respect to real objects.—The initial part of metaphysic is an investigation of the origin, limits, and certainty of our knowledge of the *material* world. The higher metaphysic contemplates the foundation and nature of *theological* knowledge, the relation of creation and human personality to the Being and Go-

* The Philosophy of the Infinite, with Special Reference to the Theories of Sir W. Hamilton and M. Cousin. Edinburgh, 1854.

† *Reason, i.e.*, the power by which we distinguish objective reality from illusion—must not be confused with *Reasoning*, which is the chief modification of Reason *in its logical and scientific function*. In “perception” and “self-consciousness” Reason recognises Matter and our own Personality as real. Whether Infinite and Divine Being be an object of human Reason, is the debated question referred to in this Essay.

vernment of God, and the problem of Existence viewed as an all-comprehensive unity.) The Scottish votaries of this study were at first attracted to the material world, and the relation of reason to *finite* beings. Is *matter*, they inquired, an object of human knowledge and thought? We all know the Scottish perseverance and sagacity which Reid and his associates devoted to this question. The problem regarding *infinite* Being Reid declined, even in the form in which it was proposed by Dr. Samuel Clarke.* The "decay of Natural Theology in England," with which Leibnitz reproaches Clarke in the opening sentence of their famous Correspondence, might with more justice be addressed to Scotland,† whose men of thought have not until recently devoted themselves to a part of metaphysics that brought honour to England in the golden age of its purely speculative literature—the half century which followed the

* See Reid's "Essays on the Intellectual Powers," iii. 3.

† We cannot find a text-book of Metaphysics in the whole range of Scottish literature. Reid's speculations on *matter*,—scattered throughout his philosophical works, include nearly all that our country produced in the early period of Scottish metaphysics. Natural or Rational Theology, as the higher branch of Metaphysics, is almost unknown in Scotland—a very different study having usurped the name. Not to speak of Hutcheson, another predecessor of Reid,—ANDREW BAXTER, in his "Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul," (London, 1737,) has pushed these researches, in some respects, into higher departments than either Reid or his successors. The "Inquiry" contains some remarkable speculations on Time and Space, and bears marks of the influence of Clarke, and the school of English metaphysics which followed the publication of Locke's Essay.—HUME has discussed Time and Space, and especially Causation, in his earlier work, and also in his Essays, while his speculations on Natural Theology suggest some of the profoundest questions that have ever been raised in the higher Metaphysics. His view of Causation is in fact the Key to all that Hume has written in Philosophy and Theology.

publication of Locke's *Essay* (1690-1740)—which witnessed the controversies of Locke with Stillingfleet—of Clarke with Butler, and of Clarke with Leibnitz—and their reverberations in the writings of Collins and Law, Joseph Clarke and Jackson.*

In these circumstances, we welcome the appearance of Mr. Calderwood's recent work on the "Infinite,"—a theme so interesting to every elevated mind. We augur good results from the application of Scottish genius to a class of questions which have been too much abandoned to the bigoted adherents of a sect of foreign metaphysicians. Mr. Calderwood expatiates over this high region, whose character and main outlines are well indicated in the headings of his chapters. As a symptom of the fact, that thoughtful persons at the present day are engaged in the same quarter, his volume might be styled a "representative" book. It is the reverse of representative, however, in the sense of servile discipleship. It is the most independent metaphysical *Essay* we have read for a long time ; and this freedom is united to an acuteness which justifies high expectations from the future efforts of a writer, who, in this his first work, has done so well. The work is not, indeed, conspicuous for literary art, nor as a record of very extensive philosophical reading ; but it possesses energy and perspicuity, those essential attri-

* The mystical Platonism of John Norris—the English Malebranche.—belongs also to this period. It is developed in his "*Essay towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World*"—(2 vols. London, 1701-4)—a work which touches often on the loftiest questions in Philosophy. In the one volume the author treats of Existence as Absolute, and in the other in its relation to the Human Understanding.

butes of a philosophical style. The volume reveals a Scottish student of metaphysics, manfully addressing himself, in the experimental fashion, to the most exalted problem which can engage the human mind.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE INFINITE is associated with the chief metaphysical controversy of our time. We shall first of all endeavour to explain the opposite conclusions in this controversy, with some of the reasonings by which they are respectively maintained.

The highest question in the Theory of Human Knowledge has, within the present generation, been discussed by the two chief representatives of philosophy in Scotland and France. It may be thus presented :—Is the problem of Being, as an all-comprehensive unity, capable of scientific solution or not?—can the nature of God, and the relation of Creation to the Divine Being, be explained?

M. COUSIN professes to solve this difficulty, in an affirmative answer to the question. He studies thought and knowledge experimentally. He thinks he has discovered two ideas, which, as relative and correlative, imply each other. There are *finite* thoughts, illustrated in all the phenomena of the mental and material world; and each of these necessarily suggests an *Infinite* Being,—for correlatives imply each the other. Try the mental experiment, he would say, and you will find that you *cannot* exclude either *finite objects* or *the Infinite* from your knowledge. They are the very elements of Reason; and, as they cannot be expelled, they belong not to your reason nor to mine, but to the universal reason—to the very nature of things. In knowing them we virtually

participate in the Divine Reason ; and discern the elements of Being, as all intelligence, created and Divine, *must* discern them. This correlation of Finite and Infinite is necessary to all intelligence, as such. It follows that the relation of God to creation—of the Infinite to the finite—is essentially comprehensible. Not merely is creation possible, but it is necessary ; inasmuch as finite beings, and the Infinite Being, are inseparable elements of all knowledge and all existence. This solution of our problem is proposed by the great French metaphysician, as a compromise between the Transcendentalism of Germany,—which rejects experiment as an organ for removing the mysteries of knowledge, and what we may call the Descendentalism of his French predecessors,—who rejected as illusory all knowledge that cannot be explained by means of the finite objects of sense. (Mr. Wright's translation of Cousin's Lectures on "The True, the Beautiful, and the Good,"* may be mentioned as the best English introduction to the speculations of a philosopher and educational leader of whom France has so much reason to be proud.—The theory of M. Cousin should be compared with the theory of Des Cartes.)

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, on the contrary, regards the problem as insoluble, and holds that M. Cousin's two elements of knowledge are both, as plural, only finite—an indefinitely great finite Being on the one hand, and an indefinite number of small finite beings on the other. Reasoning like the following is directed by our Scottish philosopher against the position which M. Cousin pro-

* Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1854.

fesses to have secured.—Every act of knowing, of which man is the subject, is an act in which the object known must be distinguished from him who knows, and as such it is limited by him. Thus the Infinite, so far as we are concerned, *becomes finite in the act becoming known*. It is only in a negative sense that M. Cousin's assertion of an infinite object, as well as finite objects in knowledge, can hold good. Finite implies infinite, merely in the same way as the presence of any object suggests its absence—for the science of contradictories is one. Is it said that the Infinite, alleged to be an object of our thoughts, is more than a mere negation of this sort? Put the assertion to the test of a mental experiment. Your alleged Infinite must, by the logical law of contradiction, be either *a whole* or *not a whole*. Try to realize either of these, *i.e.*, either an object so large that it can be no larger, or an object that is infinite. These are the only possible ways of logically reaching what is not finite. But in *both* of them we find a bar to our progress, when we make the attempt. Both are alike to us inconceivable. We can only oscillate between them. Call the one Absolute and the other Infinite, and we have given names to the two, and only two, possible ways in which we may weary ourselves in trying to realize an object that is *not* finite. On the whole, aught beyond the finite is “incognisable and inconceivable.” God, as not finite, cannot be known. “The last and highest consecration of all true religion must be, an altar *To the unknown and unknowable God.*”*

* A volume of history might be written on the answers (articulate and

So far the controversy which has introduced this problem to our Scottish metaphysicians and theologians. Mr. Morell, a popular interpreter of so many philosophical systems, evades the discussion of it with a slight allusion to the rival systems of the French and Scottish philosophers. "We freely confess," he adds, "that we are not yet prepared to combat, step by step, the weighty arguments by which the Scottish metaphysician seeks to establish the negative character of this great fundamental conception; neither, on the other hand, are we prepared to admit his inference. We cannot divest our minds of the belief, that there is something *positive* in the glance which the human mind casts upon the world of eternity and infinity. Whether we rise to the contemplation of the Absolute through the medium of the true, the beautiful, or the good, we cannot imagine that our highest conceptions of these terminate in darkness—in a total negation of all knowledge. So far from this, there seem to be flashes of light, ineffable it may be, but still real, which envelop the soul in a lustre all divine, when it catches glimpses of *infinite* truth, *infinite* beauty, and *infinite* excellence. The mind, instead of plunging into a total eclipse of all intellection, when it rises to this elevation, seems rather to be dazzled by a too great effulgence; yet still the light is real light, although, to any but the strongest vision, the effect may

inarticulate) which have been given to this great question—in Indian and Greek Philosophy—in the Mediæval speculations, and in the metaphysical systems of Modern Europe. The Sankhya of the Indian Gotama anticipates modern efforts to connect the Absolute and the Relative, by means of the relation of cause and effect.

be to *blind* rather than to illumine.”* Mr. Calderwood more manfully applies logic and not rhetoric to the controversy. According to Aristotle,† it is just to vote our thanks, not only “to those whose researches yield conclusions which accord with our own, but also to those who seem to reason less adequately,—for they contribute something, even if they only exercise our speculative habit.” We believe that more than this is due to Mr. Calderwood, dissenting as we do from some of his criticisms and inferences, and even of his premises. With some important modifications, he adheres on the whole to the opinion of the French metaphysician; and endeavours to meet in detail the arguments by which Sir W. Hamilton maintains, that only finite objects can be known.

In his own opening words,—“The work now presented to the public is intended as an illustration and defence of the proposition—that man has a positive conception of the Infinite. It is an attempt, by a careful analysis of consciousness, to prove that man does possess a notion of an Infinite Being; and, since such is the case, to ascertain the peculiar nature of the conception, and the particular relations by which it is found to arise.”

The author’s view of the result of his investigation is thus condensed on one of the closing pages of the Essay:—

1. Man does realize a positive notion of the Infinite.

* “History of Philosophy,” vol. ii. p. 504.

† “Metaphysics,” b. ii. 1.

2. This notion of the Infinite is not realized by any course of addition or progression (either in space or time) which, starting from the finite, seeks to reach the infinite, and it is not the result of any logical demonstration.
3. This notion of the Infinite is in fact an *ultimate datum* of consciousness, involved in the constitution of the mind, and arising in various relations.
4. This notion of the Infinite, though real and positive, is only partial and indefinite, capable of enlargement, but not of perfection.

To the second and third of these propositions we yield a qualified assent. Some of our objections to the first and last we shall indicate in the sequel. The discussions associated with all the propositions carry us towards objects which have always interested contemplative minds. We avail ourselves of the opportunity they afford for considering some of the relations of the great problem into which human knowledge, viewed as an organic whole, ultimately resolves itself. But we shall follow our own course, and our somewhat desultory reflections may pass for what they are worth, with those metaphysicians and divines who "go sounding on their dim and perilous way" among these high objects.

This question concerning the Infinite Being, though till recently a novelty in Scotland,* is no novelty in the

* We must protest against the misprision of the Scottish School—the method and results of its recent researches—in a little tract just pub-

history of human opinion. It has been debated for ages ; —and when we compare the latest with earlier forms of the debate, we learn that mental toil has not been thus continuously expended wholly in vain. Every metaphysical work, out of Scotland, of any moment, contains much regarding God, and the highest relations of finite beings. The world's greatest philosophers represent theological contemplation as the highest exercise of reflection. As involved in this, the nature and limits of religious speculation have been disputed from age to age, while unsound judgment in regard to these limits is and has been the parent of numberless disputes besides. The possibility of a knowledge of God, and the nature of such knowledge, have been debated by heathen philosophers and Christian fathers, by scholastic divines and modern continental metaphysicians. Those who seek for evidence of this may find it dispersed throughout the extant literature of ancient, mediæval, and modern times ; or they may turn to Cudworth,—whose “ Intellectual System” has been, like Bayle's “ Dictionary,” the half-way house in which so many of the learned have found their learning.*

lished, entitled, “ An Inquiry into Speculative and Experimental Science,” by M. Vera. (London, 1855.) The author (an ingenious Hegelian) misunderstands the relation of our recent national metaphysic to the “ Speculative ” method.

* See the *Intellectual System*, (London, 1678,) *passim*, and especially pp. 638-641, in which the Atheistic objection, “ that there can be nothing infinite,” is considered. Cudworth distinguishes the Absolute from the Infinite, and maintains, that “ though we cannot fully comprehend the Deity, nor exhaust the *Infiniteness* of its perfection, we may yet have an idea of a Being *absolutely perfect*. . . . As we may approach near to

But the question whether the Divine Being can be known by man is not new even among British debates. Not to refer to other instances, a hundred and twenty years ago it engaged two bishops* of the Irish Church. In the most elaborate part of the *Minute Philosopher* of Berkeley, the sceptical Lysicles professes to accept "an unknown subject of absolutely unknown attributes," as on the whole nearly as good as no God at all, while Crito and Euphranor contest the doctrine as an atheistic one:—"You must know, then," remarks Lysicles, at one of the turns of that beautiful Dialogue, "you must know that at bottom the being of a God is a point in itself of small consequence. The great point is, *what sense the word God is to be taken in.* I shall not be much disturbed

a mountain, and touch it with our hands, though we cannot encompass it all round, and enclasp it within our hands."—This analogy of Cudworth fails, however, like every one drawn from finite objects. *A mountain is only finite.* There is thus no analogy between our imperfect grasp of an indefinitely great *finite* object, and our intellectual relation to the *Infinite* Being. Cudworth adds, that "whatsoever is in its own nature *absolutely inconceivable* is nothing; but not whatsoever is not *fully* comprehensible by our imperfect understanding."—Surely whatever is in no sense an object of our reason must be "nothing," as far as we are concerned; but it does not follow, that whatever cannot be an object of our logical conception or faculty of comparison, is also, and in like manner, "nothing."

* By the way, the nature of our knowledge of God, and the sufficiency of the *analogical* hypothesis to account for theological knowledge, have engaged not a little attention from the episcopal bench. Besides Berkeley and Brown, we have the names of two Archbishops of Dublin and three English prelates associated with these questions. We refer to Dr. King's Discourse on "The right Method of Interpreting Scripture, in what relates to the Nature of the Deity," which has been edited, with notes, by Dr. Whately; Copleston's "Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination," pp. 115-141, &c.; Hampden's Bampton Lectures; and the metaphysical writings of Bishop Law, especially his "Notes" on Archbishop King's Essay on the "Origin of Evil."

though the name be retained, and the being of a God allowed in any sense but in that of a mind, which knows all things, and beholds human actions, like some judge or magistrate with infinite observation and intelligence. This I know was the opinion of our great Diagoras, who told me he would never have been at the pains to find out there was no God, if the received notion of God had been the same with that of some Fathers and Schoolmen. *Euph.* Pray, what was that? *Lys.* You must know Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, had discovered, that once upon a time, the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason and the appearance of things, taught that the words Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, and such-like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite different sense from what they signify in the vulgar acceptation, or from anything that we can form a notion of or conceive. Hence, whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying those attributes belonged to God, in this or that, or any known particular sense or notion; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to him^rat all. . . . But all men who think must needs see this is cutting knots and not untying them. For how are things reconciled with the divine attributes, when these attributes themselves are in every intelligible sense denied; and, consequently, the very notion of God taken away, and nothing left but the name, *without any meaning annexed to it.*

In short, the belief that there is an unknown subject of attributes, absolutely unknown, is a very innocent doctrine, which the acute Diagoras well saw, and was, therefore, wonderfully delighted with this system.*

But the alleged heresy is defended with acuteness and learning in "The Divine Analogy," a work which appeared almost contemporaneously with the "Minute Philosopher." This ingenious treatise appeared in London in 1733. Its author, Peter Brown, Bishop of Cork and Ross, published, a few years earlier, a volume on the "Procedure, Extent, and Limits of the Human Understanding."† The "Divine Analogy" may be read in connexion with the subject of this Essay. It is an attempt to reconcile the possibility of theology with the principle that God is absolutely incognisable. The author refers to an array of passages in Heathen and Christian writers, which assert, in the strongest terms, the impossibility of any knowledge of the Divine Being.‡ He maintains,

* See Berkeley's Works, vol. ii. pp. 56-65.

† Bishop Brown was an original and independent thinker in Philosophy and Theology. According to his theory, our knowledge of God and the spiritual world is founded on an analogy with the objects of sense. He is the author of an "Answer to Toland's Christianity not Mysterious." Brown died about 1735.

‡ The hyperbolic language attributed to the Fathers of the Christian Church hardly falls short of the monstrous paradox of Oken, which identifies God with Nothing. "We cannot," says Bishop Brown, "be said only to have *indistinct, confused, and imperfect* apprehensions of the true nature of God, and of his real attributes; but *none at all in any degree*. The true meaning of the word 'incomprehensible' is, that we have *no idea at all* of the real true nature of God. . . . The Fathers mean not that we cannot *fully* comprehend the true nature of God and his attributes, but that we are not capable of *any* direct or immediate apprehension of them. Agreeably to this, their common epithets for God are

that it has been the catholic opinion of theologians and philosophers, that we cannot know God and his attributes, even imperfectly, as they are in themselves; and that this catholic opinion is the sound one. The concluding chapter of the "Divine Analogy" is devoted to a criticism of the passages in the "Minute Philosopher" from which the preceding extract has been taken.

It is interesting thus to connect the present with the past. But we are here concerned with the discussion in its present phase, and the volume of Mr. Calderwood presents many convenient positions for so contemplating it—one or two of which we shall now take the liberty to occupy.

The second and third chapters of the "Philosophy of the Infinite" are devoted to what some may, perhaps, regard as merely verbal criticism. It is, indeed, difficult so to connect these discussions about *words*, with the living current of human interest, that they shall not degenerate into pedantry, and degrade the thoughtful man

that he is *ὑπεράγνωστος*, (*more than unknown*;) *ἀνόπαρτος*, (*without existence*;) *ἀνούσιος*, (*without substance*;) and Dionysius asserts that the term *οὐσία* (*substance*) cannot properly be applied to God, who is *ὑπεροούσιος*, (*above all substance*;) *ἄνους* (*without mind or soul*.) And what is more remarkable, some of the ancients rejected even the word *perfection* as very improperly attributed to God; for this reason, that they apprehended that He is beyond all bounds of perfection.—Pp. 63, &c. God, some Fathers were wont to say, is *nothing of the things which exist*, *i.e.*, He cannot be included among the objects of the universe.

The curious work entitled, "S. Dionysii Arcopagitæ De Divinis Nominibus," must be known to those who are at all conversant with the literature of this great problem. It occupies more than four hundred pages in the folio edition of the "Dionysii Opera." (Antwerp, 1633.)

into the sectarian metaphysician—that pillar-saint of literature. But an examination of these chapters may convince such persons that the study of words to which they might introduce the reader is, for the most part, of that higher kind, which requires at each step a mental experiment, and reflection on logical and metaphysical laws. In one of them, a criticism of Sir W. Hamilton's favourite "contradictories"—the Absolute and the Infinite—conducts us through a course of meditative exercises upon infinity; and in the other, our intellectual relation to what is neither finite nor relative is analyzed, in reference to the applicability of the term "negative notion" to express the relation. The author refuses to recognise any other "Absolute" than an "Infinite-Absolute," and professes to agree "with philosophers generally" in the belief that there is only *one* existence that is *not* finite, relative, and dependent.

We do not think these chapters, however, the most satisfactory part of the book. Instead of recognising *two* unconditioned beings, the chief defect of Sir William Hamilton's theory seems to be, that it hardly leaves room for the recognition of any. For what is the real tendency of his statements about an "infinite" and an "absolute?" Not that they are two contradictory *beings*, but rather two contradictory modes in one or other of which *thought* must transcend what is finite and relative,—if it can do so after a logical fashion, at all.—Is it affirmed that our intellect can take the measure of the all-comprehensive unity of Being—that the problem of the universe can be solved by man? Then let us try the experiment of

conceiving the nameless One, whose relations we profess to define. There are just two ways in which the rules of logic permit us to do so—the way of adding for ever and the way of rising beyond all possibility of addition—the way of conceiving an infinite *not-whole*, and the way of conceiving an absolute *whole*. In neither of these ways can the veil which hides Being be removed. Thought cannot infinitely expand itself, and yet it cannot cease expanding. But there can be no third road out of the darkness. The understanding is thus confined, on account of its intellectual structure, between these extremes.—Now this is a logical rather than a metaphysical experiment—an experiment upon the possibilities of human thought, and not a statement regarding objective existence. Mr. Calderwood has reversed this aspect, and has, moreover, attributed a distinction as old as Aristotle to Sir William Hamilton.*

* Mr. Calderwood strenuously maintains that the Infinite is also Absolute, adding, that it is “obvious that the Infinite is perfect and whole. If anything,” he says, “be perfect and complete, the Infinite must; for if it were imperfect or incomplete, it would be no longer infinite. If anything be total the Infinite must, for if there were any want of its totality it would cease to exist.”—(P. 29.) And yet he adopts Aristotle’s definition of the Infinite—*οὐδὲν ἄτι ἐξω ἔστι*. (That of which there is *always* something beyond.) But in the very passage which contains the definition, Aristotle carefully distinguishes from the Infinite the Absolute or Perfect—*οὐδὲν μὲν ἐξω, τοῦτ’ ἔστι τέλειον καὶ ὅλον*. (That of which there is *nothing* beyond.) We are somewhat at a loss how to reconcile this discrepancy in Mr. Calderwood, in so critical a part of the question in debate.

To explain Plato’s theory of the Infinite in knowledge, we should require to discuss his renowned doctrine of Ideas—a task, by the way, that has been performed with marvellous clearness and beauty in Archer Butler’s “Lectures on Ancient Philosophy.”—The reader may be referred to the whole discussion concerning the Infinite (*τὸ ἄπειρον*) in Aristotle’s Physics, (lib. iii. ch. 4-13.) Aristotle maintains our ignorance of the

But is the darkness then impenetrable? Can man know *only* the finite objects of this transitory world? When we speak of the Infinite Being, are we only "darkening counsel by words without knowledge?" In the cave of Plato, a world beyond is at least dimly and figuratively recognised. And all the great Platonic minds have aspired—but not through perception and logical intelligence—to the perfect and unchangeable, as the only reality. Cousin, however, boldly proclaims, that this higher world is discerned through the understanding, clearly enough to reveal the relations of this finite universe to the Infinite, and thus to give a foundation for reasonings about their mutual relations.—But this, argues Sir W. Hamilton, is no Infinite nor Absolute either, which can thus take its place in our thought on a level with ourselves and the finite objects around us. The very act of thinking about a so-called *not*-finite has rendered it definable, if not definite, as far as our knowledge is concerned. There *may*, indeed, be "something beyond,"—inconceivable and "negatively" known. But when the understanding tries to expand for its reception, thought becomes illogical, and thus destroys itself in the very act. It is the negation of thought, and not any positive object, that is reached when we try to transcend

Infinite in various passages.—See also Locke's Essay, (b. ii. ch. 17)—where he maintains that we have only a "negative" notion of infinity; and compare the same with the corresponding passages in the "Nouveaux Essais" of Leibnitz, and Cousin's "Lectures on Locke." Curious readers may trace the hypothesis of *negative* notions of the human mind, and also the distinction between the *infinite* and the *absolute* or *perfect*, through a long period in the history of philosophy. We have not space for detailed references.

the world of defined objects, and, as it were, *to realize unlimitedness in the concrete.*

These are the extremes of opinion concerning this highest problem of human speculation. The one theory seems to represent it as *capable of being solved*; the other, not merely as insoluble, but as really *no problem at all*.—Is not the true opinion a mean between these extremes? Does it not recognise our knowledge of the *facts*—finite beings and the Transcendent Being—which occasion the difficulty on the one hand; and on the other, the impossibility of any solution of their relation by human understanding? This would account for contradiction emerging, whenever a solution is irrationally attempted, and teach the need for withdrawing our faculty of comparison and reasoning from a region for which it is unfitted. Are we wrong when we suppose that M. Cousin, who speaks so eloquently and impressively of the “incomprehensibility” of God, and grants that we are unable “absolutely to comprehend God,” wishes his theory to be interpreted in harmony with the principle that the Great Problem is fundamentally insoluble; and that when Sir W. Hamilton indulges his matchless logical ingenuity in eliciting the contradictions which follow an illegitimate application of reasoning to the Infinite and Eternal, his demonstration does not touch the pillars on which the Facts themselves rest—mysteriously irreconcilable and yet known to be real.

