INQUISITIO PHILOSOPHICA.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF KANT AND HAMILTON.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

APPENDIX A.

APPENDIX B.

AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

PRINCIPLES OF KANT AND HAMILTON.

INTRODUCTION.

If the writings of an eminent metaphysician are criticised, and alleged inconsistencies pointed out in them, the criticism is sometimes met by urging that the metaphysician in question was a very able and learned man, and consequently could not have committed the mistakes ascribed to him. And the criticism may be further complained of as an attempt to pick to pieces the work of an author of high reputation, and to injure his fair fame.

Thus Mr. Mill having carefully examined the philosophical works of Sir W. Hamilton, and pointed out, as he conceives, a great number of discrepancies in them, a writer in the *Contemporary Review* blames him, as having "tasked all the resources of minute criticism to destroy

piecemeal the reputation of one who has hitherto borne an honoured name in philosophy." And further he says: "Mr. Mill's method of criticism has reduced the question to a very narrow compass. Either Sir W. Hamilton, instead of being a great philosopher, is the veriest blunderer that ever put pen to paper, or the blunders are Mr. Mill's own." But, it is urged, we cannot adopt the first alternative, since Hamilton's metaphysical abilities have been generally recognised; consequently, we must adopt the second, and regard the blunders as Mr. Mill's. Accordingly, the Reviewer censures Mr. Mill's statements as "a mass of misconceptions," displaying "an unusual deficiency of philosophical knowledge."

Here, however, we might urge against the Reviewer a similar alternative: "Either Mr. Mill is the veriest blunderer that ever put pen to paper, or the blunders imputed to him are the Reviewer's own. But Mr. Mill is not the greatest of blunderers—since it is generally recognised that his abilities are of a high order—therefore, &c."

If this style of reasoning were correct, it would apply to no one more strongly than to Sir W. Hamilton. Schelling and Hegel were philosophers who enjoyed great reputation; whose names have made much more noise in the world than Hamilton's. Yet Hamilton imputes to them blunders of the grossest description, deriding their fundamental doctrines as outrageously absurd—as fit for Laputa, not for reasonable beings. And he ridicules

these philosophers, and all who admire or resemble them, as

"Gens ratione ferox et mentem pasta chimæris."

These criticisms would be disposed of in a very summary manner if it were lawful to argue as follows: "Schelling and Hegel were philosophers of high repute, exercising a powerful influence in Germany, and admired by many persons of great ability. Sir W. Hamilton by his method of criticism brings us to this pass: that we must either regard these philosophers as gross blunderers, or consider that the blunders are his own. The latter alternative is much the easier of the two."

And Hamilton's criticisms of Brown, Kant, and Cousin might be disposed of in like manner.

But those who have studied metaphysics know well that it is possible to attribute great discrepancy and error to the works of a metaphysician, whilst feeling great respect for his intellect. Kant labours to prove that the metaphysical systems of Des Cartes, Leibnitz, and his predecessors were entirely null, while yet he greatly admired their abilities. Hamilton criticises very unfavourably the doctrine of Kant, declaring that it leads to the most melancholy consequences, to the worst and most pervading scepticism; and yet on many occasions he expresses high esteem of Kant's intellectual power. Schopenhauer professes with evident sincerity the highest admiration for Kant; yet he cross-examines him as rigorously as he can,

and accuses him in a great number of cases of inconsistency.

Indeed, the dynamic merit of a metaphysician cannot be estimated by the correctness of the results which he obtains. A powerful system of reasoning proceeding on wrong principles may trouble the waters of thought and excite mental activity far more than a correcter doctrine set forth by an inferior intellect.

But are we, because we highly esteem the intellectual power of a philosopher, to abstain from pointing out errors or discrepancies in his writings? Are we to say, "I content myself with calling attention to his merits; I leave to others the invidious task of picking holes in his reputation, and detracting from his fair fame"? Shall we blame Hamilton because, while expressing high admiration of Kant's powers, he nevertheless severely condemned some of his most important principles? Or shall we blame Schopenhauer for having pointed out numerous alleged errors and discrepancies in the doctrine of Kant, for whom he expresses the profoundest admiration?

To do this would be to ignore altogether the meaning and object of Metaphysics, the purpose of which is to present to us a connected harmonious body of doctrine. It is quite alien to the spirit of philosophy to accept doctrines which appear to us inconsistent, and to get over the difficulty by means of Faith, saying, I cannot conceive *how* the doctrines can be reconciled; but I

believe *that* they can be, since they are taught by a philosopher whom I admire and revere. However greatly we may admire a philosopher, it behoves us diligently to scrutinise his doctrines. And where these are inconsistent, we must consider that he has so far failed to accomplish the special task of Metaphysics; though, notwithstanding this failure, his attempt may in other respects possess high value.