On this intermediate hypothesis, while we have what may be called a *metaphysical* knowledge of material and finite beings,—which may be converted into science by

reasoning and induction ; we have a metaphysical knowledge of Transcendent Being,—as *not* an object of logical definition and scientific reasoning at all. We believe, and therefore know, that the Infinite One exists ; but whenever He is logically recognised as a term in thought or argument, either the object, like the argument, becomes finite, or else runs into innumerable contradictions. We hold, in one sense, with Cousin, that Transcendent Being is not *wholly* unknown. How else can we account for this controversy at all ? Yet we hold with Sir W. Hamilton, that, as transcendent or unconditioned, Being cannot be *scientifically* known. But the Scottish philosopher seems to cut away every bridge by which man can have access to God ; and the French philosopher seems to plant the Infinite *as an indefinitely known finite*, in every region of human knowledge.

But it is time to pass to the EVIDENCE by which alone *any* hypothesis on this subject can be converted into a solid theory. The last few paragraphs can hardly be saved from the charge of scholastic pedantry, unless we connect their words and formulas with wholesome facts. This investigation, like every other philosophical one, must be ultimately based on mental facts.* We must endeavour to carry into these dark and intricate regions

* Some minds, confined by the habit of observing only what is external and material, seem unable to apprehend the meaning of the term "fact," when applied to *an object that cannot be seen and handled*. If their intrepidity in speculation be equal to their rashness in assertion, they must reject Christianity—which deals essentially with spiritual facts—as well as Metaphysics.

the torch of experiment, which has illuminated so many subordinate parts of knowledge, but which most speculators about the Infinite have cast aside.

We cannot propose a method for investigating the character of theological knowledge more appropriate than the examination of TIME, SPACE, and CAUSATION, which is suggested by the three leading chapters in Mr. Calderwood's Essay. Eternity—Immensity—Omnipotence—these terms, when we try to utter them intelligently, seem to carry thought beyond its sphere. When, in an hour of unusual contemplative effort, we seek to realize their meaning, Reason is foiled by an obstacle quite unlike those which are met and removed by victorious Science. The obstacle is not like that against which the brave mathematician struggled, before he witnessed the solution of his problem rising out of familiar axioms and principles; nor like the outstanding phenomena in the material world, which have so often surrendered to induction. On the continents of finite being, the boundary line of the unknown is gradually receding, as the increasing army of investigators discovers fresh analogies, or detects in new phenomena illustrations of old theories. But we all know St. Augustine's deliverance about Time; and we have read of the sage Simonides, who, when asked by Hiero about God (*quid, aut quale sit Deus?*) demanded a day to prepare his answer—and then another and yet another day—the obstacle to a reply gathering strength the longer the question was struggled with. The ages of past human history have removed the veil which concealed from science

many a region on the intellectual globe, and future ages will continue to spread the light of this species of knowledge. But the achievement of realizing Eternity, Immensity, and Deity in human thought, must remain to the end as remote from accomplishment as it was when they kindled the imagination and reason of man at the outset of our race. These are eminently the words which suggest that insoluble problem in which all the difficulties of theological and philosophical knowledge are wrapped up,—the due appreciation of which might conciliate many controversies, and give relief to pious minds troubled by the seeming variance of Faith and Reason.

TIME* is, at least, a formal and typical illustration of the mysterious problem whose elements underlie every part of human knowledge. It is at once *unlimited* and *revealed in parts*. Interminable duration is out of logical relation with terminable duration—Eternity with a series of moments—an Eternal Being with the succession of time. We cannot limit Time, and yet we cannot reconcile Eternity with the succession of finite periods. The infinite and finite here seem to exclude one another, and yet both must be recognised. Eternity involves contradictions, when it is virtually limited by

* We need hardly remind the reader of an ambiguity in the word *Time*, which is sometimes applied exclusively to a *limited succession of events*, e.g., human life in this world, the present mundane system, &c. It is thus distinguished from Eternity, or (as some assume it to be) *unchangeable* existence. We employ "Time" as the verbal representative at once of the finite and the transcendent meaning.

being made an object of human thought. Thus to limit the illimitable is to convert it into a bundle of contradictions, illustrated in every attempt, from Aristotle to the antinomies of Kant, to apply reasoning in a region from which the faculty of comparison should be withdrawn. Mr. Calderwood expatiates on the "irrestrictive" character of Time, but denies that it can be even relatively limited. He thus obscures that aspect of this intellectual mystery which, in our view, constitutes its chief value. We must here pause a little, and refer to two passages in his book, in one of which Time is contemplated in its transcendent, and in the other in its finite manifestation. "Time," according to our author, "is a condition of thought, inasmuch as no object can be realized in thought without it; but it is not a condition in the sense of limiting the object of thought, or even in any way influencing that object, otherwise than in affording it mental or subjective existence. On the other hand, though Time is realized only as a concomitant of the object of thought, the object does not in any sense limit or restrict Time. On the one hand, Time does not limit the object, and on the other, the object does not limit time. . . . Time is not restrictive or exclusive; most other conditions are exclusive. We therefore denominate time an **IRRESTRICTIVE** condition of thought. . . . We must think Time; we cannot think it as finite; therefore we must think it as infinite. On the evidence thus presented, we maintain that in our conception of Time we have a conception of the Infinite." (Pp. 87-91.)

Now it is true that some necessary conditions of thought are not irrestrictive. This very phenomenon of Time itself seems to suggest that even the *logical* laws and relations, while true and necessary within their own sphere—do not possess this character; for unlimited Time is an object to which they cannot be applied. We know that Time is unlimited, but we cannot logically conceive its *unlimitedness*. When we seem to do so, we virtually limit it in thought. If we can really form this conception, what is its character?—As infinite, it cannot be a *whole*: there must be “always something beyond.” But in conception and reasoning we can deal only with *wholes* and their correlative *parts*. The statement that we have an “indefinite” conception of infinite Time, hardly suggests this peculiarity. The knowledge is not merely *indefinite* but *absolutely indefinable*, and therefore beyond the sphere of thought, viewed as a faculty of comparison. It is that part of our “knowledge” which cannot be dealt with by the logical faculty.—But is not Time also revealed in parts and portions? This question Mr. Calderwood answers in the negative. To us the true answer seems to illustrate in a new aspect the logically inconceivable character of Time.

“It has been strongly maintained,” says our author, “that we can think Time *relatively* limited, though we cannot think it *absolutely* limited. For example, it is said we can think a series of events occurring in Time; we can select the first and last of these; and then we can think the portion of Time beginning with the first event and terminating with the last, and thus obtain a notion

of time as relatively limited. Now, if we carefully examine our consciousness in such a case as this, it will be obvious that even here we have no conception of *limited* time. . . . We realize the objects in Time, but we do not realize them as limiting Time. . . . When we observe two vessels at sea we recognise the ocean between the ships, but it is equally true that we perceive the ocean beyond them.”—(Pp. 91, 92.)

Neither unlimited nor limited Time, viewed in the abstract, can be conceived as a whole. Yet the parts in a series of successive events are in mysterious relation to Eternity. They seem to be *parts* of that which is *not a whole*, while the understanding can only compare (finite) wholes with parts. The very analogy of the ships on the ocean so far indicates this. We perceive the ocean beyond them ;—but *a part of it* is between them. The analogy, however, is a misleading one ;—as every analogy must be, between the relation of finite to the infinite on the one hand, and any two finite correlatives which the mundane universe presents on the other. *The ocean is finite as well as its parts.* The analogy requires not a finite but an infinite ocean. This illustrates by the way—apart from the objection that might be founded on the peculiar nature of the causal relation, the vice of a common illustration, which represents the changes in the universe as waves on the ocean of Infinite Being. We inevitably slide into the notion of a finite ocean, in which the waves are parts ; instead of an infinite ocean whose “waves” can bear to it no conceivable relation at all. So it is with every attempt to apply the understand-

ing of man to solve the problem of Being ; it either fails, or issues in Pantheism. The logical organ of comparison is applicable only to finite objects ; the relation of what is limited in Time, Space, or Degree, with the Infinite, cannot be a logical correlation. While it does not contradict the logical laws, it transcends their sphere.

In this contemplation of the relation of finite periods to Eternity, we thus come in sight of the one insoluble problem of human knowledge. As Berkeley says, "the mind of man being finite, when it treats (logically) of things which partake of infinity, it is not to be wondered at if it run into absurdities and contradictions." But the study of Time prepares us for more than a vague expectation of this result. It proves not merely that the problem *may* be insoluble, but that it *must* be so, and that every endeavour to solve it, alike in these regions of Space and Time, and in the concrete world of physical existence, is the parent of confusion and contradiction.*

But is Time itself a *real Being*, or is it only a *form or condition of knowing* real beings—a form common, it may be, to all intelligence, human and divine, but existing *only as known* ? Has Time an existence—not dependent on any intelligence, created or even uncreated ? What

* These insurmountable difficulties connected with Time are discussed but not abated by Plato in the *Timæus*. Eternity, he says, is one, but (limited) time proceeds in succession. The former is fixed, the latter a created and changing state. Eternity (*αιών*) is that which always is (*τὸ ἀείδν.*) A similar theory is held, among others, by Cudworth, ("Intellectual System," pp. 664, &c.,) and by Bishop Law, in a modified form. The Platonic view of Eternity is propounded by Mr. Maurice in his volume of "Theological Essays."

is Time, when viewed, not as a law of human reason, nor as a modification of mental and material beings, but abstracted from all the minds and matter in the universe? A similar question has been raised in regard to Space. Perhaps we have not faculties for adequately enunciating, far less for answering, the question.

Our readers may like to know whether Mr. Calderwood ranks himself among the worshippers of an absolute Time and an absolute Space,—these “idols of modern Englishmen,” as Leibnitz calls them. We quote the passage which relates to the metaphysical character of Time, and refer our readers to a corresponding one concerning Space:—“What is Time? Is it only in our thoughts, or has it also an objective and external existence? In answer to this we reply, that it seems of the nature of our conception of Time to recognise it as something external. When we think of Time, we think of it as something which exists without us and apart from us. . . . So far from Time being regarded as a mere product of the human mind, it seems plain that Time would have existed even though the human race had never been brought into being. Since this is the case, it is manifest that to maintain that Time is purely subjective is to contradict consciousness, and thus to overturn the basis of philosophy. . . . Our conception of Time seems analogous to our conception of substance. . . . If Time be an external existence, the question immediately arises, is it an attribute of the Deity, or is it an infinite existence separate from the Deity? The former (hypothesis) is, we think, in direct opposition to our concep-

tion of Time. When we think of an event occurring in *time*, we do not think of it as occurring in *God*, nor would we thus describe it. But if Time be a separate yet infinite existence, how can there be two existences, both infinite, yet *each independent of the other*? This is a difficulty which we cannot profess to remove, and yet it is a difficulty which arises solely from our ignorance of the *nature* of Time."—(Pp. 97-99.)

We are not so sure that this circumstance entirely explains the difficulty. It is perhaps partly due to assumptions about abstract Time, which our mental experience, when it has been purified from prejudice by metaphysical analysis, does not verify. What is the history of past metaphysical *discovery* but a history of the gradual retreat of prejudices, in many respects analogous to the opinion that Time is an Infinite Being?—Perhaps the chief "discoveries" of which metaphysics admits are these conquests of prejudice by reflection, through which the native and spontaneous judgments of reason recover the authority of which sense and ill-regulated mental association had deprived them. Illustrations of this are innumerable in the history of philosophy. We are satisfied if we can point to such results, when we are assailed by the clamour of those who complain that the conquests of metaphysics (like those of Christianity itself) are chiefly in the mental and moral world—the amelioration of intellectual habits, and the expulsion of powerful prejudices. Victories like these are surely the parents and protectors of all useful discoveries, in the physical sciences, and in the arts

which render this earth a more convenient habitation for man. But to return to our subject.

Any one who meditates about Time, can work out only an imperfect expression of his meaning, when he tries to go beyond that record of the facts of mental experience which is open even to those least accustomed to reflect. Leibnitz, with the continental metaphysicians in general, may be taken as the representative of the hypothesis, that Time and Space exist *only as modes of thought*. Clarke, and most of our British metaphysicians, regard them as in some sense *transcendent objects of knowledge*.* The varieties of modern opinion gravitate towards one or other of these extremes,—the one of which we may style the Formal, and the other the Ontological, extreme. It is difficult to discover language fit to express an *intermediate* hypothesis. But may we not avoid the monstrous supposition of two huge entities, without resolving Time into a mere manifestation of human thought or reason? If we could imagine the annihilation of all beings, created and uncreated, are not these words “time” and “space” still applicable to the nothingness which should ensue? Even in sug-

* Neither of these counter doctrines is explicitly *developed* in their “Correspondence.” Leibnitz calls Time *an order of successions*, and Space *an order of co-existences*. Clarke regards them as *attributes of the Infinite Being*. But we have here the seeds of the rival hypotheses. We have not room here to indicate the history of their development.

Almost every conceivable hypothesis concerning Time and Space has been actually maintained by one or more of the philosophers. We may refer to Edmund Law’s “Inquiry into the Ideas of Space, Time, Immensity, Eternity, &c.” (Cambridge, 1734.)—Kant’s “Kritik,” *First Part*. (Transcendental Æsthetic.)—Cousin’s “Cours d’histoire de la Philosophie au xviii^e Siècle,” 17^e leçon, &c.—Hegel’s “Logic,” B. I. 2, &c.

gesting this view, we are sliding into the ontological hypothesis. We have no words proper to express *absolute nothingness viewed as a receptacle of beings*. Yet while we cannot class Time among real entities—only with the negation of such entities—is it not the mysterious condition of *real existence* as well as of *our knowledge of it*; presenting, as it were, *potentially*, that insoluble problem, which we find *actually* when we reflect upon Being and Causation?

(Is there *divinity* in Time and Space? They have seemed to some ingenious minds eminently suggestive of Deity; and well-known “demonstrations” of the existence of God have been rested on hypotheses regarding their nature.* In them we have indeed ample receptacles, as it were,—ready to admit a Being who cannot be defined by the rules of the logical reasoner. We are prepared to ask, when we have completed our contemplative journey through this region of human intelligence, whether there be any Being—to take possession? And if there be an Infinite Being, is there also room for finite beings besides? But the *esse* is not either logically or metaphysically implied in the *posse*. Perhaps after all, any force which resides in the *à priori* part of Clarke’s so-called *demonstration*, lies in the unconscious appeal to our sense of analogy. The fact that a Being transcending *logical* conception is thus *rationaly* possible, is felt to give some presumption of

* See Clarke’s “Demonstration,” Prop. iii., iv., &c.; and also Mr. Gillespie’s ingenious “Argument for the Being and Attributes of God,” with his “Examination of Antitheos’s Refutation” of the same.

reality. The transcendent receptacle suggests the transcendent occupant. In Space and Time we have traces of an intellectual organ which is not satisfied with finite objects of reasoning. Must not One really exist, whose mysterious relation to finite beings suggests a problem, which *reason* may raise, but which *reasoning* cannot resolve? Are we wrong in the conjecture, that it is unconsciously through a channel of this kind, that these abstract conditions of knowledge and existence have carried some speculative minds up to the Divine object of knowledge, when they supposed themselves to be travelling thither on the level railroad of demonstration?)

What evidence, it may now be asked, does an experimental study of our notions of Time and Space contribute, towards an adjustment of the controversy concerning the Infinite and our theological knowledge? It may be answered, that they exhibit *in posse*, if not *in esse*, the data of an insoluble problem. They have revealed at least the possibility of relations in existence, which transcend the capacity of human reasoning. They illustrate how reason may have resources for raising questions, while it has not logical capacity even to apprehend the answer to them. But whether the possible problem be also, as real, an intellectually and morally urgent one, no exclusive study of the characteristics of abstract Time and Space can determine.

We therefore turn from these mysterious abstractions, to the concrete beings revealed in the worlds of sense and reflection—in a word, to the phenomena of Causa-

tion. We have found ourselves unable to realize Time and Space in knowledge, either as absolutely limited or as unlimited. In Causation, we find ourselves unable on the one hand, to believe that we, and the finite objects of the material world, are independent of aught beyond ; and on the other, to realize logically, independent and infinite Being. Reason cannot be satisfied with a Finite-absolute universe. All finite beings—the greatest conceivable complement of finite beings, *as dependent*, force intelligent belief BEYOND THEMSELVES, on something transcendent, which supports and accounts for them, and which they practically reveal. Try the experiment. The supposition of a *finite* Deity—however great his power may be—suggests, with the same intellectual force that the most insignificant event does—the existence of a still greater power to account for His existence. As long as any being is finite, and thus a possible object of human conception and reasoning, it implies a cause,—a something beyond itself,—even as the greatest conceivable portion of time implies Eternity. Thus Omnipotence no more excludes or absorbs finite powers, than Immensity excludes or absorbs portions of space, or Eternity periods of time. Just as the application of human reasoning to the relation of finite periods to eternity—by virtually defining the infinite—gives birth to a host of contradictions, so the Pantheistic paradoxes issue out of a similar illegitimate application of reasoning to the Infinite Power. A power without limit cannot be reconciled *in conception* with a finite and created power. When we try to conceive them, the

latter is by the very act absorbed into the former. But we may not deny the absolute, though we must the relative or conceivable possibility of their co-existence. There is room in the irrestrictive conditions of Being, for what cannot be received by the restricted capacity of human thought. A Being that cannot be logically limited may exist, and beings within the logical limits—finite beings, may also exist. I may believe in the reality of both terms, but I cannot logically know their correlation. The attempt to realize it produces such paradoxes as a *past* and *future* Eternity, and an all-comprehensive Unity, without the sphere of whose Being there nevertheless exist finite entities.

As in Time so in Causation, the difficulty is logically insurmountable by a finite intelligence. The very existence of the difficulty is in truth a mark of intellectual finitude. We could find no logical formula for the relation between a *succession of periods* and *eternity*. Each seemed to exclude the other. Not less out of human reach is a formula which should express *creation* in its relation to *Deity*. Here, too, each seems to exclude the other. The truth is, if *unconditioned existence* (God + created being) may be regarded as virtually two *finite wholes*,—one of them no doubt indefinitely great, and as such called an infinite power,—then a Being transcending each is required to account for both of them.

This is the critical part of the discussion. We regret that we cannot, without modification, subscribe fully to the opinions of either the Scottish or French metaphysi-

cian, when these are rigidly interpreted.* Here we fear we can hardly preserve clearness, in the narrow limits to which we are confined.

* We are glad, however, to observe that M. Cousin, in his later writings, has so explained, if not modified his earlier doctrine as to approach very near to what we deem the truth on the question of our knowledge of God. The following extract from one of his latest works will be read with interest :—

“ We say in the first place that God is not absolutely incomprehensible, for this manifest reason, that, being the cause of this universe, he passes into it, and is reflected in it, as the cause in the effect ; therefore we recognise him. ‘ The heavens declare his glory,’ and ‘ the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ;’ his power, in the thousands of worlds sown in the boundless regions of space ; his intelligence in their harmonious laws ; finally, that which there is in him most august, in the sentiments of virtue, of holiness, and of love, which the heart of man contains. It must be that God is not incomprehensible to us, for all nations have petitioned him, since the first day of the intellectual life of humanity. God, then, as the cause of the universe, reveals himself to us ; but God is not only the cause of the universe, he is also the perfect and infinite cause, possessing in himself, not a relative perfection, which is only a degree of imperfection, but an absolute perfection, an infinity which is not only the finite multiplied by itself in those proportions which the human mind is able always to enumerate, but a true infinity, that is, the absolute negation of all limits, in all the powers of his being. Moreover, it is not true that an indefinite effect adequately expresses an infinite cause ; hence it is not true that we are able absolutely to comprehend God by the world and by man, for all of God is not in them. *In order absolutely to comprehend the infinite, it is necessary to have an infinite power of comprehension, and that is not granted to us. God, in manifesting himself, retains something in himself which nothing finite can absolutely manifest ; consequently, it is not permitted us to comprehend absolutely.* There remains, then, in God, beyond the universe and man, something unknown, impenetrable, incomprehensible. Hence in the immeasurable spaces of the universe, and beneath all the profundities of the human soul, God escapes us in that inexhaustible infinitude, whence he is able to draw without limit new worlds, new beings, new manifestations. God is to us, therefore, incomprehensible ; but even of this incomprehensibility we have a clear and precise idea ; for we have the most precise idea of infinity. And this idea is not in us a metaphysical refinement, it is a simple and primitive con-

In our last Essay, we offered some remarks on Sir W. Hamilton's Theory of Causation. We shall not return to that subject at present. We coincide in some of Mr. Calderwood's criticisms, nine in number. But we must specially except the eighth, in which he seems to charge Sir W. Hamilton's philosophy with Pantheism. That eminent metaphysician expressly confines the application of his hypothesis to *finite* causation; and the whole analogy of his philosophy excludes the possibility of a theory of Creation. In this latter view we coincide. The application of a merely human intelligence to solve the relation of finite and transcendent Being must, as we have already said, end in Pantheism or Atheism. Either finite beings are absorbed, as modifications of the Infinite Being; or else Deity is excluded as not consistent with the reality

ception which enlightens us from our entrance into this world, both luminous and obscure, explaining everything, and being explained by nothing, because it carries us at first to the summit and the limit of all explanation. There is something inexplicable for thought,—behold then whither thought tends; there is infinite being,—behold then the necessary principle of all relative and finite beings. *Reason explains not the inexplicable, it conceives it. It is not able to comprehend infinity in an absolute manner, but it comprehends it in some degree in its indefinite manifestations, which reveal it, and which veil it; and, further, as it has been said, it comprehends it so far as incomprehensible. It is, therefore, an equal error to call God absolutely comprehensible, and absolutely incomprehensible.* He is both invisible and present, revealed and withdrawn in himself, in the world and out of the world, so familiar and intimate with his creatures, that we see him by opening our eyes, that we feel him in feeling our hearts beat, and at the same time inaccessible in his impenetrable majesty, mingled with everything, and separated from everything, manifesting himself in universal life, and causing scarcely an ephemeral shadow of his eternal essence to appear there, communicating himself without cessation, and remaining incommunicable, at once the living God, and the God concealed, '*Deus vivus et Deus absconditus.*'"—(*Cousin's Works.* 1st Series, vol. iv. sect. 12.)

of finite agents. We are thus left oscillating between an *Infinite* universe* and a *Finite-absolute* universe.† But here some may complain of defect in the theory of Sir William Hamilton. The Scottish philosopher suggests no means for extricating us from this state. In what we incline to regard as the true doctrine, reason is recognised as, on the one hand, spontaneously rejecting the hypothesis of a *Finite-absolute* universe; and on the other as incapable, in the exercise of its logical functions, of realizing the Divine Being, whose existence we are nevertheless forced to recognise. Every attempt to compare scientifically what we may call the *Finite-relative* objects, which constitute the worlds of mind and matter,‡ with the inconceivable Being, must occasion contradictions in the speculations which it sets agoing. We are bound to accept *both*, and the latter can be known only as *practically* revealed through the former.§

But *why* thus bound? What mental force thus inclines the balance? In sense and reflection we have a direct revelation of an indefinite number of finite objects. Our knowledge of *finite* beings is ultimately secured,—not by the support of argument or inductive proof, but by a mysterious organ, which we may call Intuition, and

* The universe of Pantheism.

† The universe of Atheism. But these two extremes virtually coincide.

‡ The universe of Theism.

§ “The metaphysical knowledge of God,” says Bishop Berkeley, “considered in His absolute nature or essence, is one thing, and to know Him as he stands related to us as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, is another. The former kind of knowledge (*whatever it amounts to*) hath been, and may be, in Gentiles as well as Christians, but not the latter, which is life eternal.”

which supplies to thought, *through experience*, the materials of physical science. But why does not this perceptive intuition satisfy us? Why may we not regard the finite objects thus revealed as absolute, independent, and self-contained?—In reply to questions like these, this author offers what he calls “the common theory” of the causal judgment. On the whole, he maintains the existence of two—unaccountable—convictions:—(1.) That there is a cause for the existence of every object in its present form. (2.) That all things, except God, had an absolute commencement; that is, that there was a First Cause.

In connexion with the second of these alleged ultimate convictions, we quote the following interesting and suggestive passage:—“The upholder of Atheism will observe, that we do not profess to *prove* the existence of a First Cause. We do not profess to *demonstrate* the fact. We maintain that it is above proof—that it is beyond all demonstration. We maintain, that it can be neither doubted nor demonstrated, but is a truth necessary to the mind—a truth which must be believed. Not, indeed, a truth which is always present to the mind,—not a truth which cannot be shunned; but a truth which must be realized if we seek to account to ourselves for the origin of all things; a principle which, when raised in the mind, cannot be doubted, and, in arising, stands supreme. We do not uphold the argument from design as a demonstration logically exact. On the contrary, we maintain, that we never can have a logical demonstration of the existence

of God. The creation of the universe is only a finite manifestation of power, and from that we can never infer the Infinite. Every such argument is incompetent, as embracing more in the conclusion than is involved in the premises. . . . All the use we would make of what has been called the argument from design is as an illustration—as presenting a course of thought in which the conception of a First Cause will arise—as originating an inquiry which, if prosecuted, must terminate in belief. Let any man honestly carry out the inquiry in reference to the origin of all things, and he will find that he can no longer doubt—that by the constitution of his mind he must believe in the existence of an infinite and eternal First Cause.”—(Pp. 175, 176.)