Seeing the great freedom with which distinguished metaphysicians assail one another as guilty of inconsistency, it is natural to inquire what may be the cause of such discrepancies. On this point we may listen to Mr. Mill, who, speaking of Hamilton, says: "It is strange, but characteristic, that Sir W. Hamilton cannot be depended on for remembering, in one part of his speculations, the best things which he has said in another; not even the truths into which he has thrown so much of the powers of his mind, as to have made them, in an especial manner, his own."* "It would hardly be believed, prior to a minute examination of his writings, how much vagueness of thought, leading to the unsuspecting admission of opposite doctrines in the same breath, lurks under the specious appearance of philosophical precision which distinguishes him."†

Here the inconsistencies of teaching are ascribed to forgetfulness and vagueness of thought.

* Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 284.

† Ibid. p. 357.

We can hardly, however, suppose that able metaphysicians are naturally more afflicted with obliviousness or vagueness of thought than ordinary persons; we might rather suppose that Hamilton, Kant, Leibnitz, and Des Cartes were more than usually clear-headed, and capable of treating a subject consistently. We are therefore led to suppose that if philosophers frequently fall into inconsistency, this indicates some more than ordinary obscurity in the topics and questions about which they concern themselves. And if we study more closely their doctrines and controversies, we shall probably see much to confirm this opinion. We may find ourselves tempted to conclude that a great deal of metaphysical controversy is thrown away, owing to the circumstance that the disputants do not distinctly understand the questions at issue; so that philosophers who differ extremely in words may not differ much in ideas; while, *vice versâ*, some may appear to agree who do not do so really.

Discrepancy, therefore, in the writings of a metaphysician may be held to indicate that he is treating of a question which he has not placed before his own mind in a perfectly distinct manner, so as thoroughly to apprehend its meaning and perceive its bearings. And if a philosopher of eminent ability is in such a case, we may be pretty sure that many previous metaphysicians have been so likewise; that the question is one concerning which further elucidation is needed.

Nothing tends so much to remedy this state of things as an examination which brings the discrepancy in question clearly to light; for when this is once done, it is not likely to be repeated in the same manner. Such an examination helps to clear away the obscurity which previously attached to the question, and which rendered possible the vagueness of thought and discrepancy of utterance. It thus conduces to a very salutary result; for a distinct understanding of the meaning of metaphysical questions, and a perception of their bearings, is perhaps more needed in the present state of Metaphysics than any thing else.

CHAPTER I.

It is sometimes asserted by writers of ability that the study of Metaphysics is profitless; that metaphysical speculation results from the action of the human mind in an imperfect stage of development, and is laid aside when this stage is passed through, and a higher state of culture attained. Nevertheless, we find that works professedly metaphysical continue to be produced by writers of high ability; the recent work of Mr. Mill, carefully discussing a number of metaphysical questions, being a conspicuous example of this.

We are sometimes told that physics are profitable, because they concern themselves with real things; while metaphysics are vain, because they concern themselves merely with abstractions. If this account were correct, it would be matter for wonder that so many minds of high ability should have occupied themselves with metaphysics, and that so much interest should still be taken in them. But if we examine the works of the great metaphysicians, we shall see that their character is not conformable to the above account. We shall see

that the so-called metaphysicians seek to obtain knowledge of that which is invisible, and is not shown to us by experience; but that not the less they seek for a knowledge of that which is actual and real. We shall find them busying themselves very much with two topics—God and the future state. Plato, Des Cartes, Leibnitz, Locke, Kant, all inquire concerning God; and this part of their inquiries is regarded as of main importance. Now God is not a phenomenon: we cannot see him, nor apprehend him by the senses; nor is he ever exhibited to us in physical experience. Nevertheless we must not on that account jump to the conclusion that he is a mere metaphysical abstraction.

Again, many metaphysical writings, such as the *Phædo* of Plato, and the opening of Butler's *Analogy*, contain reasonings intended to make it appear that man does not perish when he dies; that after his death he enters on a new stage of existence, where his happiness is influenced by his previous conduct on earth. These writings are properly called metaphysical. They deal with matters beyond the range of physics, and arrive at conclusions which it is impossible to verify by experience; yet the knowledge sought for in them is a knowledge of reality, not a knowledge of mere abstractions.

We may see the source of metaphysics when we consider the question put by Epicurus to his tutor: "And Chaos whence?" An inquisitive mind naturally feels a lively desire to know the original

cause of the phenomena which he sees about him; and though the phenomena which excite this inquiry are physical, the inquiry itself is metaphysical.