To assume that our belief in the Transcendent Being is founded merely on an induction formed from the finite and dependent objects of sense and consciousness, is no doubt absurd. Paley’s proof does not fully meet the want expressed by the religious scepticism of our time,—which complains of weakness beneath the foundation on which his museum of the ideas and designs in creation is constructed. Induction yields an indefinitely great finite being, but not the Infinite Power. So far we agree in the opinion expressed in this paragraph. But we incline to a different and simpler statement of the convictions which carry us beyond the immediate objects of sense. The two “ultimate” convictions referred to in the preceding extract may, we think, be resolved into one. Here we must explain our meaning.

We have said that the finite universe of matter and

mind is known in a twofold aspect. We attribute a *real*, and likewise a *dependent* existence to the beings contained in it. In Perception, the material world is recognised as real; in Induction, as dependent. We cannot expel either of these convictions. At present, we concentrate our attention upon the second of them. Here our author, following the "common theory," proclaims *two* mental forces which inevitably draw us beyond the dependent phenomena—the *causal* and *supernatural* convictions. Now the causal, as it seems to us, is only the supernatural judgment in another aspect. We cannot discover any evidence of a *necessity** *in reason* that compels the belief in *finite* causation or the uniformity of the laws of nature. We are no doubt intellectually unable to regard a finite object or change as self-originated or self-subsisting. But it does not follow that objects and changes depend on other *finite* objects and changes. Creation itself is not necessary; *far less are we conscious of any irresistible conviction that the finite universe must contain more finite objects than we perceive it to contain.* Our knowledge that it *actually does so*, as well as what we know of the harmonious co-ordination of its parts and sequences, seems to be the growth of experience, regulated by the associative and logical laws. We thus gradually learn that we ourselves, and all the objects directly known through sense-perception, are implicated in a great and regular scheme, whose arrangements are

* "Necessity" is an ambiguous term. We have *metaphysical* necessity, *i.e.*, in human reason; *logical* necessity, *i.e.*, in pure thought; and *physical* necessity, *i.e.*, founded on the experienced uniformity of the laws of nature. We refer here only to the first.

uniform and significant. On the basis of this conviction, gradually formed in the human race and in its individual members, we learn to interpret these arrangements, and thus form the physical and social sciences.

But it is also true that every change—nay, every finite being, *must* be viewed as a dependent being; and “power” is the correlative of dependence. Try the experiment. We find that every object of logical thought demands an explanation, and also that a scientific explanation, when offered merely by inductive experience, leaves the demand unsatisfied. “The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind,” as Mr. Hume says, “only *staves off* our ignorance a little longer.” The ascertained law of gravitation sheds light on the mechanical changes of the universe, only to reveal the darkness which envelopes the cause of the gravitation-law itself. The really *necessary** causal judgment has, as it seems to us, another reference altogether than to Laws of Nature, and uniformities of succession among the finite changes of the universe. It is a general expression of the fundamental conviction of reason, that *every finite event and being depends† on, and*

* See note on preceding page.

† But this “DEPENDENCE” we cannot define. The facts and laws of Science and Supernatural Revelation may both be said to display the character of God, but not the *rationale* of their own dependence on the infinite and adorable One. It is a materialistic assumption on which Pantheists fall back, when they suggest the analogy of a finite substance and its phenomena. Atheists and Manicheans do away with the dependence altogether, the former wholly, the others in part. Enlightened Christian Theism regards it as in an emphatic sense unique, and incapable of being made an object of scientific reasoning. A world of debate thus disappears as irrelevant. The hypothesis of “occasional causes” is dismissed

practically reveals, infinite or transcendent Power. It is a vague utterance of dissatisfaction with an absolutely finite universe—*totum, teres, atque rotundum*—and of a positive belief, not only that finite objects exist, but they do not *exhaust* existence, seeing that they depend on God. Thus, as every portion of time seems to lose itself in Eternity, so every finite being and power suggests the Infinite Power in mysterious relation to it. The term *First Cause* may here, as inadequate, mislead us. Assume, as Divine, a necessary cause, adequate only to the creation of the known mental and material worlds. As finite, this assumed deity becomes dependent, and the question of a prior and greater cause immediately rises in the mind. We are intellectually dissatisfied,—so long as the object of which we are in quest is *within the range of the logical laws*, and therefore recognised as a power *only indefinitely great*. The dissatisfaction projects reason beyond the realm of finite, and therefore scientifically cognizable existence. The mental necessity which thus conducts us to the Transcendent

along with the rival one of a “pre-established harmony;” and we have a demonstration of the impossibility of a *scientific* or *speculative* account of the relation of the Infinite Being—*i.e.*, of Existence regarded in its ultimate or mysterious character—to finite and dependent beings, whether in Creation or Providence (natural and miraculous); or to moral agents,—unfallen, fallen, or restored. We may have definite practical rules, as it were, in regard to these questions,—and so much knowledge as the rules involve. We may have Facts, but not a Theory of them. If so, may we say, that much labour has been worse than wasted by divines in embarrassing simple statements of Scripture with the formal dress of theory—in offering *solutions* of problems which Revelation—natural and supernatural—only *states*, because the human understanding *could not bear the solution?*

Being and Power—with or without the intervention of finite beings and second causes—is the root of the only truly *necessary* causal judgment we can discover. Our conviction of the uniformity of nature, on the other hand—which sometimes passes under that name, appears to be the gradual issue of our experience of the regular evolutions of the created universe, and especially of our consciousness of volition. It is the former and not the latter mental force that *irresistibly* carries us beyond the narrow sphere of direct experience aloft

the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God.

In this view, the causal judgment illustrates, but is not occasioned by the weakness of human thought. Finite objects and events must be regarded as *absolutely* dependent. Our knowledge must be credited *so far as it goes*; and even if we could solve the insoluble problem of unconditioned existence, we should not thereby extricate finite beings and events from the mysterious relation of dependence. Even then should we not recognise finite objects as dependent on *one another*—which we have already learned to do through experience; and on *God*—which we are now compelled to do by the necessity of reason?

Being, in its ultimate relation to reason, may be (imperfectly because in relation only to the finite knowledge of man) described as manifested in two extremes—the one finite and plural, with which the faculty of comparison may deal; the other infinite or transcendent, which

cannot be included in our logical generalizations. Reason thus presents two corresponding faculties or organs for the apprehension of real beings:—INTUITION and EXPERIENCE, governed by the logical and associative laws; and FAITH, to whose “object,” as transcendent, the relations of human knowledge cannot be applied. The problem of Metaphysics, regarded as the science of knowledge in its relation to Being, may be put thus:—Given Experience and Faith, lodged in a mind governed by the laws of association and formal logic,—to account for actual human knowledge.

In short, the Atheist’s universe, and the Pantheist’s universe, are both metaphysically impossible. The former excludes transcendent, and the latter absorbs finite existence. The Dualism implied in creation and providence is logically inconceivable, because beyond the range of human thought; but it is originated and maintained in belief by an unaccountable necessity of human reason. Now we may *believe* what we cannot *scientifically rationalise*. Thus the balance falls on the side of the Dualistic alternative; and we escape from the mental oscillation, to which we were hopelessly abandoned, by a theory which recognises in human knowledge what cannot be logically conceived and reasoned about.

The application of these remarks to the nature and limits of theological knowledge is interesting. Speculative Theology is the science of God. If the lessons suggested by this Essay are sound ones, the *original* elements of our theological knowledge do not consist of arguments; and the forms of argument cannot be ap-

plied to the solution of the problems suggested by the Divine existence. The *foundation* and *structure* of theology are thus beyond the range of human science. *Reason*, and not reasoning, contains the elements of a question, to which *reasoning* cannot provide nor even entertain a scientific answer.*

The foundation of theology is a mysterious Faith, which may be practically developed, but which cannot be reached, through reasoning. We have already referred to professed "demonstrations" of Infinite Being founded on these possibilities of existence—time and space. And we have indicated our judgment with regard to the inductive or physical proof† of the existence of God. We can no more *infer* infinite Being from the exhibition of an indefinitely great universe, than we can rise to eternity by an indefinite addition of times, or to Immensity by an accumulation of finite spaces. Inductive generalization cannot draw from finite data more than they contain. We cannot thus account for an intellectual necessity which—unable to accept as self-existing what is only finite, carries belief beyond the sphere of generalization. Reason originally recognises real existence—whether finite or Transcendent—through a shorter and readier process than deductive or inductive reasoning. We call this

* Theology here differs from the Physical Sciences. In the latter the *foundation* is mysterious. The existence and ultimate qualities of the material world, for example, are not known by means of reasoning, but through perceptive intuition. But when thus known, systems of physical *science* may be reared, with the help of inductive and deductive reasoning.

† Sometimes called by divines *à posteriori*.

recognition *perception* or *intuition* when it deals with the worlds of sense and self-consciousness ; and we call it *faith* when, in the causal judgment, Reason addresses itself to the Being regarded as mysteriously transcending our faculty for speculation. The function of *reasoning* is, in a manner, intermediate between Intuition and Faith. Inductive reasoning creates the physical sciences, and thus virtually enlarges the sphere of our perception ;* in so doing it discloses the riches of the universe, and thus practically reveals the character of the Being on whom all depends. Intuition provides the materials, and Faith the stimulus, to inductive research. Faith is not the ground of our scientific belief in the actual harmony of nature ; this is learned from our experience of the uniformity and significance of the laws of the universe. Yet, by recognising the dependence of nature on God, Faith indirectly occasions the rational activity which, in a course of well-regulated experience, arranges the discoveries of science. Thus experience,—supported on the one side by our lower, and on the other by our higher rational instinct—extends knowledge and builds up the sciences.

But, secondly, if *reason* thus provides the elements of the deepest problem of human knowledge, in the dependence of the finite universe (which may be scientifically known) on God, therein practically but not scientifically revealed, why, it may be asked, can *reasoning* not work out a speculative solution of this problem,

* See Bacon's "Novum Organum," lib. ii.; Comte's "Philosophie Positive;" and Mill's "Logic," especially b. iii.

which is thus proposed to it? We hear, for instance, of a science of astronomy, and a science of history. Both profess to interpret parts of the great revelation of Divine Providence contained in the worlds of matter and human society; and yet both are admitted to aim lawfully at *scientific* results. If the limits of human thought do not hinder the success of attempts to explain the phenomena of the starry heavens, and the race of man, how are they less consistent with endeavours to explain the mysteries of creation, and providence, and grace? A little reflection discovers that the essential analogy is wanting. To discover the harmony of dependent events, physical or human, is not to define the basis on which they ultimately depend. The experimental sciences are confined by their profession within the narrower of these regions. Every step in scientific theology,—and not the first step merely, must be taken in that region which lies beyond the limits of our comprehension. If the inductive sciences, contrary to the remonstrances of Lord Bacon, are to be blended with Speculative Theology, their scientific character must disappear. We have more than one well compacted system of *a section* of the laws by which the created universe is regulated; and if we are satisfied to call this system a science, we have many sciences far advanced towards perfection. But if we are to regard each of these sciences as *a segment of speculative theology, and a separate phase of its insoluble problem*, then the intellectual hindrance, which bars even the entertainment of any proposed solution of this last, must restrain

the progress of human research in every department. It is quite true that all things in the worlds of mind and matter may be analyzed into mystery. Mysteries lie at the foundation of all our physical and social sciences. But they do not constitute the matter or substance with which the science, as such, deals. In fact, the sciences become mysterious, only when their respective sets of phenomena are contemplated in their relation to God, *i.e.*, when they are made to touch the insoluble problem of which metaphysics demonstrates the existence in the heart of theology.

These views invest sound theological studies and contemplations with an intellectual dignity, which was recognised in former ages by the highest spirits of the human race; and we cannot but deplore that this sublime region is so often disturbed by the disputes of perverted metaphysics, and the ignorant intolerance of sectarian zeal. We fear that devotion to theology cannot be affirmed of this age and country, when we witness the bigoted aversion of our men of letters to its very name, and also the meagre current literature which that illustrious name now represents. It cannot be that the study of the Being who is revealed in all the changes of the physical and moral worlds, and in the mysterious event for which previous history was the preparation, as later history is its consummation—after whom Plato, in his highest musings, sought not wholly in vain—whose miraculous manifestations have occupied the most powerful intellects and the largest characters of the race—in whose temple of contemplation may be found Augustine

and Anselm, Melancthon and Calvin, Pascal and Leibnitz—the study which our own Bacon styles “the sabbath and port of all man’s labours and peregrinations,”—it cannot be that this august study is abandoned in the literature of our age, on account of any real want of fitness to the highest aspirations of the reason and the heart of man. Perhaps the course of thought suggested by this Essay may afford some explanation of the ominous fact, that so few of our highest minds are devoted to theological contemplations, and that the very term, with all its cognate literature, is set aside, by common consent, as expressing what is too sectarian and professional to be permitted to mingle with the great tide of human affairs.

Theological study is, as Bacon represents it, the culminating act of human reason. God can be definitely known by us only in the finite and dependent phenomena which form His *works* and His *word*; and it may be demonstrated that these phenomena cannot provide any means for answering the questions which speculation originates. All definite and systematic theological knowledge is the fruit of induction; but at the same time of an induction which must differ essentially, in the character of its results, from that which is the organ of the physical and social sciences. It can yield only a series of *practical* solutions of an *absolutely insoluble* problem. When we try to go beyond the natural and supernatural phenomena, which constitute this practical Revelation of God, in order to construct a science of the transcendent and adorable One, we are punished by the

confusion in which the revealed facts themselves become involved,—and we can escape this punishment only by restraining our logical and scientific forces within their appropriate territory. Reasoning itself demonstrates, that contradiction of thought *must* follow any attempt to find the *rationale* of the “revelation” of God, presented in Providence and Holy Scripture. The only “theology” that is possible is thus the fruit of an inductive study of a series of events and documents, all of which reveal God,—as far as man can receive the revelation, and also the weakness and narrowness of human understanding, which cannot entertain, far less work out, a scientific theory of what the phenomena thus practically manifest.

Revealed theology—whether the Revelation be contained in the evolutions of nature or in the words of a book—is thus a body of practical knowledge,* rather than a science of speculative truths concerning the absolute relations of man to God. The one is demanded by the cravings of the human heart; the other is not in analogy with the human faculties. The Bible is not a speculative solution of the insoluble problem: philosophy can demonstrate that a solution of that sort is impossible. It is a mass of practical information, which guides our religious life in the necessary absence of any solution; and which we must receive in the conviction

* This is quite consistent with the possibility of a *systematic* arrangement of what is thus *practically* revealed, and of deductions from the revelations. To what extent the Revelation of God may, by human industry, be thus presented, is a question which does not concern us here, and which at any rate we do not presume to touch.

that it *demonstrably involves insuperable logical difficulties*. There is thus a chasm between the *metaphysical faith* which conducts us to the transcendent Being, and the *religious knowledge* in which alone that Being can be definitely manifested. The Revelation is not an opening for the advance of reasoning into the unapproachable region, to the margin of which reason had spontaneously travelled, and in so doing exhausted the logical capacity of man. It is rather a practical substitute, offered to us in our speculative impotence, and which cannot itself be made an arena for speculation. The Bible is not a supernatural development of the higher metaphysics; and it loses its significance and moral cohesion, when its contents are dealt with by theological and metaphysical controversialists as if it were. It is only with modifications that we can accept the well-known illustration of Locke, when he says that the man who takes away reason to make way for revelation "puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope." We cannot regard the Revelation of God—whether made naturally or supernaturally—as in any respect an instrument, which admits human speculations into the inaccessible territory from which we are shut out by the structure of human thought. The use of Reason in relation to Revelation is, on its own showing, negative rather than positive; and scientific theology is impossible, not because we want the data, but the faculty for dealing with the data. Hence it is not possible,

either for Reason to construct, or for Revelation to unfold, the theory of man's relations to God. The telescope is an extension of our power of perceiving through the senses. The Works and the Word of God are not properly regarded as a scientific extension of our metaphysical Faith. If the Bible were a communication in regard to the vexed controversy regarding a Plurality of Worlds, the analogy of Locke might hold good. There is nothing in the character of human intelligence to forbid the entrance of a solution of the one problem. The logical conditions of knowledge forbid even the entertainment of a solution of the other.*

We might fill a volume, if we ventured to apply these general views, in a criticism of the treatment which Divine Revelation has received, in ancient and modern theological discussion. The history of religious controversy is, in how great a measure, the history of vain attempts on the part of speculative divines to find a Procrustes-bed of science into which the Facts of natural and biblical theology may be harmoniously fitted, and of the resistance offered by the Facts to the unphilosophical treatment. The sound metaphysician receives the revelations of man's free-will, and also of God's foreknowledge and foreordination,—of the exhortations to prayer, and also to human activity,—though he cannot scientifically explain their consistency ; and he does so

* “As for perfection or completeness in Divinity, it is not to be sought ; for he that will reduce a knowledge into an art (science) will make it round and uniform : *but in DIVINITY many things must be left ABRUPT.*”—Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.

because he knows that they are the varied practical solutions of a problem which he further knows must be speculatively insoluble. His metaphysic *opens room*, as it were, for the Divine teaching, which theological rationalists—heterodox and orthodox—either reject, or torture into a semblance of consistency with the forms of science. Neither a theory of the created universe, and of the human part of it in particular, nor a theory of the inaccessible Being on whom all depends, is revealed. They are not capable of being revealed. A child cannot be taught the full scientific significance of the Newtonian theory of the material world ; but he may be taught useful rules which others have derived from it. If an infant were to apply its undeveloped reason and experience to the rules which it has thus been taught, in order to discover their most general principles, it would be acting less irrationally by far, than those who study the revelations of God to man, as if they were the scientific solution of the insoluble problem. The infant is more able to grasp the science out of which the rules issue, than human intelligence is to comprehend a science of the unspeculative knowledge, which *must* form the substance of any Revelation of God.

We shall be delighted to learn that any of our readers are willing to pursue the course of meditation to which the volume that has suggested this disquisition naturally invites them ; and that they are disposed to travel along that highest and quite unique walk of inductive research, on which lie the natural and miraculous Facts

of Divine Revelation, in a spirit becoming those who are examining a region, in which every object is a direct illustration of a problem that the philosopher can *prove* to be insoluble. Defended on this course by true metaphysics against the false, the student of the "ways of God" learns that the greatest human minds have not been mistaken in assigning the loftiest place to Theology, which should be the grandest department of modern, as it was of mediæval and ancient literature. Bacon is too sanguine, when he predicts that a sober treatise on the office of human reason in Divinity "would be like an opiate in medicine, and not only lay the empty speculations which disturb the schools, but also that fury of controversy which raises such tumults in the Church." But we may, perhaps, hope for some less comprehensive advantage from the maxim, that "man is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out where the problem begins,"—applied by the few to the study of all Divine Revelation, in the spirit of Bacon and Pascal.

ESSAY V.

THE METAPHYSICS OF AUGUSTINIANISM.

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“THERE is a movement forward,” says the author of the “Restoration of Belief,” “which is not merely desirable, not merely possible, but almost certain to come about. This is a thorough and absolute emancipation of biblical interpretation from the trammels that have hitherto been imposed upon it by our polemical theologies. When once this liberation has been effected, the utterances of the Scripture will have room to take a new hold of the human mind,—accepted as true in their simplest meaning; and then a genuine counterpoising of moral and spiritual principles will freely develop itself in a manner that shall give rest to the heart; *whether or not a systematic coherence can be secured for scientific theology.*”—We quote these words from a volume which contains logical sagacity and philosophic comprehension, as well as the magnanimity and courage of faith, in richer profusion than any other work bearing on religi-

ous matters that has been addressed to the present generation. The "Restoration of Belief" may, in many respects, take a place, among the books of the nineteenth century, corresponding to that justly conceded by us to the "Analogy" of Butler in the literature of the last age, or to the "Thoughts" of Pascal in that of the age preceding.

Our quotation, it will be seen, refers expressly only to "biblical" interpretation, and to the "revelation" of God contained in Scripture. But the lesson it contains may be applied to the interpretation of *any* Revelation of the Divine Being,—as well that contained in the events of the material world, or in the facts of human consciousness, as on the pages of the Bible. And the movement referred to suggests the need for an emancipation of religious knowledge from the trammels, not of polemical theology only, but of unphilosophical assumption of every kind. That movement must clear away for itself the obstructions which metaphysical ingenuity has supplied to unbelief; and not less those which ecclesiastical prejudice has opposed to the reception of the facts of Divine Revelation in their mysterious integrity. We mention both these together,—as we often observe a common foundation of dogmatic assumption, on which unbelievers, on the one side, reject or sit in judgment on divine mysteries, and certain theologians, on the other, endeavour to enforce consistency within an order of ideas whose psychological character forbids any attempt to comprehend them within the narrow enclosure of a human system and finite knowledge. The

latter 'overweening conceit is a mainstay of modern Atheism.

Thus expanded in its application, the foregoing extract may suggest as an ideal at which to aim,—the deliverance of religious thought and research from the bondage of a false metaphysics, which, in theological hands, has wantonly added difficulties of its own to those inseparable from the employment of a finite understanding in such questions. Thus a way into our faith may be opened, for the entrance of Revealed Facts, in their collective purity, unvitiated by the vain endeavours of opposite parties to attain a “systematic coherence,” which matters so high cannot receive in any finite intelligence. Revelation, in its intellectual aspect, can be appreciated only by those who have reflected deeply on our theological ignorance. Through an increase of that reflection, we may hope for an increase of a genuine inductive spirit, in that part of modern thought which has hitherto most firmly resisted the influence of Bacon,—we mean the department of Theology. In the present state of theological opinion, this much-needed reform is promoted as much by those who remove metaphysical obstructions to faith in mysterious truths whose ramifications penetrate every part of natural and supernatural theology, as by others, who add to our information of what has been positively revealed regarding the Divine Being, in the changes of nature or the texts of the Bible. The one class *make room* for the material gathered by the other.

We have no intention to discuss, as matters of biblical doctrine, any of the numerous questions in ecclesiastical

history and controversial divinity, investigated by Mr. Mozley, with exemplary candour, in his able and learned work on "Augustinianism,"* which forms a valuable addition to theological literature. We are drawn to his book, as we find pervading it† an interesting endeavour to apply the solvent of Religious Philosophy, to a well-worn debate in the schools of metaphysics and theology. We are glad to see in that attempt one among other signs, that a long and discouraging controversy is leading divines to interpret more deeply,—because more with the aid of philosophical reflection on the nature and boundaries of finite knowledge,—the inspired words which express the best of all metaphysical lessons—WE KNOW IN PART. Metaphysic only *proves* by rational reflection, what in them is *expressed* through Divine inspiration.

It is true that we must not overrate the influence of philosophical reflection on human knowledge, either in directly solving difficulties for rationalism, or in chasing away, from the region of religious belief, dogmatic assumptions which, for the most part, retain their hold over their theological victims by other means than intelligent apprehension. We are here glad to quote from Mr. Mozley some eloquent sentences, much in sympathy with our own opinion.

"Philosophers," he says, "have from time to time

* A "Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination." By J. B. Mozley, B.D., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. London, 1855.

† See especially chapters ii. and xi.

prophesied a day when a better understanding would commence of man with himself, and of man with man. They have risen up from the survey of the past with the idea that it is impossible that mankind can go on for ever repeating the same mistakes ; that they must one day see the limits of human reason, distinguish what they know from what they do not know, and draw the necessary conclusion, that on some questions they cannot insist on any one absolute truth, and condemn each other accordingly. But the vision does not approach at present any very clear fulfilment. The limits of human reason are perhaps better understood in the world now than they ever were before ; and such knowledge has evidently an effect on controversy, modifying and chastening it. Those who remind men of their ignorance use an argument which, however it may fall short of striking with its full philosophical strength, and producing its due effect, appeals to an undeniable truth, before which all human souls must bow. And the most ardent minds, in the very heat of controversy, have an indirect suspicion that a strong ground has been established in this quarter. On the other hand, this knowledge of the limits of human reason is not, and perhaps never will be, for reasons which I have given, very acute or accurate in the minds of the mass ; while the tendency to one-sided views and to hasty assumption is strong, and is aided by passion and self-love, as well as by better feeling misapplied. On the whole, therefore, while improved philosophy has perhaps entirely destroyed some great false assumptions which have reigned in the world, so that

these will never rise again, *it cannot subdue the temper which makes such assumptions.* It is able occasionally to check and qualify, but it cannot be expected that it will ever habitually regulate theological thought and controversy. It will from time to time step in as a monitor, and take advantage of a pause and quiet interval to impress its lesson upon mankind, *to bring them back to reflection when they have been carried too far,* and convert for the time a sense of error into a more cautious view of truth ; but it will never perhaps do more than this. Unable to balance and settle, it will give a useful oscillation to the human mind, an alternation of enthusiasm and judgment, of excitement and repose.”—(Pp. 339, 340.)

There are two modes in which perplexities of speculation, and the “trammels” of polemical theology, may be removed from the path of those engaged in inductive research among the facts of Divine Revelation. Of these the one is direct and positive ; the other indirect or negative. That is, we may find ourselves rationally at liberty to accept all the offered facts,—notwithstanding the seeming contradictions which they involve when received in their integrity,—either (1.) through a *comprehensible* resolution of their apparent contradictions, or (2.) through a demonstration that *such* contradictions result from the very finitude of human knowledge, and that a finite intelligence must be content to live for ever, satisfied with this *incomprehensible* and merely negative solution.

The popular mind naturally craves for direct satisfac-

tion. It cannot, when it becomes alive to a difficulty, be readily made to receive as the only possible conclusion, a scientific proof that *for us* there must here remain a difficulty for ever. It has been encouraged in this tendency by the circumstance, that many metaphysicians have vainly sought positive solutions of mysteries necessarily implied in the finitude of knowledge; and that "systematic" divines have dealt with the incomprehensible *words* and *propositions* in which such mysteries are expressed, as if they were not incomprehensible at all, but part of the territory of ordinary intelligence. Philosophy has now, as it seems to us, almost reached the stage in its progress, at which the second of the two modes already referred to shall be more generally recognised, as alone and sufficiently available. The spirit of Bacon, together with the speculations of Locke, and Kant, and Sir William Hamilton, have wonderfully advanced our knowledge of the true theory of our *necessary* ignorance.* The full practical application of that theory corresponds with the "movement forward," in the theological province, hopefully described from afar by the author of the "Restoration of Belief."

* The theory of our *à priori* ignorance—that man must seek for *what appears*, in order to gain the only knowledge that is for him possible of *what is*—must abandon the ideal of a "universal science," *totum, teres, atque rotundum*,—and instead *gradually* accumulate a knowledge, that must be to him, on the whole, essentially imperfect and anomalous, because finite,—its imperfection and ultimately mysterious character being the very evidence of its finitude—*this* surely is the lesson of all true Philosophy from Plato downwards. But these moderns have, in different ways, helped to give a scientific expression to that lesson, in a form congenial to the wants of the modern mind, and especially of theology.

Mr. Mozley, in this volume, endeavours to apply the illustrations of human ignorance which may be discovered in reflection on the boundary of knowledge, to a group of speculative difficulties, by which free progress, both in theological research and in the Christian life, has been too much hindered. Viewed on its philosophical side, that group has appeared to demand a comprehensible reconciliation of man's conviction that he is free and responsible for his actions, with the universal and necessary conviction that every event must be caused; on its theological side, it has suggested the apparent inconsistency of human agency—unfallen, fallen, or restored—on the one hand, and Divine Power, or more specially Divine Grace and Predestination, on the other. That "every event must be caused," seems the germ of Pantheistic Fatalism; "I am the creator of my own actions," appears to be a first step towards Atheism.

In the view of these perplexities, rival sects and angry controversies have been maintained, in the Pagan and also in the Christian world. One party first pretend to define, and then exclusively reason from, the axiom which expresses the necessity of "a cause," and the infinity of the power of God. They virtually take for granted that the meaning of that axiom can be comprehended in finite knowledge, and thus conclude logically, that whatever happens (whether an act of will or a change in the material world) *must* happen, and could not possibly be other than it is. Their opponents, too, virtually confine the full meaning of "causal necessity" within the limits of human comprehension—but after another fashion.

They take for granted that causation in the abstract is sufficiently intelligible to require the assumption, that their favourite dogma of free action in man must be inconsistent with absolute power in the Supreme Being ; and conclude accordingly that the omnipotence and omniscience of God are modified by the acts of his creatures.

But what if both these counter assumptions contain by implication an unphilosophical theory of human knowledge and an oversight of the phenomena of our theological ignorance ? They do so, if it can be demonstrated, that "causal necessity" becomes ultimately an unintelligible necessity,—that the proposition which expresses it (*i.e.*, "every change implies a cause") must be an incomprehensible proposition, as long as our intelligence is finite or imperfect. Philosophical reflection upon its character must settle this point. At any rate, such reflection reveals many other incomprehensible ideas and beliefs. They are the foundation of those we regard as perfectly intelligible. "Omnia exeunt in mysterium." This must be so unless *our* mental experience is the measure of existence, and *its* necessary truths the boundary of being. Every metaphysical assumption employed in theology,—this one regarding Causality and Divine power among the number,—ought, therefore, to be subjected to the ordeal of reflection upon its *ultimate* meaning, before it is permitted to find its way into the "heartless syllogisms" of controversy.

Mr. Mozley wisely turns his eyes in this direction in the opening chapters of his book. Let us avail ourselves

of an extract from his description of certain incomprehensible ideas and convictions, which form the background of the familiar beliefs of ordinary experience. We may, by reflecting upon them, see our theological ignorance as in a metaphysical mirror:—

“It will be evident to any one at all conversant with philosophy, and who will summon to his mind a few instances of the different kinds of truths to which it calls our attention, and which it assumes and uses in its arguments and speculations, that there are *two* very different kinds of truths upon which philosophy proceeds—one, of which the conception is distinct and absolute; the other, of which the conception is indistinct, and only incipient or in tendency. Of ordinary facts, such as meet the senses—of the facts of our internal consciousness, our own feelings and sensations, bodily and mental, we have distinct conceptions, so far at least, that these are complete and absolute truths embraced by our minds. On the other hand, there are various truths which we partly conceive, and partly fail in conceiving; the conception, when it has begun, does not advance or come to a natural termination, but remains a certain tendency of thought only. Such are the ideas of substance, cause, infinity—and others, which we cannot grasp or subject to our minds, which, when we follow them up, involve us in the utmost perplexity, and carry us into great apparent contradictions. These, as entertained by our minds, are incipient truths, not final or absolute ones. In following, or trying to follow them, we feel that we are in a certain right way, that we are going in a certain

true direction of thought ; but we attain no good, and arrive at no positive apprehension. . . . I cannot form the least idea of what substance is. I find myself only going in the direction of something which I cannot reach, which mocks all pursuit, and eludes all grasp. . . . While the movement *towards* a cause, or some kind of idea of one, is part of our rational nature, I find, on reflection, that I can form no distinct conception whatever of what a cause is. . . . My reason, as surely as it leads me up to the truth that there is a cause of things, stops at that point, and leaves me in utter perplexity and amazement as to what a cause is. It is a wonder, a mystery, an incomprehensible truth. My reason forces me towards the idea of something, of which I can give no more account to myself than I can of the most inexplicable article in a creed. . . . Time, space, and number do not end, but go on at the very last ; that is the very latest intelligence we have of them,—at the last intelligence, as it were, they are ultimately going further. They go forward not only to the end, but at the end. . . . We are conscious of the germs of various ideas which we cannot open out or realize as whole or consistent ones. We feel ourselves reaching after what we cannot grasp, and moving forward in thought to something we cannot overtake. I move in the direction of a substance and a cause in nature which I cannot find ; my thought reaches after infinity, but the effort is abortive, and the idea remains *for ever only beginning*.”—(Pp. 17-22.)

These quotations illustrate the manner in which Mr.

Mozley guides reflection towards phenomena that are presented in our mental experience, when human reason endeavours to overleap its bounds, and thus becomes conscious of the *necessary* imperfection of its knowledge, when that knowledge is regarded as an organic whole. The examples offered by him are, of course, not new to the metaphysician ; they are the commonplace of metaphysical literature. But the application to theological discussion of the principle they suggest can never, we fear, be practically old or out of place. No more wholesome discipline can be applied to the theological mind of this age than familiarity, by reflection, with this order of truths. They form the very firmament of the heaven on which the theologian gazes in his hours of religious thought, and from which he must not be suffered to turn away when he proceeds to manufacture his syllogisms.

We follow Mr. Mozley with much advantage over this initial stage. But disappointment, or at least some doubt about his meaning, meets us, when we advance with him to apply the principle that may be drawn from that wonderful part of our mental experience,—in order to explain or reduce the perplexing antagonism between the causal and the moral judgment—between Divine Power and human liberty—between an exclusive theory of necessity and an exclusive theory of voluntary freedom. In place of proving that a negative or incomprehensible solution is possible,—by giving evidence that causality is *per se* ultimately mysterious, and, as such, incapable of being *known* to contradict moral freedom in God and

man,—he proceeds to argue as if the incomprehensibility of the maxim that “every event must be caused,” arises merely from our sense of originality as agents being in “contradiction” to it. He appears to affirm that the class of propositions which express causal necessity and the Divine Power, contradict the other class of propositions which express the conditions of moral responsibility, —and then he asks us to believe both, on the ground that both are invincible instincts. Instead of shewing *how* these two classes of propositions, apparently contradictory, truly employ an order of words whose seeming inconsistency cannot,—by reason of the kind of meaning they convey,—be affirmed to be real inconsistency, he speaks as if causation and its group of cognate words have *become* mysteries, only through the consciousness we have that our acts are original. The co-existence of a belief in causality with a belief in moral agency, is indeed incomprehensible; but is it so because the two beliefs are known to be contradictory, and not rather because causality and Divine Power cannot be fathomed by finite intelligence? Let us, in the first place, hear Mr. Mozley:—

“The maxim that there must be a cause of every event once granted, the conclusion of a necessity in human actions inevitably follows. But though the maxim that ‘every event must have a cause,’ is undoubtedly true, what kind of truth is it? Is it a truth absolute and complete, like a fact of sensation or reflection? or is it a truth indistinct, incipient, and in tendency only, like one of those ideas which have just been

discussed ? it is a truth of the *latter* kind, *for this simple reason, that there is a contrary truth to it.* When we look into our minds, and examine the nature and characteristics of action, we find that we have a certain natural and irresistible impression or sense of our originality as agents. . . . Here, then, are two contradictory instincts or perceptions of our reason, which we must make the best of, and arrive at what measure of truth a mixed conclusion gives. We certainly have both these perceptions, and one must not be made to give way to the other.”—(Pp. 24-26.)

Here the fact of our consciousness of liberty is the proof offered by Mr. Mozley that our knowledge of causality in the abstract is incomplete or mysterious. But again, the causal judgment may be viewed not as a merely abstract proposition ; it may also take the form of a theological one. Belief in causal necessity may be considered under the form of belief in Divine or Absolute Power. How does Mr. Mozley deal with it in this altered form ? How does he connect incomprehensibility with Omnipotence ?

“What,” he asks, “is this truth of the Divine Power, or Omnipotence, as we apprehend it ? Does it belong to the class of full and distinct, or of incomplete truths ? Certainly to the latter, *for there appears at once a counter truth to it, in the existence of moral evil, which must be referred to some other cause than God, as well as in that sense of our own originality to which I have just alluded.* The Divine Omnipotence, then, is a truth which we do not understand.”—(P. 29.)

In these and other passages, the *evidence* of the incomprehensibility of the abstract causal judgment, with its counterpart faith in Divine Power, is said to lie in the fact that another truth "contradicts" it. But this "contradiction" is the very obstacle which has puzzled mankind, and the mere statement of it,—along with the dogmatic inference that it must somehow be the index of a latent mystery, is hardly a step towards either a positive or a negative resolution of the perplexity. We want proof, that a free agent is possible,—in abstract consistency with *all that can be known by man* concerning causation and the power of God, and apart from any revelation of liberty in human consciousness. We ask for evidence, *independent of the assumed fact of moral freedom*, that causality or Divine Power *must* be incomprehensible. Now, instead of an analysis of our ignorance of what is ultimately implied in causal necessity, and a consequent proof that that necessity must be ultimately mysterious, *whether or not any fact apparently contrary to it be revealed*,—that it is thus, abstractly and in itself, capable of affording harbourage to truths which cannot be reconciled, because, as embraced by it, they cannot be comprehended, and therefore cannot be known to contradict one another,—instead of a proof of this sort, which we had looked for on emerging from the general evidence that such truths there are, we find ourselves kept, through many pages of this volume, in the presence of two classes of propositions, of which the one class is said to contradict the other,—and which, *on that account*, are, it is assumed, imperfectly comprehended.

But may we not prove concerning this same belief in the necessity for a "cause," that when we try to *exhaust* its meaning, it becomes absolutely unintelligible on our hands, and cannot therefore be turned against any alleged revelation either of common sense or of the Bible?

To assert that man must believe both of two "contradictory" propositions, is either to encourage absolute scepticism, or to discourage our spontaneous faith in one or other of the counter propositions. If both are intelligible propositions, every logical thinker is compelled to make his election between them, and to follow out that election into its consequences. But to offer an independent proof that, while apparently contradictory, they are really incomprehensible, opens a way for the mysterious retention of both, without offence to logic. It converts into a fact above reason what had seemed to subvert its fundamental law.

Now, is not the philosophical proposition, that "every event must have a cause,"—or, if we prefer the theological translation of it, that "all changes are due to the Divine Power,"—one which, apart from any revelation in consciousness or otherwise of our originality as agents, must, from its intrinsic character, escape every endeavour of human reason to comprehend it? If this be so, it is unintelligible, not because the fact of moral liberty contradicts it, but because it is in its own nature mysterious.

To answer the question we must ask another. What is implied in an event being *caused*? We cannot here

discuss this question in detail. It is a long chapter in the higher metaphysics. We can only refer to the part of the discussion essential to our present purpose. All profound thinkers will allow that causation implies the *external* existence of *something*. That "something has existed from eternity," is necessarily involved in our knowledge of *any* event presently existing in time. The causal necessity thus contains in itself an assertion of *the mystery of eternal existence*. In fact, one of the most effectual means we can take, when we desire to have an illustration of the finitude or imperfection of our knowledge, is to try to *exhaust* the meaning of the proposition "every event must have a cause," in that ETERNAL (and therefore incomprehensible) regress to which it necessarily binds us. The causal necessity is thus found to contain in its bosom the mystery of Eternity,—which is to say, in other words, that it expresses, by implication, and, perhaps, in its most striking form, the mysterious conviction that human knowledge is not complete. The words Eternity, and Eternal Existence, are symbols of this negative conviction. Causality shares ultimately the incomprehensible character that belongs to Eternity.

Can speculation accomplish more, towards our extrication from a dilemma that has made *Augustinianism* the centre of so much debate, than is implied in the proof which it thus *can* offer of the essential incomprehensibility of the very words in which that dilemma is expressed? Enough surely if metaphysical speculation can prove so much—and thus disarm the "causal neces-

sity," at least as an element in *human* reasoning, of its supposed power to exclude free agency as contradictory to itself. Providence and Grace, Prescience and Predestination, when applied to God, are then recognised as terms which express different phases of our incomprehensible faith in Divine Power,—or, more generally, in Eternal Existence. Each of these words suggests a meaning which reflection can prove to be mysterious, and not an idea of our ordinary knowledge at all. It is not for man to affirm, in these circumstances, that Eternal Existence, imperfectly signified by these analogical words, is irreconcilable with moral agency in creation, or with any other revealed fact;—though the proposition, "every event must be caused," seems irreconcilable with free causation, when that proposition is interpreted in a definite and therefore superficial meaning, and before reflection has analyzed the ignorance that lies concealed in its familiar terms.

Whatever either now is, or now begins to be, implies, and in that sense "reveals," something that is eternal. It is lost, as it were, in the mysterious idea of Eternity. That incomprehensible idea necessarily conceals from man a positive theory of the *ultimate* relation,—either to one another, or to the Eternal Being revealed by them,—of any of the finite objects that are known to us. Events viewed in time become ultimately incomprehensible. They are lost in the Power, Prescience, and Predestination of God; and it is the function of reflective philosophy to prove, by mental experiment, that these words in one sense possess, and in another are void of

significance. The Divine Power and human free-will go on side by side, till, as Mr. Mozley well says, "they are lost sight of and disappear in the haze of our conceptions, like two parallel straight lines which go on to infinity without meeting."

As it seems to us, metaphysics may afford the kind of relief now indicated in this long vexed controversy. If so, the need for relief has been occasioned by the restlessness of speculative minds, and the unphilosophical assumptions of systematic divines, who have degraded a mystery of finite intelligence into a fact of ordinary knowledge, and treated it as if human reason could fathom the Eternity of Being and the Power of God. Let us, then, try habitually to reanimate the old words with their loftier meaning, and accept all that is revealed in the works and word of God, to our senses or to reflection, in the faith that even speculation itself has (incomprehensibly) opened room for it all.

Perhaps Mr. Mozley is not adverse to this more definite application, to the mysterious truth, involved in Augustinianism,—because already implied in human reason,—of the mental experience to which, at the outset, he summoned our attention. At any rate, he has hardly availed himself of that wonderful experience to the degree we think he might. He too indistinctly points the way through the speculative obstructions against which his operations were originally directed, towards the point at which the *possible* harmony of truths, assumed in modern debate to be contradictory, may be discerned.

But he offers us some admirable lessons of religious philosophy by the way. Of these we regret that our narrow space forbids us to enrich our pages with more than one or two examples. Here is a considerate apology for an indisposition to entertain those comprehensive views of the essential nature of finite knowledge, which might sometimes annihilate controversy, by proving scientifically that the matter to which the dispute refers is not properly within the sphere of logical adjustment, and cannot be rendered systematically coherent:—

“Are not the generality of men spared a severe trial, with probably an unfavourable issue, in not having in the first instance this deeper sense of ignorance at all? Is not their ignorance veiled in mercy from them by a kind Providence; so that, with respect to these truths, they go on for their whole lives, *thinking they know a great deal more than they do?* Nor does this apply to the uninstructed and uncultivated part of mankind only, but perhaps even more strongly to the learned and controversial class. For, certainly, to hear the way in which some of this class argue, and draw inferences from the incomprehensible truths of revelation, carrying them, as they say, into their *consequences* and logical results, upon which, however remote or far fetched, they yet insist as if they were of the substance of the primary truth itself; to judge, I say, from the long and fine trains of inferences drawn by some theologians from mysterious doctrines, endless distinctions spun one out of the other in succession, and issuing in subtleties which baffle all com-

prehension, and are, in short, mere words and nothing more, but for which, so long as at each successive step there has been an inference, (or something which to the controversially wound-up intellect or fancy at the time appeared such,) these persons claim the most absolute deference; as if some subtlest conception of the argumentative brain, some needle's point so inconceivably minute, that not one man in ten thousand could even see it once if he tried for his whole life, were of the very foundation of the faith; to judge, I say, from such a mode of arguing from religious truths, one cannot avoid two reflections,—one, that such persons do not know their own ignorance; the other, that it is probably a mercy to them that they do not. They do not know their own ignorance with respect to these truths; for if they did, they would see that such incomprehensible truths were not known premises, and could not be argued from as such, or made the foundation of unlimited inference: and that they do not know it, is probably a mercy to them; for the very same hasty and audacious temper of the intellect which leads them to build so much upon such assumptions, the nature of which they have never examined, would, had they examined it, and so arrived at a real perception of their incomprehensible nature, have inclined them to reject such truths. Thus, in compassion to the infirmity of man, a merciful Providence hides his ignorance from him; and by a kind deceit, such as parents use to their children, allow him to suppose that he knows what he does not know. He is thus saved from unbelief, and only falls into a well-meaning,

though foolish and presumptuous, dogmatism.”—(Pp. 322-323.)

And, after all, in the present case, philosophical reflection on human ignorance only proves *scientifically* what the common sense of mankind, undisturbed by presumptuous dogmatism, has already settled *spontaneously*. By common sense, the mystery of divine power, and the mystery of our originality as agents, are *both* accepted in their integrity.

“What,” asks Mr. Mozley, “do the common phrases employed in ordinary conversation and writing upon this question—the popular and received modes of deciding it, whenever it incidentally turns up—amount to but this solution? Such phrases, I mean, as that ‘we must hold man’s free-will together with God’s foreknowledge and predestination, although we do not see *how* they agree;’ and other like formulæ. Such forms of language for deciding the question evidently proceed upon the acknowledgment of two contradictory (?) truths on this subject, which cannot be reconciled, but must be held together in inconsistency. They imply that the doctrine of predestination and the doctrine of free-will are both true, and that one who would hold the truth, must hold both. The plain natural reason of man is thus always large and comprehensive; not afraid of inconsistency, but admitting all truth which presents itself to its notice. It is only where minds begin to philosophize that they grow narrow, and there begins to be felt the appeal to consistency and the temptation to exclude truths. Then begins the pride of argument, the ingenuity of construc-

tion, the carrying out of ideas and principles into successive consequences, which, as they become more and more remote, and leave the original truth at a distance, also carry the mind of the reasoner himself away from *the first natural aspect of that truth as imperfect and partial, to an artificial aspect of it as whole and exclusive.*"
—(P. 327.)

But we have more than exhausted our space. We must be satisfied with a passing glance at a general principle in Philosophy of great present interest. The theological struggle of this age, in all its more important phases, turns upon the philosophical problem of the limits of knowledge, and the true theory of human ignorance. In all investigations and statements regarding the Power, Knowledge, Predestination, and other acts or attributes of God, we must employ that class of words which may be called INCOMPREHENSIBLE, and which—whether they are found in the Bible or in books of Philosophy—cannot be animated with complete or consistent meaning. No effort of any finite intelligence can rescue these words from that predicament, or exclude, from this department of thought and theology, doctrines which seem to contradict one another, only because we are hindered by the limitation of our faculties from exhausting their meaning.* Does not the evidence of this fact

* The reader will find some excellent remarks on the position of *incomprehensible* truths in theology, in a letter by Mr. Mansel, on "Man's Conception of Eternity; an Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theory of a Fixed State out of Time." We are glad to quote the following sentences: "Pantheism and Anthropomorphism are the two alternatives of religious thought, the one representing the negative, the other the positive side.

prove, that metaphysical science has outgrown the style of argument that has been employed, *especially within the last two centuries*, by both parties, in the controversy to which this Essay relates ?

The stagnation of philosophical reflection, in the minds of too many professional divines, naturally indisposes them to that habitual reconsideration of the incomprehensible meaning of such words, which is needed for preserving the simplicity of theological truth amid the temptations of controversy. Can a lurking confusion

If we aspire to comprehend the infinite, we are drawn by inevitable consequence into the negations of Pantheism. If we represent the Deity under finite symbols, these must be drawn from the phenomena of human consciousness, and be thus based on a more or less refined Anthropomorphism. But an Anthropomorphism of this kind, if we accept its language and modes of thought as regulatively true, *without attempting to determine its speculative significance*, in so far from being either logically illegitimate, or theologically unsound, that it is one which meets us in almost every page of Holy Scripture, which is implied alike in the letter and spirit of its teaching, and which furnishes the only mode in which that teaching can be applied to any practical use. . . . Revelation, to have any practical effects, must be adapted to the constitution of its human recipient, not to that of its Divine Author. Such an adaptation apparently implies the existence of a more absolute form of truth related to a more perfect intelligence. But of such absolute truth our conception is negative only ; we know it only as the condition of an intelligence which is not ours. Revelation cannot make this conception positive, which would be possible only by a change in the laws of our mental constitution ; nor yet, while it remains negative, can it be turned to any practical account, except to remind us of the limited nature of our faculties, and to warn us to be prepared for intellectual difficulties beyond our power to solve. Our practical concern lies rather with the positive and partial forms under which the invisible things of God have been made discernible to the eye of man—forms which it is our duty to accept as relatively true, for the purpose of our intellectual and moral training during this present life ; though we cannot determine how much of them is speculatively true for every form of intelligence, and how much is relative and dependent upon the existing laws of human consciousness.”