The different answers obtained by those who have engaged in this inquiry constitute the principal differences between the various metaphysical schools. Some thinkers, considering the order and harmony displayed in the world (called on this account the κόσμος), conclude that the universe was produced by the design of an intelligent being —a δημιουργός. Some thinkers, on the other hand, are unwilling to ascribe design or forethought to the Supreme Being, regarding it as an imperfection; and prefer to suppose that the Divine Intelligence acts spontaneously, in a manner somewhat resembling the unconscious inspiration of artists and poets. The instinct of animals is also thought to bear some analogy to it.

The reasonings which from the appearances of order and adjustment in the universe infer that it was produced by intelligence or by design, are treated of by Kant as the cosmological and teleological arguments; and one of the principal purposes of his great work is to examine the validity of these reasonings.

But because these arguments are spoken of under these scholastic names, we must not suppose that they are the peculiar property of professional metaphysicians. They have passed through the minds of a vast number of persons of very different

periods, countries, and classes. We find them in the Psalms: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" We find the same reasoning repeatedly in the Koran: "The succession of night and day; . . . the rain which descends from the clouds and restores life to the parched earth; the animals which cover its surface; the changes of the winds and of the clouds, are, in the eyes of those who have knowledge, marks of the power of the Most High." When Napoleon, after hearing the anti-theistic arguments of his savans, replied, pointing to the starry heavens, "Vous avez beau raisonner, Messieurs; mais qui donc a fait tout cela?" he appealed to the same reasoning. And the same reasoning is frequently employed by persons of humble rank, and of little education; totally unacquainted with the works of metaphysicians, not even knowing the names of Plato, Leibnitz, or Kant. Yet, employed by them, simple as they are, it is still a metaphysical argument.

Metaphysicians are by no means agreed as to the validity of these reasonings. They were accepted very cordially by Voltaire, who seems quite convinced of their validity; but they are scrutinised very diligently by Hume and by Kant, who both come to the conclusion that they are defective. And since that scrutiny they have enjoyed amongst metaphysicians much less credit than they formerly did.

The great diversity of opinions which have been entertained concerning the nature of the cause of the universe is principally referable to one source—viz. the existence of evil. While Nature exhibits to us much that is beautiful and admirable, she also exhibits to us much of a different character, such as the long catalogue of human crimes and diseases, pestilence, war, and death. The Theist calls attention to various combinations which, he declares, tend evidently to the promotion of enjoyment or well-being, to the conservation of life, or the good of society; and which, as he thence infers, manifest the designing intelligence of a benevolent Being. The Antitheist replies by calling attention to the tiger, the shark, the vulture, the torpedo, the boa-constrictor, the cobra-capella. If the eye and the ear give evidence of design, the electrical organ of the torpedo, the sting of the scorpion, the apparatus for secreting venom in the serpent must, he argues, be held to do so equally. And the design thus evinced is, he contends, not that of a benevolent being. Was it, he asks, a benevolent being who put into the cat the instinct to amuse itself with the agonies of the mouse, and who endowed the predatory animals with the structure and instincts in virtue of which they live in perpetual war with other races? Nor will he allow that the theistic argument is any better, if we consider man. The Theist may call attention to the wonderful products of human intelligence, to the mechanical

triumphs by which man extends his dominion over Nature, to the works of Phidias, Michael Angelo, Raphael, to the writings of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare; and may ask, Could such faculties have been implanted in man except by a Divine Intelligence? Or again, he may point to the religious nature of man, to the faith and fervent prayers of saints, to the self-abnegation which the nobler class of men have displayed in their endeavours to benefit their fellows; and may ask, By whom could such a nature have been implanted or communicated, if not by a good and holy Being? But his opponent points to the long history of human crimes and strife, to religious rancour and persecution, to the Inquisition and the Auto da Fé; and contends that if the Author of the universe were both benevolent and powerful, he could not have peopled the earth with such a race as that of man.

From the consideration of such circumstances different thinkers have come to very different conclusions concerning the nature of the cause of the Universe. Some regard the world as produced by the design of one Person, in the highest degree powerful and good; some as produced by several Persons, powerful and good, and perfectly agreeing amongst themselves. Others have come to the conclusion that the phenomena of the world are caused by the conflicting action of two beings, one of whom is good, according to our idea of goodness, and endeavours to produce order, har-

mony, and happiness; while the other is bad, according to our idea of badness, seeking to mar the works of the benevolent Being, and to produce disorder, strife, and misery. Others have supposed the world to be ruled by a number of different beings, of different qualities and purposes. Others, again, regard it as produced and governed by the action of one Person, or the consentaneous action of many Persons, whom it is proper to call good and beneficent, but whose so-called goodness and beneficence must be of a kind of which we can form no conception, differing from the goodness and beneficence of the best men not merely in degree, but in essence or principle.