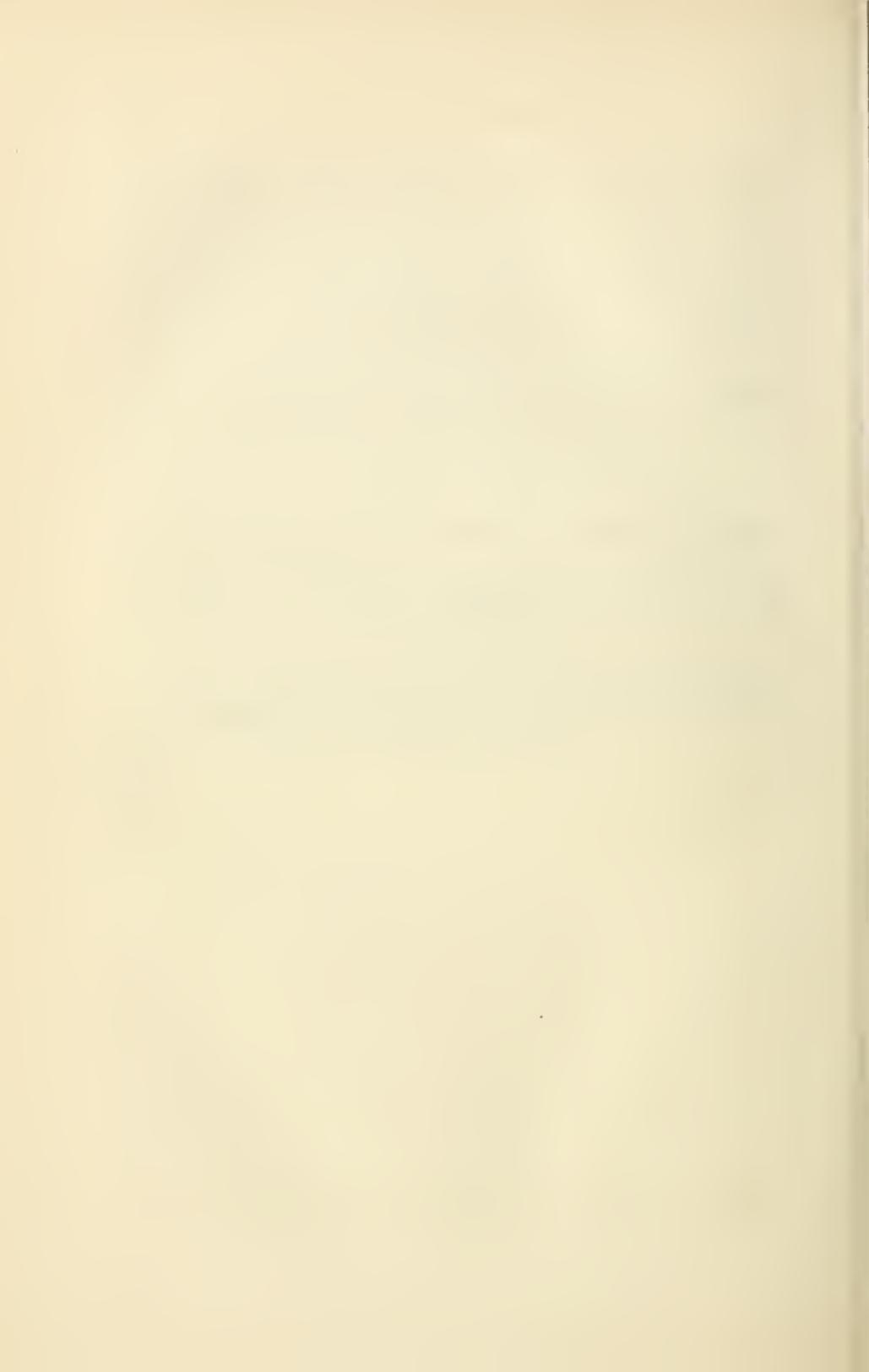
of Divine Revelation itself, with their own interpretation of certain words and phrases, also have its influence among divines, in destroying, by the adoption of an exclusive view, the "spontaneous inconsistency" of Common Sense on these matters? All the revelations of God are, without doubt, infallibly true, and given by inspiration ; but it can hardly be supposed that Protestant interpreters of revelation really mean that *they*, too, are inspired and infallible—still less that divines, whether Protestant or Romanist, profess to be able to render comprehensible words, whose meaning, wherever found, is, and must continue for ever, mysterious in all finite knowledge. Yet the language of some theologians has induced their less charitable readers to attribute to them these impious paradoxes.

However this may be, we owe a cordial welcome to others, like Mr. Mozley, whose labours tend to remove obstructions, which presumption has placed in the way of a free application of the inductive method to natural and supernatural theology. On this account we view with satisfaction the attempt made in the treatise now before us, ambiguous as we cannot but regard that attempt, to apply the solvent of Philosophy to an ancient controversy. That satisfaction is increased when we find that the work unites, in an unusual degree, good sense and lofty serenity, with discussions hitherto too much surrendered to orthodox and heterodox bigotry, or to the morbid musings of minds pre-engaged by vicious metaphysical assumptions. We are glad, too, to have this evidence that Oxford in this generation

can entertain, with considerate appreciation and historic impartiality, the profound ideas of Augustine and Calvin; and can see in the mysteries to which such ideas relate, facts common to human reason, and not peculiar to a sect of Christian divines. When compared with the superficial criticism of a past age, and the intolerance which for generations many Anglican Churchmen have displayed towards these venerable doctrines, this circumstance suggests a hope of better times. Let us trust that a deeper and more comprehensive mode of viewing this and other theological questions may continue to prevail in England, among those who look to Christianity as the source of national wellbeing, and the best practical solution of the speculative difficulties of mankind. Nor do we exclude Scotland from our hope, if the large religious spirit of Chalmers is permitted to retain its liberal and benignant sway.

ESSAY VI.

FERRIER'S THEORY OF KNOWING AND BEING.



ESSAY VI.

FERRIER'S THEORY OF KNOWING AND BEING.

THIS book* is a curiosity in speculative literature. No man, its author tells us, has for these two thousand years seen the true flesh-and-blood countenance of a single philosophical problem. Metaphysicians, and especially those of Scotland, have, it seems, been at cross purposes. They have been beating the air instead of cultivating their sublime religion. They have been searching for they know not what. They have been worshipping they know not what. The real mysteries that surround us have become commonplace under their hands, and nonsensical words and maxims have been invested with mystery. Their very dialect is an abomination to others, and an unknown tongue even to themselves. The dark words of one generation have become darker in the comments of the next. Even the partial illumination in the old Greek schools—the hazy insight of the early sages—has disappeared amid modern pe-

* Institutes of Metaphysic: The Theory of Knowing and Being. By James F. Ferrier, A.B., Oxon.; Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, St. Andrews. Edinburgh and London, 1854.

dantry and sectarianism. We have turned from things to words—from discoveries sustained by demonstrative proof to contradictory guesses. At the best, our library of modern speculation is a series of vain endeavours to decipher a long-lost hieroglyphic. The greatest minds of the race in each age have, it seems, unaccountably surrendered themselves to the illusion, and the *Metaphysical Literature* of the world is the result of this extraordinary hallucination. But now at last, in this new system of Mr. Ferrier, we are invited to contemplate the cosmos instead of the chaos of speculation.

The intellectual magician who boldly offers to remove the disorder that has been gathering for two thousand years, and to let in the light of the noonday sun on the darkest path of human research, of course invokes a special attention when he thus claims to be our guide. And seldom have we encountered a companion in whose society we could more agreeably pursue our journey. In travelling with Professor Ferrier over these pages, we have beguiled weary hours—seduced by his ingenious paradoxes, his humorous illustrations, and his quaint yet graceful style. The hoary incrustations of philosophical terminology actually melt away beneath the sunshine of his genial enthusiasm. We are conducted over the arctic wastes of abstract thought as happily as if we were on a journey through the regions of poetry or romance. Then Mr. Ferrier is not more attractive as a companion than he is original and adventurous as a guide. He is ready to follow speculation wherever speculation chooses to carry him, disregarding the pre-

cedents alike of his vulgar and his philosophical predecessors. The pure air of mental liberty is alone agreeable to him. From Pythagoras to Hegel his sympathies are all with those who have pursued truth, however far she might lead them from the prudent conventions of popular opinion. No Scottish, perhaps no modern metaphysician, has ever played with a more pleasant freedom over the sublime mysteries of existence. Indeed, the graver class may be apt to complain that in a neighbourhood so awful, their guide wantonly abandons himself to the amusements of the intellectual gymnasium, and seems sometimes more ready to exhibit dexterous escapades by the way, than to conduct them to the resting-place for which they are longing.

We were drawn to this volume with more sympathy and higher expectations, than to almost any philosophical book that has recently appeared. We have found it a work of logical and literary art, abounding in passages of great beauty. But when we contemplate the ONE prominent conclusion which constitutes its professed discovery, apart from the suggestive and highly entertaining mental processes through which we have been made to pass on our way to it, we must frankly acknowledge our disappointment and surprise. Our guide boasts that he has broken into "the innermost secrecies of nature," and that he can now "lay open the universe from stem to stern." He offers to carry us over the obstacles which have foiled so many generations of philosophers, on a level railroad of Demonstration, straight into the citadel of existence. But we do not

see in all his elaborate structure the keystone of a scientific arch, on which we can cross the chasm where so many metaphysicians have perished. We travel so far on the old road, and when we are told that we have crossed the dark abyss, we find on examination that we are where we were before, with our guide endeavouring to persuade us that the darkness and the abyss are spectral illusions of our own. What is solid in Mr. Ferrier's system has long been familiar; and its so-called Discovery must be viewed as a dogma not merely unproved, but assumed in the face of opposite proof. Instead of seeing in this new Theory of the Universe the great discovery that its author proclaims, we are compelled to regard it as tending to obscure the wisest lesson which Philosophy has taught to mankind, and the one which of all her lessons mankind, we sometimes hope, are really beginning to learn.

But we must indicate some of our reasons, and not merely make assertions. We shall try to keep our remarks within narrow limits, and resist the temptation to follow Mr. Ferrier into many interesting digressions, that we may always have before us the doctrine which forms **THE ESSENCE OF HIS THEORY**. The acceptance or rejection of that doctrine turns upon the deepest question in speculation, and, through speculation, in human knowledge.

Seventy pages of an Introduction place us in front of the question to which all metaphysic worthy of the name, attempts to find either a positive or a negative answer.

In these pages we have a view of the nature and proper mode of pursuing metaphysical truth ; and also some ingenious reasons in explanation of the anarchy which is said to prevail among its students. The rest of the volume is a development of the Discovery to which the author asserts his claim. Let us pause for a little in the Introduction, to learn *what* Mr. Ferrier means by Metaphysics ; and also *why* and *how* a science worthy of that venerable name ought to be produced.

It is well to fix the word to a meaning as definite as possible. While a small minority of thoughtful persons have for ages been pursuing a tolerably marked line of contemplative research, under this name, the majority of mankind,—finding the research uncongenial to them, have disturbed those engaged in it, by carrying away their watchword, and employing it as a vague term of reproach. The metaphysicians themselves have at last become confused, in doing and describing their work, when the word that was invented to designate it is found labelled on the backs of men who are doing nothing at all—or perhaps mischief. We thank Mr. Ferrier for helping to rescue it from this predicament. He has nowhere offered a formal definition. But he has associated the name with a volume which expressly, and in a very exclusive manner, professes to deal with the chief question, which, in some one of its many phases, has kept metaphysicians busy since men began to reflect, and which must continue to do so until reflection has died out in the human race. To find the relation of knowing and

being—of our knowledge to absolute existence—of thought to the infinite—of intelligence to the unconditioned, are technical expressions for a task which, in one form or other, meets every man who tries to analyze his knowledge and to read its deeper meaning.

It is easy to caricature the metaphysical problem, and the formulas in language which have been invented to express the higher refinements of thought. We meet men who deny that philosophical words and phrases can have any meaning at all, because they have no meaning for *them*; or who translate them in a way that justifies the denial. What rational being cares to consider whether, *in the superficial meaning of the words*, the external senses are worthy of trust, or whether his own personal identity is preserved from day to day? Every sane man of course believes, *in some sense*, that he himself and other intelligent beings exist, and that matter exists, and that the course of nature may be depended on. Yet grave modern philosophers, it is said, have been wrangling only about these truisms—to the amusement if not the profit of their audience. And no doubt shallow pedants, with souls void of the reflective genius which alone transmits life beneath these “masks” of a deeper controversy, *have mingled in the fray*. But the life itself of modern thought lies under the forms in which it thus takes expression. The metaphysician does not seek to *prove*—what everybody grants in some sense—that he himself exists, or that matter exists, or that God exists. He does not give any extra evidence that what men see and touch and taste is real—that our feelings,

thoughts, and volitions, are actually experienced by us—or that other intelligences than our own may reasonably be inferred to exist, through the marks of design made known to our observations. But he asks what EXISTENCE means, and must mean, when thus variously employed.* May the word be applied to what is not and cannot be an object of human knowledge and thought; or is every such application of it, whether in popular or in scientific discourse, the expression of an illusion and the parent of an error?

All the ultimate controversies of mankind converge in dependence on the formula which should be used to express the relation of Reason to Being—of what is *comprehended* by us to what *is*. Is our knowledge in any respect identical with existence; or, on the contrary, may we believe what cannot be known, what seems even to contradict the very essence of our knowledge? Must every set of propositions, whose collective meaning seems contradictory, while each separately is mysterious, be excluded from belief—on the ground that our knowledge, in its essence, must be absolute? In these questions lies the strength of dogmatic Ontology, with its dry bones of definition; and also of reflective Philosophy, with its theories of perception and causation—of the absolute and unconditioned. They invite positive or negative solu-

* "Nothing," says Berkeley, "seems of more importance towards erecting a firm system of sound and real knowledge, which may be proof against the assaults of scepticism, than to lay the beginning in a distinct explication of what is *meant* by THING, REALITY, EXISTENCE: for in vain shall we dispute concerning the real existence of things, or pretend to any knowledge thereof, so long as we have not fixed the meaning of these words."—*Principles of Human Knowledge*.

tions of the problem, Is AN UNKNOWN possible? does existence depend on being positively known?

Whether they like the name Metaphysician or not, all men more or less entertain this question. They are unconsciously solving it in the positive way, when they dogmatize, as so many are wont to do, about the ultimate possibilities of things; and even pervert positive evidence, in interpreting it consistently with their dogmas. It has in fact been answered formally by metaphysicians, and practically by mankind at large, in *both* ways;—while a third party sceptically evade it altogether. Some employ our intelligence as the measure of Being; and conclude, that what cannot be reduced by definition within *its* laws must be excluded from belief. Others interpret all their positive knowledge, through the Faith that *what is* may transcend their intelligence. The sceptics of every order regard all beyond Sense or common experience as matters in which we have no concern. We have thus *ontological* metaphysicians, *philosophical* metaphysicians, and *sceptical* metaphysicians. But the ontological and sceptical extremes meet; and we may divide metaphysicians into ONTOLOGISTS and PHILOSOPHERS.* The former profess to answer positively the question in our last paragraph. The latter confess that it cannot receive any definite reply, but deny that it is therefore insignificant. Ontology and Philosophy are

* We use Philosophy here in its etymological meaning, in which it is supposed to meet absolute Being with *love* and *longing*, rather than with intelligence. Ontology seems more akin to Sophistry, and philosophy was originally used to express antagonism to the sophists.

the two metaphysical streams. They rise on the same intellectual summit, and flow ever after in opposite directions. It may be difficult to detect the difference at their source, but it becomes more obvious, when, in our progress through the various "climates of opinion" we find mankind virtually formed into two great sections, as they, consciously or unconsciously, incline to merge faith in knowledge, or knowledge in faith. Mr. Ferrier, with his definition of absolute existence, takes his place among the Ontologists. He cannot fairly claim a designation which substitutes Love for knowledge, Faith for intellectual comprehension.*

The "Theory of Knowing and Being" is, we have said, the classic ideal of Metaphysics. We agree with Mr. Ferrier in accepting that theory as the proper object of the study. But great part of his book is occupied in illustrating the (what he calls) degraded position and unbecoming attitudes of professed metaphysicians,—especially of modern British psychologists. There is no doubt that, in the century and a half which has elapsed since Locke's Essay became popular, the vocabulary, and, on a superficial view, the objects of the study, have been changed in this country. This change, so far as it implies an abatement from the old ideal, has been partly occasioned by the disinclination for the rarefied atmosphere around the source of the two streams, so characteristic of middle-class Englishmen; and still more by the speculative apathy common with them to mankind, which fails to introduce their living meaning into technical words invented to express profound thought. The tension of

mind which this department of intellectual service calls for is too great, too constant, and too unexciting to the vulgar taste, to permit more than a few in each age and country to engage in it with earnestness. But the British idea of the *problem* of metaphysics is not, after all, so far wide of his own as Mr. Ferrier seems to imagine ; however opposite the British *solution* of that problem may be to the one now offered in these "Institutes."

It is true that metaphysic is the science or theory of Being. But the only knowledge of this kind that is possible to us may be—and we believe is—the theory of the ultimate or necessary relations of *our* Knowing to Being. Now this restricted view coincides well enough with that of our best British psychology, with its "faculties," and "mental states." What are these but the issue of faltering endeavours to define *existence as known by us, i.e.*, to construct the science of *human* knowledge ? Many of our "mental philosophers," since Locke, have perhaps discredited this ideal, and have treated the human understanding as they would any of the ordinary phenomena in nature,—forgetful that the theory of human Knowledge, in its ultimate relations, is, by implication, a theory of Being ; and that intellectual phenomena are related to *all* phenomena as their ideal side. Psychology has in consequence so far ceased to be Philosophy *de facto*, but not *de jure*. It still conducts to the loftiest of human sciences, even though its votaries may forget the dignity of their position. In short, the "science of the human mind," with "its hopeless inquiry about *faculties*, and all that sort of

rubbish," is simply an attempt to define the ultimate relations of *our* Knowing to Being.

But *why* should we engage at all in this severe kind of intellectual labour? Why transcend the useful routine of common life on these speculative altitudes? Meditative exercises of that kind cannot be the staple of the mental experience of mankind, or the sole employment of any man. Why should they be the chief business even of a few?

We cannot now discuss this large question, nor criticise even the portion of these "Institutes," in which the motives that have hitherto sustained reflection among men, and the ends secured by its continued activity, are analyzed. Their main defence of the study,—so far as it differs from the common one, is suicidal. The author cuts the branch on which he has to stand. He employs the Reason which he condemns, to correct, *per saltum*, its own fundamental errors; and declaims against the philosophers for attempting, through inductions founded on our reflex experience, to make a *gradual* approach to the system of universal truth. His system is essentially polemical. His ideal metaphysician is an intellectual warrior;*—but he is sent to the fight deprived

* We need hardly note, that *every* professed philosophical doctrine, from Socrates downwards, is virtually polemical—*i.e.*, meant to correct human reason as it is, and to bring it nearer to its ideal. Who more clearly illustrates this than our own John Locke, whose Essay is a polemic against prejudices? His ardour in this cause has produced a *bluntness* in his weapon, which has exposed him to the keen-edged speculation of less practical and earnest combatants. But the fact that the metaphysician is

of his weapons, and with his position lost. "The original dowry of universal man," says Mr. Ferrier, "is inadvertency and error." The principles now universally received as ultimate, under the name of Common Sense, have, he thinks, perplexed knowledge, rendering it incoherent and contradictory. The multitude have therein inadvertently worshipped illusions, and the psychologists—those sham metaphysicians, have pandered to the vulgar taste, and confirmed the people in their idolatry. They have "reconciled" Philosophy with the Faith of Common Sense, by making it the servant of absurd prejudices; instead of taking the manlier course of exploding, by the application of thorough-going reasoning, prevalent beliefs that Mr. Ferrier assents are really void of consistent meaning. Metaphysic, in its genuine aspect, is, he would say, a continual struggle with the Common Sense of mankind. Its aim is to take the place of Common Sense. But Faith, we reply, is the soul of work. We cannot carry on even this work of warring against the original beliefs of mankind, without retaining some of them to give us life and strength. The Theory, indeed, does not wholly overlook this. It tries to retain *a part* of the Common Sense, as the basis of its operations, in the war which it declares against *the whole*. But we must examine the position which Mr. Ferrier thus reserves for his metaphysician. Perhaps the principle which reserves it may either secure a broader basis, or else hinder any.

a polemic does not determine his *mode* of warfare; and it is here that we separate from Mr. Ferrier.

Through "the compulsory reason" alone, we are told, can we conquer for ourselves a deliverance from our "original dowry of inadvertency and error." The "ordinary opinions of mankind" are contradictory; and Psychology is their proclaimed guardian. Metaphysic, as polemical, must explode Psychology. But it is too modest to make the attempt, unless it can bring a stronger force than mere "probability" against it. Metaphysic must, therefore, according to Mr. Ferrier, be an *à priori* science. We can address ourselves to the problem of Being, only in what may be called the *demonstrative*, as distinguished from the *observational*, state of mind. The *necessary* part or the essence of Being, is what the speculative reformer must define and display scientifically. He wants to discover "what is" as it *must* be—leaving it to the students of the various physical sciences to observe and generalize the *contingent* phenomena of the universe. Existence is studied by him, not in any of its variable manifestations, material or mental, but only in those which are essential, and apart from which it could not *be* existence, but absurdity and contradiction. We may, perhaps, be tempted to ask whether there is *any* atmosphere of "necessary truth," in which existence, as such, must be thus enveloped? The method of constructing knowledge anew, on the foundation of a single abstract proposition rescued as a "necessary truth" from the ruins created by philosophic doubt, has already been several times tried with indifferent success—as Spinoza and his recent successors can prove. But we need not perplex ourselves about this question at the

outset. Let us wait the issue of this fresh attempt. If Mr. Ferrier, or any one else, *has* thus discovered the Essence of Being, there is an end to the question.

The neglect of most metaphysicians to use this Demonstrative Method is the author's explanation of their notorious aberrations. Mr. Ferrier everywhere inveighs against his predecessors and contemporaries,—especially those in Scotland, for abandoning the “necessary truths,” or for confounding truths that are “necessary,” with others void of that distinguished mark. In his hands, at all events, no truth can be admitted into Metaphysics that is not either an axiom or a deduction from axioms. All through the structure he promises to rear, we are to live in an uninterrupted blaze of demonstration, like that of Euclid. The work is to be a “mass of demonstrations,” “a chain of clear demonstration carried through from the first word to the last,” “one large demonstration from the beginning to the end.” It is not a system of mathematics, and does not include that department; but it thus far resembles it, that when we relapse from a rigour of reasoning equal to that in pure mathematics, we may take this as a sign that we are wandering out of the metaphysical province. It is indeed true that all the vulgar, and the great majority of professed thinkers, *have* hitherto thus gone astray. But this is not to be wondered at. The real wonder would have been, had the case been different. The actual case only illustrates the necessary laws of human progress and of the history of opinion. The deepest truths *must* come last. Men must traverse the surface of knowledge, before they recognise

those axioms which yield trains of demonstration about the essence of Being. Hence, in these years of "progress," they have created Physical Sciences, while they have hardly made a commencement in Metaphysics. But now, in this modern Theory of our ingenious countryman, speculation hopes to return to the point from which originally she set out, and to travel thence with a clearer vision and a firmer tread. We may now, at last, breathe, we are told, only the atmosphere of "necessary" truth, from the beginning to the end of our metaphysical enterprise.

But how are we to know *when* we are doing this? how distinguish that pure air from the denser atmosphere of probability and vulgar knowledge? What *kind* of necessity is referred to, when it is said, that the truths about Being we are to search for are only the necessary truths? An illustration may convey the reply. That I am writing at this table is *not* a necessary truth about Being. It is only one among many other possible forms or phenomena. I can fancy myself walking in my garden or travelling to the moon. I can, in short, know Being in innumerable other forms. I can conceive every object to be different from what it is. In all this experienced fluctuation or contingency, I have sufficient proof that, at least, phenomena which may thus be changed at will are not necessary. They may be conceived to be different from what they are. But that a thing is and is not at the same time—that A is not A—is a contradiction in terms. A *contradiction* cannot

possibly be true. No volition, human or divine, can make it true. An invincible necessity forces us to reject a contradiction. Now, if we can find any propositions concerning "what is," which cannot be rejected without a contradiction in terms, these surely are necessary. In *them* we may find the definition which limits Being. The logical axioms of Identity and Contradiction, as they are technically called, are the most general expressions of that necessity. The opposites of all metaphysical truths must contradict these axioms; they must affirm that Being at once is and is not. Now, can we thus develop Metaphysics from Formal Logic? Are there any truths about existence that are fenced in by this purely logical necessity? If so, in what quarter can we find them? Mr. Ferrier answers these questions by evolving his system,—and in an order which he says is, like all else in metaphysics, "necessitated not chosen." What is that order?

The nature of the necessity explained in the last paragraph implies the answer. What *is*, is at least what *is known*. Knowledge thus far contains existence—even though the question of the possibility of *unknown* existence should remain undetermined. And the "necessity," which is the organ of discovery in Metaphysics, appertains to knowledge. It is *felt* in the act of knowing. Reflection must, therefore, in the first place, be applied to Knowledge. We must try to find the essence of knowledge—some element whose presence creates knowledge, while its absence implies a contradiction; and which thus limits knowledge, as such, by the infalli-

ble logical law. The first part of every system of metaphysics must, therefore, be an EPISTEMOLOGY or theory of knowledge.—But is this theory co-extensive with Metaphysics? Knowing is, indeed, a manifestation of Being. But, perhaps, it is not the *only* one—and so the definition of Being slips through our hands. Our theory of existence *as known* cannot perhaps be transferred to existence *absolutely*. Accordingly, we must try to direct our scientific resources against the vaunted region of Ignorance. We must have an AGNOIOLOGY or theory of ignorance, as well as an Epistemology. If we are successful in our assaults on knowledge and on ignorance, then at last we have the theory of Being,—for that theory must express the essence of Being either *as known* by us, or *as unknown* to us. No third aspect of Being is logically possible. It would imply a contradiction in terms.—The problem of ONTOLOGY is therefore solved, in a limitation of absolute Being by the definition yielded in the theories of knowledge and ignorance. Any surplus of scholastic formulas and “common sense” beliefs that violate that definition, and in which human reason has hitherto played the fool, must pass for ever away into what Mr. Ferrier calls the “limbo of contradiction.” If we can conquer a theory of Knowledge and a theory of Ignorance, we *must* have a positive Ontology within our power.

Can we then, in following this order, find anything we are obliged to affirm of Being, as such, on pain of contradicting ourselves, *i.e.*, implying that what is *said* to exist at once is and is not? (If we can, *that* is Meta-

physics.) Let us try to condense Mr. Ferrier's very confident reply, diffused as it is through forty-one Demonstrations, which, with their comments, are spread over more than four hundred pages of his Institutes.

All KNOWLEDGE involves a relation. We know, only as we know something. The "something," defined in knowledge, is technically called its *object*; and the "known," by which it is defined, represents the *subject*, *i.e.*, the element variously named "ego," "self," "intelligence," &c. Both these elements are essential in knowledge: but one of them is variable or contingent in its forms, the other identical amid all the changes of its correlative. An indefinite variety of "objects" (*e.g.*, solid and extended objects, commonly called Matter; and states or feelings of Mind) may be contained in knowledge. The "subject," or pure intelligence, must be the one feature which is identical, invariable, and essential, in all this variety. But these two elements—the former, in any one of its innumerable forms, the latter, in its invariable form—are *both* necessary to constitute *any* knowledge. If either be abstracted, the knowledge (*i.e.*, existence *as known*) relapses into a contradiction. Take away the "something," *i.e.*, *an object*, and the "known" becomes nonsense; it cannot, without a contradiction in terms, be called knowledge. Or, withdraw the act of "knowing," *i.e.*, *the subject*, and again the "object" is converted into nonsense, and only through a contradiction can be styled knowledge at all. To maintain that knowledge can survive the abstraction of *either* element,

is as absurd as to affirm that a circle can want its centre, or that A can be not A.

This, surely, is a position any one may occupy without opposition. No man can deny *explicitly* that existence *as known* must be a relation which implies this synthesis; because no man can deny that knowledge implies both a consciousness of knowing, and also an object that is known. It may therefore, according to Mr. Ferrier, be taken as the one fundamental axiom in metaphysics,—to be employed against those who deny it *implicitly*, *i.e.*, who contradict it in various ways inadvertently. The Theory of Knowledge is just a systematic employment of the axiom in this service. Trains of demonstration resting on it are applied in succession to explode contradictory propositions which, by implication, deny that all knowledge implies an “object—known.” Modern metaphysics—under the name of Psychology—is crowded, it is said, with such propositions; and under its protection, they, with the brood of noxious errors which they nourish, have undisputed possession of the popular mind. Men habitually profess to include in knowledge, an “object” *separated from the act of knowing*; or a “knowing” that is *void of any object*. Thus they nonsensically distinguish subject from object, not merely in the act, as they *may* do, but also out and independently of the act of knowledge, which they *cannot* do consistently. An *unknown* object, (*i.e.*, an object separated from knowing) is a contradiction; and a self or subject *not engaged in knowing any object* is also a contradiction. The “ordinary” distinction of subject

and object* is therefore absurd. They can no more be separated than the centre can be separated from the circle. But they may be theoretically distinguished from one another, as the centre may be thus distinguished from the circumference of a circle.

The axiom may be now applied in detail to the various "objects" of knowledge. That Matter and Mind, for example, are known, and can be thought and reasoned about by us,—each *per se*, *i.e.*, in separation from the other,—must be, by implication, a contradiction in terms. The supposition implies that an object is known and yet not known at the same time. All that men can really know or conceive must be *knowledge of matter* and *knowledge of mind*. This must be, until we can get at the object apart from the act—in other words, know without knowing. We cannot, as it were, strip objects of the acts of knowing by which they are *made* objects, and then contemplate them apart. Hitherto, men have spoken about matter and mind—self and not-self—as if either could be known out of relation to the other. According to Mr. Ferrier, a frightful progeny of psychological hypotheses has been founded on a misleading figure of speech—Materialism, Idealism, Realism, Conceptualism, Nominalism, &c. The chaos of metaphysics, over which we have been moralizing, has been brought about by a systematic violation of this fundamental necessity. The vulgar have hitherto assumed, and psychologists have professed to study a so-called "know-

* *I.e.*, in which "subject" stands for an independent *self*, and "object" means an independent *not-self*.

ledge" *which is not knowledge at all, but sheer contradiction.* They have tried to study *unknown* objects, and acts of knowledge *abstracted from all objects.* They might as well try to study a centreless circle, or a stick with only one end. Let us remove the contradiction, and then we may have the theory of knowledge. Knowledge is and must be a fusion of knowing and known. Try to dissolve it by psychological analysis, and the universe must read nonsensically. Preserve the union, and the hieroglyphic becomes pregnant with meaning.

Mr. Ferrier, in possession of this strong scientific position, now directs his logical artillery with apparent vigour and effect. It is demonstrated by him, that unknown matter cannot be known-matter, nor unknown mind known-mind,—that abstract universals, and particulars abstracted from a universal, are alike contradictory,—that a faculty called sense, and commonly said to give the knowledge of matter, must be a faculty of non-sense—that a knowledge of unknown Substance, or of an unknown Absolute, must be a contradiction in terms—and he suggests, that, on the whole, we should reverse the old application of these favourite metaphysical terms, "substance," and "absolute," "phenomenon," and "relative"—at least, if we are to preserve our traditional respect for the two former, and to retain the latter in the new system, in a place of inferiority corresponding to the one they have been wont to occupy in the old! With this deliverance of the region of Epistemology from its barbarous possessors, and introduction of order and intelligence into the language of the conquered

territory, Mr. Ferrier triumphantly closes his first campaign. In truth, the really arduous part of his work was either previously accomplished, or it is still before him.

But to proceed. While it is clear as the sun at noon that we cannot *know* what flatly contradicts the essence of knowledge, may "unknown" existence not still be concealed in our IGNORANCE? May it not be that there is something which transcends the "objects" of sense and self-consciousness; and also those reached through the inductive reasonings for which *they* supply the material? May we not believe, accordingly, that what is known by us in sense is (ontologically) something more than even the "necessary" elements of our knowledge; and that what is known by us in self-consciousness is (ontologically) something more than even the "necessary" elements of our transient consciousness? Does it follow, on pain of contradiction, that, because a thing cannot be *known* out of the relation of knowledge, it may not *exist* irrespective of knowledge and definitions? —There is proof enough that there may be unknown objects of which *we* are ignorant. A man born blind is ignorant of colour; and, nevertheless, men not born blind know that colour exists. And we, with our five senses here on earth, may be ignorant of what is revealed to the inhabitant of Saturn, with his fifty senses; while he in turn is perhaps ignorant of the peculiar revelations made through our five. Thus far all is clear. But can intelligence be ignorant of what is CONTRADICTION? Can "A is not A" find refuge in *any* region of ignorance? An indefinite number of known objects, which are not

objects in *our* knowledge, may find refuge there. But ignorance cannot contain *objects that are not objects*. Now, whatever (so-called) object is not a known-object is already demonstrated to be a contradiction. All behind or beyond *known*-existence must be the contradictory; and we cannot, without absurdity, be said to be "ignorant" of that. The sphere of knowledge, and the sphere of ignorance, must thus far coincide. The latter sphere is indeed wider than the former,—but only inasmuch as it may conceal indefinite modifications of the *contingent or variable* element in knowledge. It cannot conceal what is not *a* modification of known-existence (*i.e.*, of object subject.)

Here, then, says Mr. Ferrier, we may at last display in triumph the final definition of Being—the want of which has so long confused human reason. We cannot, except at the expense of a contradiction in terms, suppose that Being is neither contained in our knowledge nor concealed in our ignorance. Whatever is *must* be either known or not known by *us*. But both what we know and what we are ignorant of must be known-existence. There may be various *kinds* of known-existence—various contingent modes of knowing, but *unknown* existence is not existence at all, but only an absurdity or contradiction. Whatever is *must* be an object-known. It need not, of course, be known by me, nor by any human intelligence; but it must be the object of *an* intelligence, in order to escape contradiction. In short, KNOWN-EXISTENCE IS THE ONLY REAL EXISTENCE; and any belief or proposition which implies the

reality of what is *not* an object of *any* intelligence, must be virtually a contradictory belief or proposition. At the best, it conceals a contradiction in terms. In this conclusion Ontology triumphs over Philosophy. The "insoluble problem" of Reason has been solved. Absolute Being is measured in a definition wrought out by human intelligence, and expressive of a human theory. And, through this conclusion of Reason, a series of propositions, long venerable in the Faith of mankind, seems to disappear for ever.

Not to refer to Fichte and the Germans, the germ of this curious Theory may be found in the works of an author of popular celebrity in British literature. The system of Bishop Berkeley, so far, resembles the new doctrine ; and Berkeley alone, of all British metaphysicians, receives Mr. Ferrier's enthusiastic praise. Nor have we any desire to abate the praise. Only we may for a moment place the good Bishop's theory beside Mr. Ferrier's, developed as it is with less pedantic formality. We quote the following from among many other passages in Berkeley, relating to the nature of Being :—

"That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas, formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, is what everybody will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together, (that is, whatever objects they compose,) cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them. I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this, by any one

that shall attend to *what is meant by the term* EXIST *when applied to sensible things.* The table I write on, I say, exists, *i.e.*, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby, that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odour, *i.e.*, it was smelled; there was a sound, *i.e.*, it was heard; a colour or figure, *i.e.*, it was perceived by sight or touch. That is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things, without any relation to their being perceived, (known,) that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds of thinking beings which perceive them. It is, indeed, an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and, in a word, all sensible objects have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But with how great an assurance and acquiescence soever this principle may be entertained in the world, yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question, may, if I mistake not, perceive it to involve a *manifest contradiction*. . . . Some truths there are so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, *viz.*, that all the choir of heaven, and furniture of the earth,—in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind,—that their being is to be perceived or known. To be convinced of

which, the reader need only reflect, and try to separate in his own thoughts the *being* of a sensible thing, from its *being perceived*. From what has been said, it follows that there is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives."—*Principles of Human Knowledge*, iii.-vii.

Berkeley's theory differs from Mr. Ferrier's in being, at least, more cautiously vague. He does not define known-existence as Mr. Ferrier does—in distinguishing its necessary and invariable element from its contingent and variable one. He says that Matter must be known. But he does not define absolute knowledge. His theory, accordingly, is only indefinitely, if at all, an ontological one. Berkeley absorbs the *material world* in knowledge. These Institutes absorb Absolute Being in a *definite kind* of knowledge,—thereby excluding from belief every proposition which cannot be reconciled with that definition. Berkeley, trained in an earlier school, evades a demonstrative Ontology. Mr. Ferrier, carried with a later generation on the strong tide of German speculation, has developed the Psychology of Berkeley into a kind of Scottish Hegelianism. The theory of Berkeley may be criticised as a theory of human reason in its relation to the material world ; this Theory of Knowing and Being must be criticised with reference to its boasted definition of Absolute Existence. The Idealism of Berkeley, regarded only as a psychological sentence of extermination on unknown Matter, is a far less presumptuous thing than Mr. Ferrier's ontological sentence of extermination on whatever is not known as an *object* in relation to a *subject*.

Must mankind henceforward join Mr. Ferrier in this sentence, if they are to preserve the dignity of rational beings?

Only when they are ready to accept, *as an absolute or ontological truth*, that psychological necessity of the human mind on which the Theory rests. If we may assume, without proof, and without explaining the mental phenomena which seem to forbid the assumption, that the essence of *our* knowledge is absolute—complete—perfect, then no extraordinary strength of reasoning is required to reach Mr. Ferrier's conclusion,—that there cannot be “an unknown,” *i.e.*, an object divorced from a subject, or a subject divorced from an object. In short, the Theory must presume that it is already on ontological ground in its very first proposition, if it is really on that hitherto inaccessible territory in its last. But the real difficulty it has to meet is the difficulty of defending the *absolute* meaning, which the first proposition in the Epistemology requires to have, in order that it may carry the conclusion contained in the tenth demonstration of the Ontology. The Theory rests on a single necessary truth. In this respect it resembles the system of Spinoza. That system is blind to all that is not expressed or implied in favourite axioms; and it is thus enabled to boast of its “demonstrative” character. The method used by theorists of this class tempts them to turn the blind eye to all beyond the narrow foundation on which alone the “demonstration” can be made to stand. Mr. Ferrier's Theory has taken no precautions against that temptation. In the first place,

there are other truths, equally necessary and axiomatic, which we cannot reconcile with the selected one. Are we, for instance, obliged to believe propositions whose meaning, taken collectively, cannot be known or conceived as an "object" at all? Does not *our* knowledge, even in its necessary or essential elements, thus bear upon it the marks of imperfection, and explode in a series of contradictions when it is dogmatically assumed to be absolute?

Mr. Ferrier, in his horror of Psychology, has not encountered these questions. In a book which proclaims itself the "Institutes" of Metaphysic, the reader is astonished to find no allusion to the phenomena in our knowledge, which alone, we may almost say, have raised metaphysical curiosity; and which have hitherto foiled every attempt to resolve Absolute existence into *the only kind of knowledge we have any experience of*. The group of propositions, regarding Immensity, Eternity, and Causation,—apparently contradictory when the relation of subject and object is assumed to be absolute in knowledge, but which are fixed as necessarily in Reason as that fundamental law itself—are passed in silence. These *marginal* propositions of Faith, as we may call them, are the barriers which hitherto have closed every speculative approach to Ontology. The seeming contradictions in our knowledge, revealed in the propositions now referred to, imply that THE UNKNOWN cannot be made to fit in to any conditions—necessary or contingent—of existence as known to us. We find, when we analyze our knowledge into *all* its elements, that we

believe, and must continue to believe, seeming contradictions. But in another view, these contradictory necessities of our knowledge may nourish Faith while they thus limit Reason. Whether or not we can define *what is*, we can at least tell *what is not*. We, of course, agree with Mr. Ferrier that truth cannot contradict itself. Absolute knowledge cannot be contradictory, though *our* knowledge may become so when *it* is assumed to be perfect or absolute. And so we conclude that our marginal knowledge—and by implication our *entire* knowledge, for it is an organic whole—is *not* absolute or perfect, but only relative to our condition and circumstances in this and in a future life. Through these beliefs in apparent contradictions, we find our knowledge charged with FAITH IN AN UNKNOWN, in which the apparent contradictions may be reconciled. For if our knowledge seems thus fundamentally contradictory, we must either with the Sceptics reject it altogether, or, with the Philosophers, read in these abnormal phenomena the signs of its imperfection or finitude. The former is the alternative of Rationalism ; the latter is the instinct of Faith.

This most sublime and instructive aspect of human knowledge is suggested in the phenomena of Space, Time, Number, and Causation,—in the ground or Substance of the known universe,—and in the revelations of the physical and moral government of God. A curious spectacle might be formed if we were here to bring together, and present, as it were, in a tabular view, these abnormal intellectual phenomena by which our Reason is limited—as they have risen on the metaphysical wheel

for our edification, from Aristotle to the antinomies of Kant. We might thus have a panoramic view of Reason in its demonstrated weakness—our knowledge in its experimentally proved finitude. When, with the help of the speculations of departed men of thought, we reflect upon the ultimate propositions in our knowledge, we find that we are daily believing and acting upon truths which, taken separately, are partially intelligible, while, taken collectively, they are *to us* nonsensical and apparently contradictory. Even the “necessary truths” of human knowledge contradict one another, when they are presumed to be known, *i.e.*, logically comprehended. This wonderful fact has been the occasion, as it has been the difficulty, of all our previous Ontologies and high speculations. These “antinomies of reason” were illustrated by us in our Essay on the “Insoluble Problem” which they suggest, and to which we may refer as pointing towards some evidence for the assertion, that *our* knowledge cannot be presumed to be *absolute* without an act of intellectual suicide. In this profoundest part of our mental experience, we have proof, as irresistible as demonstration, that Faith in an unknown is wrought into the very fibres and tissues of all human knowledge. When we try to realize collectively, under a law of relative knowledge,* the beliefs to which we have just referred, we find the nascent knowledge becoming contradictory in the experiment. Sceptics, like Hume, have inferred from this result that our knowledge is an illusion; instead of drawing, with

* *E.g.*, under the law of subject + object.

Pascal, the wiser lesson that it is only imperfect, and that the apparent contradictions result from the illegitimate assumption that it *is* essentially complete.* Mr. Ferrier overlooks both the inference and the lesson, and without more ado converts a primary law of finite knowledge into the essence of being.

Hume's metaphysical speculation may indeed be read in a good sense. It is vulgarly called a system of universal scepticism—as if that were possible. It is rather an emphatic and unqualified exposure of the apparent contradictions which illustrate the finitude of human knowledge; with almost no reference to the Faith which these very contradictions may be made to nourish. The intellectual giant took this bold way of illustrating what human reason is worth when it would be as God. The lesson which the spectacle teaches must, however, depend upon the spectator. But Pascal is eminently the *philosopher*, as contrasted with the Dogmatist on the one hand, and the Sceptic on the other. How sublimely he

* "It was a truth," says Cudworth, "though abused by the Sceptics, that there is ἀκατάληπτόν τι, something incomprehensible, in the essence even of the lowest substance. For even Body itself, which the Atheists think themselves so well acquainted with, because they can feel it with their fingers, and which is the only substance that they acknowledge either in themselves or the universe, hath such puzzling difficulties and entanglements in the speculation of it, that they can never be able to extricate themselves from. We might instance also in some accidental things, as Time and Motion. *Truth is bigger than our minds, and we are not the same with it, but have a lower participation only of the intellectual nature, and are rather apprehenders than comprehenders thereof. This is indeed one badge of our creaturely state, that we have not a perfectly comprehensive knowledge, or such as is adequate and commensurate to the essence of things.*"

shadows forth our human intelligence as poised between absolute knowledge and absolute ignorance: "Voilà notre état véritable. C'est ce qui nous rend incapables de savoir certainement, et d'ignorer absolument. Nous voguons sur un milieu vaste, toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre. Quelque terme où nous pensions nous attacher et nous affermir, il branle et nous quitte ; et si nous le suivons, il échappe à nos prises, nous glisse, et fuit d'une fuite éternelle. Rien ne s'arrête pour nous."—(Œuvres ii. 70-1.) In sundry other passages of Pascal, how impressive is the description of what we have called the *marginal phenomena* of our finite intelligence—those which give us the consciousness of intellectual finitude, and which convey into the word Infinite the only meaning it can, without a contradiction, contain. But to return.

We complain, then, that these "Institutes" of Metaphysics disregard all the facts which most urgently invite metaphysical contemplation. They overlook the phenomena which forbid the conversion of psychological necessities into absolute truths ; and which thus induce the Faith that—unable to follow the seeming contradictions of our actual knowledge either into absolute scepticism or absolute knowledge—sees in these contradictions only a sign that Being must transcend our finite comprehension. We are promised the play of Hamlet, and yet Hamlet makes no appearance. This is an "oversight" as unaccountable as any of those with which Mr. Ferrier can charge the popular mind. He has not a word to say about the "necessary truths" in our knowledge which seem to im-

ply something that cannot be "an object" of knowledge at all—in the only comprehensible sense of the word object.

Even apart from these mysteries of Faith, we have no right to take for granted that *our* knowledge is the measure of absolute knowledge. If even it did not thus contain the signs of its own imperfection, which reclaim against the dogma, the assumption is at least gratuitous. Why must intelligence be realized essentially in the human way? Is the Divine Knowledge one with ours in its fundamental principles? A query is here at least more becoming than an axiom. Yet that axiom, and its obvious applications, constitute this system, and contain its so-called discovery. Surely all the beautiful elaboration of the literary structure is required to conceal the weakness of the scientific foundation.

The schoolmen, we may remark, have exhausted speculative ingenuity on the unprofitable problem of the Divine Knowledge.* And they have at least supplied, in their failure, a course of profitable experiments on the limits of our Reason, when we go forth on the enterprise of defining any other knowledge than our own, or try to find consistent expressions for the mysteries of Faith, which would cease to be mysterious if they could be consistently expressed. The theologian, like every other deep thinker, must believe and act upon propositions that seem contradictory to intelligence because it is finite,

* The reader is referred with emphasis to the *Prima Pars* of the "Summa Theologiæ" of Thomas Aquinas, in which that great philosophical theologian and theological philosopher marks out the nature and limits of Theology, and the character of its objects as transcending the measure of human reason.

and that can be proved to seem thus in consequence of its finitude. Faith in an unknown, in the various phases of that faith, seems the distinguishing mark of intellectual finitude. The words "infinite" and "absolute" are only abstract expressions of a conviction that the only knowledge (known-existence) in *our* experience is *essentially* imperfect and anomalous. This conviction, from the dawn of reflection to the present hour, has obtruded itself in forms against which the most subtle dialectic is of no avail,—and it may therefore well refuse to yield to Mr. Ferrier's simple summons to surrender. Knowledge, as it *must* be experienced by *us*, is dogmatically affirmed by him to be the absolute measure of knowledge as such. What cannot be reconciled with the "necessities" of our mental experience must be swept away, as neither knowledge nor existence, but the implied contradiction of both. But the contradiction which this Theory professes to avoid in its axiom, is itself a direct result of the unphilosophical assumption, that *our necessary knowledge is the essence of knowledge human and Divine*. The contradiction disappears when the assumption is withdrawn, and is, in fact, a warning not to make the assumption. Contradictions which are found in the heart of our knowledge, when that knowledge is presumed to be absolute, seem to proclaim articulately that the Essence of Being cannot be revealed to us. The sages of every age have thus interpreted the proclamation. And men in general, if not on the *scientific* grounds suggested by Psychology, are at least *spontaneously* convinced that what *is* cannot be contained in what *is known*—from which it follows that

no absolute definition and limitation of Being can be deduced from any axiom in our knowledge.

Supported by this evidence, we may decline to allow that our necessary knowledge is absolute, at least in the sense required by Mr. Ferrier's system ; and in so doing, we reject his first proposition, in the only meaning of that proposition from which his theory can be demonstrated. Far from applying to "Being," it becomes inapplicable to any "Knowing" except our own. The anomalous phenomena revealed when we reflect upon Reason as it is manifested in Faith, forbid us to assume that the "necessary truths" are *perfectly* known by us, and that in them our knowledge is absolute. Mr. Ferrier leaves out the rebellious elements, and then constitutes the equation. We, on the contrary, accept these elements, and are thus fortified in our spontaneous Faith that Being,—whatever it may be, and whether definable or not,—is at least not definable by man. We know a series of correlative "objects" revealed in sense or self-consciousness, and made the basis of inductive inferences ; and we further know that what is thus relatively known, explodes in contradictions, when we assume an absolute perfection in this relative knowledge.

In a word, it is Mr. Ferrier's proposed solution of the ontological problem that is unphilosophical, if not contradictory. The theory that the problem is insoluble—*i.e.*, that all *our* knowledge rises out of what is mysterious—need involve no contradiction, while it saves the knowledge we actually have from many. In the boasted Demonstration which forms this system, the conclusion

is either founded on the assumption that a law of our knowledge is absolute ; or else it implies the contradiction that we can attain to absolute truth through an intellectual experience that is only psychological and human. In this dilemma it must choose its horn.

And its author frankly makes his choice. It is, he says, "impious," "sinful," "irreligious," to deny that any knowledge can transcend the necessary law of ours. Mr. Ferrier, whose foremost claim is to have constructed "a purely reasoned system," offers in the sequel a body of reasoning which might be condensed within a paragraph, although it is diluted into a volume,—and rests the weight of his paradox on the dogma, that that paradox cannot be rejected without "sin." We quote a relevant passage :—

"It (the system) may seem to adopt a somewhat presumptuous line of exposition in undertaking to lay down the laws, not only of *our* thinking and knowing, but of *all* possible thinking and knowing. This charge is answered simply by the remark that it would be still more presumptuous to exclude any possible thinking, any possible knowing, any possible intelligence, from the operation of these laws—for the laws here referred to are necessary truths—their opposites involve contradictions, and, therefore, the supposition that any intelligence can be exempt from them is simply nonsense ; and, so far as senselessness is a sin, this supposition is sinful. It supposes that Reason can be Unreason, that wisdom can be madness, that cosmos can be chaos. This system escapes that sin. It is therefore less presumptuous, and more becoming in its moral spirit than those hypocritical in-

quiries, which, by way of exalting the highest of all reason, hold that this may, in certain cases, be emancipated from its own (?) necessary laws, and that these laws should be laid down as binding, not universally, but only on human intelligence. *This restriction is wicked as well as weak.*"—P. 55.

"Weak" or "wicked" as it may be, we cannot fly in the face of facts. Till the seeming contradictions, whose ramifications traverse finite knowledge, are reconciled with a definition of Absolute Existence, we must continue to regard what is known by us as incapable of limiting what absolutely is. Only then (if even then) can an "unknown" be eliminated. We cannot, to escape the charge of impiety, accept a theory of Being which fails to reconcile the counter-necessities of Reason that are involved in Faith.

But in truth Mr. Ferrier cannot afford to take a lower position than the one he vindicates in this strange fashion. He has to fulfil his promise to produce a System which cannot be rejected on pain of falling into a contradiction in terms; and the purely formal law of Logic, with which Mr. Ferrier marvellously identifies his axiom, does not help him as long as it is empty. That law is worthless for the purpose of discovery, and avails only for preserving consistency in our thoughts. Formal Logic, as the *theory* of non-contradiction, develops *forms* of consistent thinking out of the two axioms,—“A is A,” and “A cannot be not A.” It thus yields negative, but not positive definitions of Being. We learn from it what existence *is not*, but we do not conversely learn

what it *is*. In this sense, we hold with the old Greeks, that Logic,—as the science and art founded on these principles of Identity and Contradiction, is the foundation of Metaphysics, and the proper introduction to all philosophical studies. But in the new Theory of Knowing and Being, the law of Contradiction is armed with weapons not its own,—though they are indispensable in the polemical service in which it is *there* employed. Significant terms are substituted for the naked symbols of Pure Logic; and the formula, thus loaded, is employed as freely as if it were empty. As Kant would say, it is changed from an identical or analytic to a synthetic proposition. Mr. Ferrier substitutes “knowledge must be knowledge,” for “A must be A.” But he intends by “knowledge” what is essential to knowledge in *human* experience. And so the axiom means, by implication, “*Human* knowledge must contain *absolute* knowledge,”—a proposition which, instead of being identical with “A must be A,” is removed from it by the whole diameter of philosophical controversy.

A resolution to follow the Demonstrative Method from the beginning to the end of his metaphysical enterprise, seems, in short, to have blinded Mr. Ferrier to the numerous facts in our knowledge, which forbid his translation of a law of Logic into a law of Existence. He despises psychology and experience. Yet he is obliged to rear his system on an observed fact in finite knowledge—wantonly elevated, in the face of the opposite evidence already referred to, to the empty dignity of the identical proposition on which Pure Logic rests. But

Metaphysics,—thus virtually resting on observation, while professing to rest on the law of non-contradiction, cannot be more than the loftiest department of experimental research,—appropriately named “speculation,” in consideration of its comprehensiveness and grandeur. A “demonstrative” Ontology is at variance with the nature of a finite intelligence,—whose only possible knowledge of Being must be formed on a systematic observation of the various relations of existence which are gradually revealed in sense and self-consciousness.

These Institutes, then, while they declare war against observation and experiment in metaphysics, nevertheless rest unconsciously on a selected part of our rational experience. With them there is a favoured part and a neglected part. The favoured part is the observed fact that in finite knowledge an “object” can be known only in relation to the “subject.” The neglected part contains the counter-necessities of reason, which seem to prove (obliquely) that the knowledge, thus limited, cannot be absolute. When *we* try to place these counter-necessities in harmony with Mr. Ferrier’s selected “necessary truth,” the foundations of our knowledge appear to teem with contradictions. To subvert the Faith of mankind, weapons very different from the axiom directed against it in this Theory must therefore be employed. Common belief must be trusted till it is actually proved, *by a more rigorous induction of our knowledge as an organic whole*, to be unworthy of trust. This lawful polemical weapon has already expelled many a prejudice which seemed to find protection in the uneducated Reason, and may be ex-

pected gradually to secure a still nearer approach to the philosophical formulas best fitted to express the *ultimate* relations of *our* knowledge to existence. The crotchets of “demonstrative ontologists,”—urged by metaphysicians, theologians, and in physical research, have hitherto been the great obstruction to a true interpretation of the Divine works and the Divine word.

Thus far we have confined our view to the so-called *discovery* claimed in the new Theory. Mr. Ferrier claims to be original, through his employment of an axiom overlooked and hence traversed by metaphysicians, but before which the vulgar prejudices of common sense concerning existence, hitherto protected under shelter of our ignorance, must now inevitably give way. We quote a passage in which the claim is announced:—

“It is scarcely credible that, at this time of day, any philosophical opinion should be absolutely original, or that any philosophical truth, of which no previous hint exists in any quarter, should now for the first time be brought to light. Nevertheless, the doctrine now under consideration is believed to be altogether new. If it is not, the present writer will be ready to surrender it to any prior claimant who may be pointed out, and to give due honour to whom honour is due. But, meanwhile, this system may be permitted to hold possession of it, as its own peculiar discovery—a circumstance which is mentioned, because those who may favour these Institutes with their attention may perhaps have some inclination to know wherein more particularly their originality may consist. *They claim, for the first time, to have an-*

nounced the true law of ignorance, and to have deduced from it its consequences."—P. 425.

We hardly think that in this respect his claim to originality is likely to be seriously disputed. When Mr. Ferrier has convinced the thinking world that his "discovery" is a real one, it is time enough to examine its pedigree. Meantime, as far as Ontology is concerned, we have, in the forty-one Demonstrations of these Institutes, a development of inferences so obviously contained in the dogma on which all the reasoning depends, that even the metaphysical ingenuity and literary accomplishment of the reasoner can hardly conceal their barrenness.

But have that ingenuity and learning accomplished nothing? They may fail to convince the world that the "discovery," which this book was written to announce, consists with a true and comprehensive interpretation of *all* that we experience in our knowledge. But is that experience altogether unproductive in the author's hands? If we cannot receive this theory as an Ontology, may we not receive it as an improvement of our Modern Psychology? It is possible that these Institutes may develop better the science of human understanding (*i.e.*, *Being as known by us*), while they leave the science of *absolute* Being in the darkness in which they found it.

We have already said, that the mode of research which Mr. Ferrier professes to follow in Metaphysics, tends to withdraw his attention from the chief obstacles to the reception of his dogma, in the only sense in which it can

serve his purpose. We now add, that the principle on which he justifies speculative studies at all, is apt to give a darker colour to his picture of previous systems of speculation than the history of opinion warrants. With him metaphysic is a war of extermination. The theory must *make* antagonists if it cannot *find* them. If Ontology must be abandoned, it must at least wage war with the psychologists on some other ground. Accordingly, Mr. Ferrier has unconsciously put the doctrines of the despised "mental philosophers" under a strain that has *made* them despicable—while he has at the same time served himself heir to their genuine opinions. When the illegitimate assumption which alone renders his system original has been withdrawn from it, and the application of his axiom has thus been confined to the only positive knowledge *we* have any experience of, his well-informed readers must feel that they are expatiating in a familiar territory, as they follow the evolutions of his system. They are contemplating only an old and still current psychological theory of human knowledge. The paradox of these Institutes is found to be the commonplace of modern philosophy; and their "counter propositions," which are said to represent the modern doctrine, exist hardly anywhere out of Mr. Ferrier's own imagination.

The fundamental principle of this Theory,—when thus modified and limited to *our* intelligence, is only the familiar maxim that HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IS RELATIVE; and that its highest relations are, *first* those it bears to the limits of our intellectual structure as finite beings, and *secondly*, to that structure, as developed and modified through mental

association or external circumstances. Among these relations, accordingly, studious men have been seeking, from age to age, for the roots by which the sciences are nourished, and for the rules which should regulate their cultivation. We need hardly refer to detailed evidence in defence of this statement. It is familiar to every tyro in Philosophy, that the nearest approach a man can make to a philosophic abstraction from the particular objects of our knowledge, has been gained when he contemplates all objects on their ideal side—*i.e.*, as they illustrate our necessary and contingent modes of knowing. Here lies the difference between Ontology and Philosophy proper. The philosophers take for granted that this contemplation must be (to us) the culminating part of knowledge—the part which displays the elements *necessary* to every manifestation of *what is*—material or immaterial, human or Divine—that can come within *our* experience, either now or in the future life. The vain struggle for a logical Ontology receives from their hands the only satisfaction that is possible, in a theory of *knowledge as experienced in human consciousness*. But this humbler investigation need not (as it has too often been) be divorced from the lofty aspiration which may have moved the transcendental speculation. On the contrary, as a perpetual memorial of our finitude, the enlightened study of human understanding lends strength to the Love and Faith, in which the noblest attributes of humanity find vent.

But how have these ultimate relations of our knowledge been actually developed in the despised modern Psycho-

logy? Take two modern philosophers, notable, as the representatives respectively of the two opposite systems of mental science,—we mean Locke and Kant. Locke's theory contains by implication, and Kant's in a developed form, the essence of Mr. Ferrier's theory—after its vaunted “discovery” has been eliminated. Indeed, the principle is implied in the first aphorism of the *Novum Organum*. The phenomenal world is, with Bacon, the only positively known world. Being, as known by man, is, according to the whole spirit of his philosophy, the succession of “appearances” experienced in sense and self-consciousness; and of which we attain a growing knowledge through systematic analogy or induction. But in the last analysis this implies that Being, as comprehended by us, is only our own cognitive experience.

Locke would say our own “ideas;”—and accordingly, his Essay is an attempt to generalize known-existence, in the technical form of an inquiry into “the origin, limits, and certainty of human knowledge.” Locke's account of the human understanding is Mr. Ferrier's theory of known-being—imperfectly worked out. It differs from these Institutes in two respects.—In the *first* place, the English metaphysician, in his zeal against innate ideas, fails to indicate formally the elements common to our knowledge as such. The “ideas” of Locke are the “subject + object” of Mr. Ferrier. Even the “simple” ideas, so renowned in the Essay, are “complex” ideas in the doctrine of the Institutes. Every idea (cognition) must contain, according to Mr. Ferrier, both the one necessary element, and also one contingent element.

In the *second* place, Locke carefully guards against the assumption which is the boast of the Institutes. He does not take for granted that *our* intellectual world—*our* world of ideas or cognitions—contains any perfect or absolute element at all. He says, indeed, that our knowledge is limited to our ideas; but he does not infer from this that Substance* is nonsensical, and Matter a contradiction. Locke does not pretend to fathom the ocean of Being; he only endeavours to measure the length of our intellectual line.

But if Mr. Ferrier is the first to draw the ontological inference which Locke in his wisdom has not drawn, he neither is, nor professes to be, the first who has discovered the *two* elements essential to human knowledge. The *Essay* of Locke has long been modified, or rather supplemented, by the *Kritik* of Kant; and the supplement develops the theory of knowledge which the earlier system had failed fully to unfold. Amid all his scholastic pedantry, which conceals from the unscientific reader the virtues of his system, Kant has ably interpreted certain hieroglyphics in our knowledge that had previously been imperfectly understood. No sound speculative system can now overlook the elements which he has compared and contrasted as “necessary” and “contingent”—*à priori* and *à posteriori*, &c. They give a com-

* For Locke's somewhat vacillating theory of Being or Substance, the reader may refer to his *Letters* to the Bishop of Worcester, contained in his *Collected Works*, Vol. IV. See also the Bishop's *Answer*, (London, 1697.)—A great deal of curious discussion, suggestive of the theme of this *Essay*, may be found in the *English Controversies* of the era of Locke. See the “*Anti-Scepticism*” of Henry Lee, (1702,) and Perronet's two “*Vindications*” of Locke, (1736 and 1738.)

mon basis and limit to the indefinite varieties in the experience of individuals. They help to amend that comprehensive formula which describes human knowledge in its most comprehensive aspect, and the gradual amendment of which is the best scientific reward of metaphysical labour. But Kant does not profess to imply a definition of Absolute Being in his contribution to the definition of our knowledge. He expressly excludes from his theory all knowledge except our own.

Thus while, with Locke and Kant, the chief modern systems of Psychology contain the new theory expressly or by implication, the Kantian system formally develops that analysis of knowledge, which Mr. Ferrier ventures, in the face of opposite proof, to apply also to absolute existence. The fact that what is true in his system is very old, may abate the discouragement that is apt to rise, when the metaphysical labours of the past are contemplated in the lurid light which Mr. Ferrier is apt to throw upon them.

The theory of these Institutes,—when thus translated out of Ontology into Psychology, is an interesting exposition of *one* of the “necessary truths” of human intelligence. It is a general recognition and partial application of the essential relation in our knowledge—that in which, as Pascal says, “we strike a tincture of our own compound being on all the objects we contemplate”—a relation which seems inevitable in all finite knowledge.

But there are other relations, not less implied in finite intelligence than the law of knowledge as objective, of which it takes no account;—and, therefore, even viewed as a system of Psychology, it is defective. The axiom of the Theory, which includes *more*

than enough when it is represented as only a form of non-contradiction, includes *less than enough* when it is regarded as an expression of *all* the elements that are necessary in our finite knowledge. When interpreted as a logical system, it errs by excess; when it is read as a theory of psychology, it errs through defect.

Take a single illustration. We cannot, according to the Theory, strip existence of "knowing," and yet continue to know it. To us it must, as an object, be always *known* existence, *i.e.*, *our* knowledge. But if it is true that we cannot divorce an object from the subject, it is equally true that we cannot divorce cognitions from one another; or, at least, that we are inevitably dissatisfied with any *isolated* cognition. A finite intelligence cannot know without converting Being into "an object"—his knowledge; but a finite intelligence can as little detach a *present* known-existence from the mystery of *Eternal* existence. It is as impossible to deny that something has *always* been, if something now is, as it is to deny that an object must be *known* in order to be an object at all. We find the knowledge of an absolute "object"* as impracticable as the knowledge of existence out of relation to a subject. At least, if Mr. Ferrier has represented the latter impossibility as a logical contradiction, other metaphysicians have done the same by the former. The basis of Dr. Clarke's "Demonstration," (among many other examples,) involves the assumption,† that to sepa-

* We of course here use the term *object* according to the definition in the Theory, *i.e.*, subject + object.

† An "assumption" open to objections partly similar to those already referred to, in connexion with Mr. Ferrier's identification of *his* fundamental "necessary truth" with the logical law of contradiction.

rate a present "object" (*i.e.*, subject + object) from Eternal existence is a contradiction in terms:—

"It is absolutely and undeniably certain," he says, "that something has existed from all eternity. This is so evident and undeniable a proposition, that no Atheist in any age has ever presumed to assert the contrary; and, therefore, there is little need of being particular in the proof of it. For, since something now is, 'tis manifest that something always was. Otherwise the things that now are, must have risen out of nothing, absolutely and without cause—which is a flat contradiction in terms. . . . Whatever exists has a cause of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature, and then it must have been of itself eternal; or in the will of some other Being, and then that other Being must, at least in the order of nature and causality, have existed before it. That *something*, therefore, has really existed from eternity is one of the certainest and most evident truths in the world."—(*Demonstration*, pp. 14, 15.)

In a word, the "necessary truth" of *causality*, like the "necessary truth" of *objective* knowledge, becomes, in the last analysis of it, unintelligible.* And besides these two, there are several *other* truths, equally necessary in finite knowledge, and equally mysterious, which these Institutes neither describe nor explain.† They thus virtually omit one of the two phases of human Reason. They analyse Reason as Intelligence, while they overlook Reason in Faith—struggling as it there is with the im-

* The reader is here referred to the preceding Essay,—on the "Metaphysics of Augustinianism."

† An approach to some of the truths in question is perhaps made in the "Observations" on the last Proposition in the "Institutes."

perfect and apparently contradictory beliefs which alone illustrate our Ignorance philosophically, and which have taught wise men from age to age that *what is* must transcend *what is known to be*—that no finite intelligence can escape from the cave of Plato.

But where, we must ask in conclusion, has Mr. Ferrier found the illogical theory of knowledge and existence, which he draws up alongside his own, in the "counter propositions" of these Institutes? His own theory is offered as a development of Logic; the system presented in psychological books is, it seems, a development of Anti-logic. It is replete with contradictions. But we are not conducted by any notes of reference to the concrete counterparts of this contradictory system. We have no clew to the books in our philosophical libraries which illustrate or vindicate the charges. They are, it is true, pointed especially at our Scottish philosophers, who are singled out as the chief culprits. We cannot, of course, in this brief review, compare each counter proposition with the literature of philosophy, nor even with the Scottish department of that literature, in order to test the representation. But let us take, as a specimen, that article in which Scottish psychologists are said to have sinned most grievously. They assert, it is said, that Matter, or at least some of its qualities, may be known *per se*, *i.e.*, out of relation to any intelligence. "Natural thinking," says Mr. Ferrier, "advocates our knowledge of material things *per se*, and psychology, if it abandons this position, contends at any rate for our knowledge of certain material qualities *per se*."

Now let us turn to the expressed opinions of Dr. Reid and his associates :—

“What is body ?” asks Dr. Reid. “It is, say philosophers, that which is extended, solid, and divisible. Says the querist, I do not ask what the properties of body are, but what is the thing itself ; let me first know directly what body is, and then consider its properties. To this demand I am afraid the querist will meet with no satisfactory answer ; *because our notion of body is not direct, but relative to its qualities.* We know that it is *something* extended, solid, and divisible, but we know no more. Again, if it should be asked, What is mind ? It is that which thinks. I ask not what it does, or what its operations are, but what it is. To this I can find no answer ; *our notion of mind being not direct, but relative to its operations, as our notion of body is relative to its qualities.*”*

In short, matter is known by us only through the relations which it bears in our knowledge, *i.e.*, its qualities. And mind, too, is only known to us through its relations in experience, *i.e.*, its operations or states. In other words, the “qualities” of matter, and the “operations” of mind are dependent on being known ; and we cannot tell what either matter or mind are, except as thus contained in knowledge. Nevertheless, we believe in the mysterious independence, both of that which is known as extended, and of that which is known as operating—an independence of the *perception* in the former

* “Essays on the Active Powers of Man,” I. ch. 1.—See also “Essays on the Intellectual Powers,” II. ch. 17, 19, &c.

case, and of *self-consciousness* in the latter. We cannot accept the mere knowledge as also the absolute existence. It may, perhaps, be said that—as unknown—we cannot decide that the unknown “extended substance,” and the unknown “substance that feels and wills” are mutually independent, and that thus mind and matter may be *absolutely* the same. But, as Mr. Stewart remarks, this is “only an hypothesis, which amounts to nothing more than a mere possibility,” and even if it were true, “it would no more be proper to say of mind, that it is material, than to say of body that it is spiritual.”*

It is true, that our Scottish psychologists lay stress upon the distinction between the Primary and Secondary qualities of matter; and Dr. Reid even says, that we have a direct knowledge of the former, and only a relative knowledge of the latter. Hence a verbal ambiguity. When we examine the statement more closely, we find the meaning to be, that *some* qualities of matter—*i.e.*, the Primary, are known *as directly* as the operations or states of our own minds are known; whereas others—*i.e.*, the Secondary, are known *only through the medium of a species of mental states*, viz., of our sensations. Reid seems to refer, in short, not to the original relation which constitutes knowledge as knowledge, but to the secondary relations through which knowledge is increased. We know the qualities of matter, partly through their relation to certain mental states; and partly immediately in the direct relation of consciousness. In this sense we may be said to be “conscious of

* “Elements,” Vol. i. p. 48, (Sir William Hamilton’s Edition.)

objects" as extended, as we are "conscious" of mental feelings that are not extended. But, out of knowledge (*i.e.*, out of consciousness) both are alike unknown,—unless we apply the term knowledge to the Faith, that neither existence *known as extended*, nor existence *known as sensation, volition, &c.*, is absolute Being.

Here the philosophy of Scotland comes into relation with the philosophy of Berkeley. We are alike conscious of the extended world of matter, and of our own feelings. We live in our perceptions of matter, as we live in our mental states. But, apart from the perceptions and the mental states, we are ignorant of the Absolute Existence revealed in these opposite forms. Being—as known in perception, is the antithesis of Being—as known in self-consciousness. But of their transcendent relations we can say nothing absolutely; and we are ready to believe anything that is sufficiently attested in consciousness, and that is not *known* to be contradictory. This analogy between Scottish "Realism" and the Idealism that is commonly counted its opposite, has not escaped the notice of the philosopher who has modified and developed the principles of Reid with the most signal success. "The general approximation of thorough-going Realism, and thorough-going Idealism," says Sir William Hamilton, "may at first sight be startling. On reflection, however, their radical affinity will prove well founded. Both build upon the same fundamental fact—that the extended object immediately perceived is identical with the extended object actually existing. For the truth of this fact both can appeal to the common sense of mankind; and to

the common sense of mankind Berkeley did appeal not less confidently, and perhaps more logically, than Reid. Natural Realism and Absolute Idealism are the only systems worthy of a philosopher ; for as they alone have any foundation in consciousness, so they alone have any consistency in themselves."* We unite with the Idealist in regarding states of mind and qualities of matter as alike immediately known in the fundamental relation which constitutes finite knowledge. But we recede from Idealism when, with Mr. Ferrier, it becomes ontological ; and, in its oversight of the imperfect knowledge of Faith, fails to analyse the philosophic ignorance that is implied in a finite intelligence both of mind and matter. The attempt to confine the universe to the limits that are necessary in human knowledge, reacts on that knowledge itself, and, by involving them in contradiction, paralyses the mysterious beliefs which are its life.

Self-consciousness and world-consciousness are two co-ordinate phases of our relative knowledge. They constitute its starting-points. But the knowledge to which they are the starting-points is not self-contained or absolute. The one phase seems to be ultimately lost in the mystery of personal identity, and the other in the mystery of parts infinitely divisible. Both phases, in these and other forms, sink beneath the horizon of our knowledge in clouds of mystery. The ultimate propositions regarding Mind and Matter are only imperfectly intelligible ; and thus, though seemingly contradictory, cannot be *known* to contradict one another. Perception and self-consciousness

* Hamilton's " Collected Works of Reid," p. 817.

are both, so to speak, charged with the Faith that *such* knowledge is not absolute Being, and cannot yield materials for an Ontology—that all our descriptions and definitions of the mental and material systems must be relative to our knowledge of these systems—that neither mind nor matter can be perfectly known until God is perfectly known. An exhaustive or absolute knowledge can alone either reconcile or else conclusively expel the beliefs, irreconcilable by us, which are lodged in the heart of every human cognition. The fundamental Faith that contains them, and to which all propositions not *known* to be contradictory are possible, is the only real antagonist Mr. Ferrier has to meet when he goes in quest of a definition of Being. He may therefore overlook the antagonists he has conjured up, in the counter-propositions and counter-demonstrations of the contradictory system which he has placed beside his own. Most of those adversaries, we do believe, depend for their existence on being conceived by him.

In this Faith—diffused as it is through all the manifestations of human intelligence, and even vindicated as it may be by the seeming contradictions for which it opens the possibility of a transcendent reconciliation—let us reverentially watch and wait for the Revelation of the Divine Ideas, offered to us in the works and in the word of God. Only in this condition of mind can God be known by man. Only thus, we may add, can one man be known by another. Nay, thus only can we know ourselves. We read ourselves in our own actions.

We read others in their actions. We may read the will of God in all. Yet we must read the phenomena, both of the moral and material universe, in the Faith that there are transcendent distinctions too—distinctions which are the foundation of that system of moral government through which we are passing—which mysteriously reconcile personal responsibility with human dependence on Divine Power, and thus “vindicate the ways of God to man.” It is in theology especially that the separate rays of the light of finite knowledge seem to converge, and then to set in mystery. Every part of any knowledge must be limited, and therefore mysterious, until God is comprehended, for every part of knowledge seems ultimately to converge in the Divine. Man fails to exhaust the meaning of the propositions which express the Omnipotence of God, and also those which announce the conditions of Moral Responsibility in the creature. The only definite meaning that can be introduced by us into the one of these sets of propositions, may thus contradict the only definite meaning that we can introduce into the other. But what is not comprehended, nor reconciled with the objective law of knowledge, cannot be pronounced *absolutely* contradictory; and may be accepted as the only mode in which it is possible for human reason to approach a transcendent truth. We know enough about “potential existence” to regulate our course under the Divine moral government; even though we cannot define speculatively, the absolute relations of man to God, or translate into logical formulas the theory of the universe. What the Divine Being absolutely is we cannot

tell ; but we can read diligently the language of His works and His word. Let us then interpret both, free from the artificial restraints of Demonstrative Ontology. In this mortal life, at least, every system of the kind *must* be an artificial restraint ; for it cannot embody the perfect truth. And the *intellectual* barrier may be found as insurmountable after death and in a better world, as we find it amid the moral darkness which surrounds us here. But when the moral darkness has there passed away, we shall find ourselves in the enjoyment, not indeed of a logical theory of Absolute Existence, but of an unbroken humility and love, in which we may serve the Revealed God while we are eternally ignorant of Being.

In parting from Mr. Ferrier, on a system so opposed to the one he has offered to the world, we cannot refrain from a renewed expression of our sympathy with his meditative ardour, and of our admiration for his speculative ability. We have confined this Essay exclusively to a review of the one fundamental principle of his Theory. But we have thus denied ourselves the pleasure of accompanying him into the bye-paths and resting-places, especially of historical criticism, with which he has so agreeably enlivened his course. In these, too, we might, had we followed him, have found ourselves involved not seldom in friendly controversy ; but we should also have had the pleasure of recommending some valuable interpretations of systems ill understood, and opinions inadequately appreciated. And

both among the details, and in the leading principle from which we have so widely differed, we meet an independent devotion to speculations that we love, as rare as it is refreshing in these degenerate days. When we turn from these pages to the dull wilderness of commonplace which spreads over much of the literature that now calls itself philosophical, we remember the inclination of the philosophic Roman—*ERRARE malo cum Platone, quam cum istis VERA sentire.*

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL CLASS-ROOM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

[*Extracts from an Introductory Lecture in the Class of
Logic and Metaphysics.*]

GENTLEMEN,—YOUR presence in this Philosophical Class-room proves that you hope somehow to receive advantage from the stimulus and society of Academical life and intercourse. You hope to obtain, in a term of attendance here, information regarding the nature and uses of those branches of study which we profess to pursue in this place,—information which could not be obtained,—or at least could not, you suppose, be obtained so well—by means of solitary reflection and private reading in books of Philosophy. You also expect to receive within College walls an addition to your mental strength,—to your intellectual resources and faculty for intellectual work,—which the discipline and mutual sympathies of Academical fellowship may seem peculiarly fitted to convey. In short, you look to the Class-room as a channel through which a mass of *new information*, as well as a stream of fresh *mental strength* may be carried into your minds.

Are these expectations well founded? May a College

Philosophical Class-room be with reason thus regarded, as a means for conveying knowledge which cannot be received by the student through any other channel? May it be viewed as an arena for creating, through a system of intellectual gymnastics, a mental power which cannot be as well evoked by the contests and collisions of un-academic life?

Two or three hundred years ago, or even two or three generations ago, these questions were less urgent. There was then no need to raise them at the commencement of an academic course. *Then* the number of extra-academic channels for conveying information was much less numerous than it is to-day. Then too the intelligence of the popular or extra-academic mind was less awake than it is now, and was awake over a narrower area. *Now* the printing press is issuing books of all sizes, and on all subjects, so that he who runs may read. The knowledge formerly inclosed within College walls may now be received by the wayside. The secrets of the class-room may be obtained in the local library and the bookseller's shop. The stimulus of intellectual competition, occasioned by diffused popular intelligence, may appear to some a sufficient substitute for the antiquated gladiatorship of academic halls. It may seem as if the vast and daily increase in the number of books, in these days sown broadcast over the land, is rendering THE CLASS-ROOM less and less a necessary channel for conveying information,—at least to reading persons, regarding Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, History, the Physical Sciences, or Theology. On all these subjects we in this Nineteenth Century are surrounded by

streams of knowledge. What need for turning away from these innumerable streams, and coming up here for a tedious term of months, to receive a scanty draught, that has been withdrawn, for the purposes of the class-room, from the now illimitable sea of the world's Literature ?

These notorious circumstances in *our* times may invest with some interest the question of the office or function of the Philosophical Class-room,—its proper office and function for intelligent young men, in the middle of the nineteenth century,—with a wilderness of excellent books in Philosophy outside its walls,—and an intellectual stimulus, too, which pervades society outside more powerfully than we can hope to rouse it within our academic circles.

“The works or acts of merit towards learning,” says Lord Bacon, “are conversant about three objects:—the places of learning, the books of learning, and the persons of the learned. For as water, whether it be the dew of heaven, or the springs of the earth, doth scatter and lose itself in the ground, unless it be collected into a receptacle, where it may by union comfort and sustain itself . . . so this excellent liquor of Knowledge, whether it descend from Divine Inspiration, or spring from human sense, would soon perish and vanish to oblivion, if it were not preserved in books, traditions, conferences, and places appointed (as Universities and Colleges) for the receipt and comforting of the same.”—(*Adv. of Learning.*) Colleges and Universities are meant to be centres of attraction, for collecting together numbers of persons, in order that they may accomplish collectively, and through

social study, what cannot so well be accomplished in isolation. They are social organizations created for maintaining and promoting the higher and more difficult class of studies. They assume that *social* study has many advantages, of which *solitary* study is destitute. They profess to provide a special system of means for rendering social study effective.

But a college CLASS-ROOM, with its internal discipline, is not the only means for making philosophical study a social business. There are other ways in which men may be brought into intercourse with *other* men, beside this of meeting daily in a Class-room, in order to be there associated with one who professes to instruct them. Some of these are suggested in the passage quoted from Bacon. For example, BOOKS provide the means for SOCIAL study. When we are really reading a book, we are holding intellectual intercourse with its author. We are trying to think *his* thoughts, though we are not beholding his personal presence. When many books are collected round us, written by various authors, dead and living, we are brought within the reach of what ought to be a strong social stimulus. If not present and living men, at least distant or departed men are speaking to us through their written words. We may thus listen to the voices of the illustrious dead, and of the greatest among the living. If colleges and universities were only vast repositories of books, they would still be what we have already called them,—“social organizations” for bringing men bent on study into intercourse with other studious minds. But an academic institution, while it includes a library, must

yet be more than a mere library. A library that brings and keeps an array of books in the immediate neighbourhood of the student, is, of course, a part of every academical organization. But it is not supposed to constitute it, or to be its characteristic feature.

Again. Apart from the class-room, another *social* purpose may be served by academic buildings. Instead of the authoritative lecture of a teacher, they may supply means and occasions for promiscuous debates to members of the University, on themes of Philosophy and learning. Debates and disputations are associated with the past history of the European universities. Doubtless they are, in one form or another, an important social stimulus. In some form—more or less organized—they belong to every earnest academical community. We cannot collect together hundreds of intelligent persons, for the purpose of social study, without occasioning a collision of mind with mind, in the friendly intercourse of academic life, that should form one of its most valuable means of intellectual exercise and progress. The Debating-room, as well as the Library, is, in the nature of things, an essential part of the academical machinery.

Here, then, we find the question with which we set out made narrower and more definite in its application. It is not now the question of college education *versus* desultory education in Philosophy. It is the question of college education, *by means of the peculiar appliances of the Lecture-room*, over and above the appliances of the Library and the Debating-room. Why should an academical institution (in the department of Philosophy) be

more than a *depot of books* and a *centre of spontaneous debates or discussions?*

I am glad to put the question in this more precise form for two reasons:—1. It suggests what ought not to be forgotten,—that the Library and the Debating-room form parts of a complete academical institution. They typify, as it were, two great means of social study—means which should meet us in the University, as they must both, in some form or other, accompany us through life. Intercourse with books, and intercourse with thinking men, form the very intellectual atmosphere of human life—that atmosphere which the terms or sessions of college life should prepare us to breathe, and which should exist in a condensed and yet reduced form in the *Library* and the *Debating-room*. 2. The form which the question has last received, suggests the special relation of the PHILOSOPHICAL CLASS-ROOM to the Philosophical Library and Debating-room. The *first* should be the *introduction* to the *two last*. I think I can show that it is as indispensable an introduction as ever,—in some respects more so; notwithstanding the vast increase of modern books and libraries, and the far wider social area of modern debates and discussions. It should provide a key to the philosophical, and through that to the general Library, and also the power to use the key; and it ought to brace the student for the philosophical, and through that for the general debates and conflicts of opinion in human life. It should send forth men better fitted to encounter the written and oral expressions of opinion, given forth by other men,—better fitted to work their way towards

Truth, amid all the social turmoil and confusion of this earthly pilgrimage.

There is still a place, I affirm, for the College Philosophical Class-room—with its living instructors, tutorial or professorial—were it only as a means towards beneficial intercourse in after life with our libraries and our living thinkers. This assertion may be illustrated in more ways than one.

I need hardly refer to the peculiar office and value of oral as compared with written instruction, nor to the charm which somehow is found to belong to the living voice. The advantage, nay the need for a present and living centre of authority and instruction, in addition to a dead or distant one, is recognised by all who have reflected on the wants of human nature. On that I do not need to enlarge. “The Professor,” it has been well said, “ought to be the science or subject *vitalized and humanized* in the students’ presence. . . . It is not the knowledge communicated, which may be got by books—but it is the magical effect of the presence of a great living teacher—the grandeur, the purity, and the freshness of his manner in dealing with a subject, and expressing himself upon it. . . . Such a man, lecturing on one subject, throws rays of light into the minds of his students on all subjects.” I quote these words in the knowledge that they must suggest to your minds a contrast between what might be the issue of living intercourse with a great teacher, and what alone you

can hope to obtain in the intercourse of this class-room. I would not have you to overlook the dignity and glory of the professorial function in its nobler illustrations, because of the far inferior specimen of that function which I can offer to you.

But to return. There may be a few perhaps, who, in the modern taste for independence of judgment and free thought, would depreciate AN AUTHORITY which provisionally lays an arrest upon the liberty, or shall I rather say the license, of juvenile speculation. I do not anticipate any feeling of this sort among you. I believe I may take for granted that you are willing, for a time at least, to adjourn an unlicensed liberty of individual judgment, to sit meanwhile under the shadow of the old and received system of speculation ; and, in this way, to learn whether or not you may sit permanently under its protection,—whether or not your allegiance to Truth must force you still to search for other shelter. Only through such temporary surrender, at the outset of your philosophical course, can you expect to gain strength for a journey through the labyrinths of speculation, or for an encounter with the conflicting tides of opinion to which we are exposed, on a voyage over the ocean of modern literature. If I may speak from my own experience, I know no mental exercise more invigorating and ennobling, than such tentative and at least temporary absorption of the mind, under the dominant influences of a classic work in Philosophy, or of a modern metaphysical system.

I pass, however, from these somewhat vague aspects of

the matter to one or two definite principles, through which the office of the Modern Philosophical Class-room,—as in some respects more than ever the basis of philosophical study, may be made apparent.

The immense bulk to which the world's Library of Philosophical books has grown makes us independent, it is said, of the Lecture-room as a channel for conveying philosophical knowledge. With numberless fountains elsewhere, why need we still come to this old-fashioned well? Now this question might, so far as the mere exhibition of knowledge is concerned, be pertinent enough, if all the other fountains gave forth pure water—if every fresh addition to logical and metaphysical literature were, either a restatement of one uniform and universally received system, or else an addition to such a system, resting on what went before. As it is, the very magnitude of our philosophical library is the strongest reason for asking you to pause and ponder for some months, in an academical class-room, before you make an *independent* assault upon it. Instead of uniformity in its lessons, there is much outward sign of discord. Instead of a cosmos, our books in logic and metaphysics and ethics seem on the surface to represent a chaos of opinions—a very Babel of discordant tongues. I believe, indeed, that the chaotic state of this part of human knowledge has been very much exaggerated—that there is much more real harmony in the evolutions of philosophic thought than might appear on the surface of men's words. I am confident that this is so. Nevertheless, the various schools of logical and metaphysical teaching, which are

represented in popular treatises and courses of instruction in these departments, *seem* to interpose like a dark cloud between the student who addresses himself to this portion of Literature, and the Truth which every earnest and enthusiastic student must be seeking. The larger our philosophical library, the more dense the cloud becomes, and the more need for an intellectual chemistry by which the preparations of previous speculation may be tested, and, it may be, induced to combine.

Perhaps I am not far wrong when I say, that, as a deficiency in the number of philosophical books, and books of every sort, was the obstacle to intellectual progress some centuries ago, so now, in this age, the obstacle is of the opposite kind. Not the absence, but the overabundant presence of Books is the evil and temptation of these times. In other ages the mental aliment supplied by books could not be found. In this age it is pressed upon men in every form ; and we are all suffering, in consequence, from intellectual indigestion. Then the Lecture-room was needed, as almost the *solitary* channel, for conveying philosophical and other knowledge. Now the Lecture-room is needed to protect the inexperienced student from the influx of innumerable *other* streams of knowledge and crude opinion, which he might be tempted to receive through the channels of surrounding literature. No small part of the moral strength and courage of all classes of readers is needed, for presenting an effective resistance to the temptations offered by surrounding literature—for remaining firmly and manfully ignorant of much that is valued by the unreflect-

ing, in order that they may make a solid conquest of some narrow portion of Truth. The vigour and perseverance in quest of books, that is rightly called for in one set of circumstances, may, in another and different state of society, be employed in keeping ourselves aloof from the huge and ever-growing Library of the world's literary creations, that we may devote ourselves to a few long-trying classical ones as our guides. A term of study in the modern philosophical class-room should help to form that sort of mental vigour. It should teach the true proportions and salient points of the vast mass of Philosophical Literature which, as it were, stands in array before the student,—and point out the portions in that mass where it is most important that he should effect a lodgement.

So much for the philosophical Class-room, viewed as a safe passage into the philosophical and general Library. But it may also be contemplated as a necessary introduction to the academical Debating-room,—and to the debates and conflicts of life. In the one case we have glanced at its relation to intercourse with the dead and distant, *through their writings*. In the other, we might enlarge on its relation to social intercourse with persons who are living and present among us, *through means of spoken words*.

I will here only refer in general to the superficial and desultory character which is apt to belong to *un-academic* popular discussions, void, as they are apt to be, of the order of a well-matured course of re-

search,—and to the growing impatience of a half-educated public for profound, systematic, and elaborate thought and research. Theory and Speculation are distasteful to the many. They may like to wear the appearance of knowing much. They do not like the toil of knowing deeply and systematically. They relish the amusement afforded by varied illustrations of principles in knowledge that can be apprehended without much intellectual strain, and that abound in applications of obvious use. They grow weary of, and turn away in disgust from the deeper principles of knowledge and belief,—from the pure abstractions, which cannot be recognised without a laborious expenditure of research and reflection,—from refinements of thought and reasoning, which seem too delicate for the rough handling of every-day life,—from distinctions and definitions, for which the resources of ordinary speech are hardly adequate, and which need the invention and preservation of new and perhaps hard-sounding words, that they may be retained and communicated to others,—from classifications and systems whose full significance cannot probably be appreciated until years of patient thought have been devoted to them.

The feeling of this class of persons is made apparent, for instance, in their repugnance to those *words* which mark the discoveries of science, and express the growing refinements of abstract speculation. What may be called the “technical words” of Abstract Philosophy—its species, and concepts, and syllogisms, and categories—its causality, and substance, and absolute, and unconditioned, are

hateful to them. They require that every philosophical doctrine worthy of acceptance must be capable of being expressed in the words of common life—a kind of pedantry which finds its only apology in the ridiculous pedantry of logical and metaphysical coxcombs, who use the dialect of Philosophy, while they are incapable of thinking its thoughts. The truth is, that here, as elsewhere, new truths require new resources in language; and that what is jargon to the many who do not reflect, may be pregnant with meaning to the few who do. Tendencies like those now alluded to are natural to the indolence of human nature. They are especially apt to gain sway and predominance in voluntary societies of young men, assembled for the purpose of what (in such circumstances) is almost certain to become desultory and aimless, or, at the best, superficial discussion. The Class-room ought to be a place of refuge for the refined distinctions and definitions, and the elaborate systems of high science. It should supply the stimulus and guidance needed for attaching the student to those results of deep thinking, that have been attained by the leaders of thought in the department to which it belongs—results whose symbols are found in the technical words and comprehensive general propositions which cost so much trouble to master, and whose meaning, when attained, is found to elevate those who have gained possession of it, to a higher intellectual position than they had reached before. It should, for this purpose, carry the student through the ramifications of a continued and systematic course of study,—engage him, for a series of weeks or months,

with some difficulty still outstanding in Philosophy, the removal of which might constitute a veritable discovery, —or induce him to invest a classic book with all the appliances of studious reading and questioning, and to prepare elaborate analyses of what it contains,—thus in the end opening for him a way into the profound mind of its author. These, and such as these, are the ends aimed at in an efficient academic discipline. These, and such as these, I heartily desire that we should keep before us in this Class-room; that here you may form those intellectual habits, and gain that intellectual strength which are needed amid the innumerable temptations to superficial and desultory discussion, which naturally assail you in your present intellectual intercourse with one another, and ultimately in the great conflicts of opinion in the world around you. May this be the arena of an intellectual struggle during the months of the session. May you be roused and guided here to a successful assault on Philosophical Literature. May you be retained here within the higher region of abstractions and of systematic arrangements, and aloof from the vices of desultory and easily discouraged popular study.

The Philosophical Class-room being thus vindicated as a part, and as the fundamental part of a Philosophical College, another question rises: *How* should a class like this be conducted, so as to convey the best kind of information, and add most effectually to the mental strength of those who are assembled in it? What

MEANS may the Teacher, as the living centre and guide of its operations, adopt, so that the peculiar functions of the Class-room, already glanced at, may be in some measure fulfilled? What organs or instruments may he use, for introducing you to a true acquaintance with Books, and for enabling you to take a wise and thoughtful part in Debates?

There are two ways, in both of which the work associated with a chair of Logic and Metaphysics may be conceived to be discharged. The one is indirect and indefinite. It includes the various public means, which the Professor may have an opportunity of using, in order to promote, in the Literature of the country, a profound discussion and wise adjustment of the questions that rise in the region of Speculative Philosophy. The other is direct and more definite. It relates to the Educational Machinery to be created and kept at work in the class-room.

Of the former of these means I say nothing at present. But the proper, or at least the proposed, arrangements for promoting in the class-room the utility of the chair, is a matter to which I may be expected to refer in some detail.

I hope to devote some hours in each week chiefly to the delivery of the more formal lectures,—including references to passages in philosophical literature. The other hours I reserve chiefly for conversations upon selected text-books, or upon the lectures; for oral and written examinations; and for criticisms upon the pre-

scribed essays and exercises. Conversational exercises of this kind are important for rendering the class-room a place which all may feel to be consecrated to real SOCIAL study. I need hardly remind you, that from the days of Socrates and Plato downwards, the DIALOGUE has been regarded as an important instrument for communicating philosophical instruction, and for exciting the philosophical spirit. It has helped to associate men in a living struggle in quest of Truth and Wisdom along the devious paths of speculation.

A perfect academical institution employs two orders of functionaries, or at least performs two functions. It has a body of Professors and a body of Tutors. It treats of what Bacon calls "parts of learning not sufficiently laboured and prosecuted;" and also of what he calls "sciences already extant and invented." It exhibits the more fluctuating and progressive parts of knowledge, in order to promote their progress and adjustment. It presents also the details and more settled parts of knowledge as the foundation of strict and accurate discipline. One of these functions we should in some measure perform in the hours for lecturing, and the other in the hours for conversational exercises. The oral and written lectures, and the selected passages read from books in the one series of hours, should, at any rate, convey some of the comprehensive views and wide general truths to which I am bound to introduce you. The conversations and other exercises of the other series of hours should help to associate the massive generalizations of Philosophy with details, and to break them down into the

separate arguments on which they depend, so that each of them may be made an object of distinct regard and analysis. In a word, in the hours for Lecture we should chiefly apply the intellectual telescope, and in the hours for Exercises the intellectual microscope.

The use of text-books, along with my own lectures, I have already found important for sustaining the keen life which should be infused into our CLASS-SOCIETY,—if it is to be really effectual for beneficially altering the minds of those who belong to it, and for providing them with solid intellectual nourishment. But we here encounter an obstacle. Those who have most deeply considered the books that compose the literature of our Sciences, in connection with the series of topics to be discussed, and of exercises to be performed in a class like this, may best appreciate the difficulty—rather the impossibility—of finding any *one* work sufficiently suited for a text-book in Speculative Philosophy. Divinity classes have confessions, articles, and creeds for the bases of their dogmatic instruction. In the department of Philosophy we can, at the most, only piece together selections from certain authors in ancient and modern literature; and these rather as a text for critical comment, than as a standard of authoritative doctrine.

It follows that I cannot introduce into the Philosophical Class-room a perfect text-book of doctrine. But I can introduce more than one book in which speculations are expressed that have stood the test of many generations. I can present more than one book suited

to induce you to ascend summits of thought that may test your highest energies, and still leave you, after you have expended these energies, contemplating the viewless and the unknown far beyond. I can associate myself with you, in your toilsome struggle to reach a point at which some master-mind of the past has habitually contemplated the mysteries of knowledge, and the narrow limits of human reason.

In this way I have hitherto used, in the department of METAPHYSICS, select passages from the "Essay" of Locke (a fruitful field for criticism, and also on account of its prominent historical importance); with frequent references to the philosophical works of Reid, edited by Sir William Hamilton, to other writers of the Scottish school, to the Critick of Kant and the lectures of Cousin. We have, in the meantime, postponed the Dialectic of Plato.

In the part of the course which relates to FORMAL LOGIC, I have referred occasionally to the well known popular manuals of Port-Royal and of Archbishop Whately, and to Mr. Thomson's clear and excellent work on the "Laws of Thought." These, with Mr. Mansel's learned edition of the "Rudimenta" of Aldrich, may have helped to introduce you to the Analytics of Aristotle—the original basis of the Science of Pure Logic.

I have been accustomed to associate with our discussions on the nature of science, the methods of constructing it, and the general field of what may be called PHYSICAL or MIXED LOGIC, certain passages from the

“*Novum Organum* ;” with frequent reference to the doctrines of Comte, Mill, and Whewell.

I must add, that if the condition of the Literature of Philosophy is so considerable a hindrance to the convenient use of a text-book, the difficulty is aggravated, because the range of selection is narrowed, by the inadequate previous scholarship of many Scottish students, and their insufficient preparation in those habits of thought, and that familiarity with the structure of language, which men need, before they can think the thoughts of Plato or Aristotle, Bacon or Locke, when reading the words in which these thoughts have been made permanent.

I have said that we cannot find, in philosophical literature, books from which the propositions that constitute a course of philosophical teaching may be conveyed ready-made to your minds. I will add, that even if we could, the mere dogmatic conveyance of new propositions into men’s understandings is not teaching Philosophy at all. If that process conveys truth, it does not communicate the singular impulse which converts the *spontaneous* into the *reflective* life. That impulse, perhaps, proceeds less from mature speculation than from suggestive questions. If the pathway along which you have to tread is, in this class-room, still in an unfinished state, I hope that it may, at least, carry you to a point at which your own philosophical ardour may be roused, and your own philosophical strength matured, to the degree of enabling you afterwards to find or construct a pathway for yourselves. In all the ar-

rangements of the class, I seek to evoke that mental sympathy or contagion, that is apt, by the very manifestation of an earnest wrestling with the doubts and difficulties of these studies, to be communicated from one mind to another. Indeed, the word sympathy does not express the sufficient meaning. The mental world is pervaded by a kind of mystic influence. The social or sympathetic action of all adds to the intensity of the mental power of each. There is, I think, a kind of organic intellectual life in the human species, and in sections or societies of it, which influences the intellectual life of each member. It is through the help of this law that I hope to see created among us here a vortex of thought, or at least a small eddy, on the great stream of human intellectual activity. Having secured that result, I am content, for a time, with what many may call meagre attainments and partial knowledge. If before you pass away into the busy society of men, where you are apt to be bruised and broken by competing interests and low worldly aims, you have here got your minds so infected with the love of truth and candour and generous comprehensive principle,—with high aims and aspirations that shall not be blighted by the chill frosts of a coming stern experience among the men and things of the everyday world,—that, in after life, you can but draw fresh strength and high resolve from the memory of genial hours in this early spring-time of life, then the academical mechanism which leaves behind only this result has not been constructed in vain.

In truth, I do not profess to add in this place a nu-

merous assortment of new propositions to those that you already possess in your knowledge. I seek rather to infuse new powers and inclinations,—to invest old knowledge, and the forms in which it is expressed, with a new character in your minds,—to foster among you a deep sense of ignorance, and of what it is that we are and must remain ignorant of,—to induce you to show, in this spirit, a manly yet modest front to intellectual difficulties, and so to gather strength for securing a real experimental feeling of the gladness of a life occupied in wrestling with them,—thus fostering the spirit of doubt and self-diffidence in association with power. The history of all Philosophy involves a series of sympathetic oscillations as well as—like the physical sciences and arts in the last two centuries—the movements of sustained progress. It undulates as well as advances. In this respect it resembles poetry. The deepest thoughts of Metaphysics have been pondered in all ages. The Greek philosophers have experienced them not less than the men of our own time. The true propositions, and positive discoveries, which Speculative Philosophy contains, are not numerous,—neither are the arguments by which they are reached and vindicated usually long. The power of this kind of knowledge lies very much, I think, in the wide range of thought that is gained, when any one article of it is deeply apprehended by the mind, and in the nourishment which is thus supplied to the contemplative faculty. Its history is as much the history of highly-intensified manifestations of reflective energy, as of growing and elaborated forms of doctrinal truth.

The creed which it presents contains few yet massive articles. It is not more with the conclusions which philosophers have reached, than with the conscious or half-conscious yearnings of the illustrious series of philosophical minds that I seek to draw you into sympathy, when I ask you to engage in the study of Philosophy. The six huge volumes of Brucker, or the eleven volumes of Tennemann, register an accumulation of doctrine much of which we willingly discharge from our minds, except for the sake of the illustration which it affords of the profound mental craving in which it all originated. If you ask for a categorical summary of all that the world's professed thinkers have *discovered*, from the period of the questionings of Thales and Anaximander, down to Hegel and Cousin,—in the form of a statistical register of new propositions, the list seems to the popular eye scanty, and of hardly appreciable importance. But who can sum up the indirect and indefinite effects, upon individuals or societies, of the action of the great speculative force which has in that period been turned in quest of them? The heavings of opinion which it has occasioned have affected the literature, laws, and civil and ecclesiastical arrangements of each age. All these are tinged by the style of thinking about their thoughts, and about the universe in the light of that thinking, which,—prevailing among speculative men, constitutes the history of human opinion a living organic growth.

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