There are, however, some thinkers who regard all the above hypotheses as equally erroneous; holding that the world was not caused by intelligence or design at all: that it has resulted from the unconscious changes of an unintelligent principle, acting by blind physical necessity. The difference between this view and that which ascribes Mind to the cause of the Universe is succinctly intimated in the lines of Euripides:

> ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν,
> ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σὺ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
> Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν.

The various phenomena which to the one class of thinkers appear to indicate the contrivance of an intelligent Maker are viewed by the others in a totally different light. Lucretius strongly exhorts his disciple:

> "Lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata
> Prospicere ut possemus;"

denouncing the contrary opinion as an error which should be sedulously avoided. And in present times thinkers of this class consider that since the labours of Hume and Kant, the teleological argument may be disregarded as obsolete.

Nor is more impression made upon them when their opponents appeal to the religious or spiritual consciousness; to the sentiments, emotions, or affections of Man. It is urged that these affections find no adequate object for their exercise among transitory secular phenomena; that man's longings cannot be satisfied except by belief in a Personal Being, who is imperishable and perfect. To this the advocates of the contrary doctrine reply, that that which seems desirable to us, that which would gratify our sentiments and cravings, is not on this account to be regarded as true or existent. Experience, say they, does not confirm such a notion. We see men entering the arena of life full of aspirations and desires, and full of confidence that those aspirations will be gratified; but the realities of life do not answer to their ideas, and they are disenchanted in a very rough manner. In order to ascertain truth of fact, we must not look within us, to our own cravings and emotions, but must look out of ourselves to experience; and must refuse to believe doctrines, however agreeable, which experience does not verify.

Now experience, say they, does not verify the doctrine of the Theist. It does not show to us any immortal intelligent being or person, nor any person possessed of great power in controlling the phenomena of the Universe. Nor does it show to us any man who exists after his death. Its teaching is, that when a bird dies, or a dog dies, or a man dies, the result is in all cases the same; the bodily organism is destroyed, and with it the life and intelligence of the animal or individual finally cease.

Moreover, say they, experience shows that the sentiment or craving talked of by the Theist—the strong desire to believe in the existence of an invisible Perfect Person—may be accounted for much more easily than by supposing that such a Person really exists. Experience shows that when men or women cannot find in real life objects which satisfy their natural affections and desires, they invent ideal or imaginary objects, and turn their affections upon these. The social state being now very imperfect, this process takes place to a large extent, and hence Theism is common; but if the social state were properly reformed, so that persons generally could fully occupy their sentiments and emotions in loving and benefiting their fellows, they would no longer invent ideal objects of their affections; and Theism would be found to wane and disappear.

They do not, however, admit that in this case Religion would cease; but maintain that Religion

might exist without belief in a God. Indeed, Buddhism is declared to be a standing example in proof of this. It is properly called a religion ; since it exercises a powerful influence over its votaries, exciting their devotion and reverence, and inducing them to undergo austerities of a severe kind. It has copious records of missionaries and martyrs, who exhibited a highly heroic and self-denying spirit. Yet, it is asserted, it is without a God ; it strongly denies the existence of an intelligent First Cause, or of an imperishable Person.

In proof of the same view, the example of Schopenhauer is adduced. He greatly admired the ascetic mediæval monks, and greatly admired the Buddhist religion, while yet he was a decided Antitheist.

Again, Comte is represented by some persons as eminently devout and religious, and yet not a Theist.

Thus it is considered that the extinction of Theism, so far from causing the ruin of religion, might tend on the contrary to strengthen, purify, and exalt it.

The perplexities attending the existence of evil, the principal source of these persistent debates, are strikingly set forth by Schopenhauer, who vividly depicts the imperfection of man and the ills of life, and quotes an abundance of authors (among whom Pascal is conspicuous) dwelling on the same gloomy theme. Schopenhauer seems

to have been principally determined to his Anti-theism by his consideration of this subject. It is also strongly insisted on by Mr. Mansel, who remarks: "The real riddle of existence,—the problem which confounds all philosophy, ay, and all religion too, so far as religion is a thing of man's reason,—is the fact that evil exists *at all.* . . . . Against this immovable barrier of the existence of evil the waves of philosophy have dashed themselves unceasingly since the birthday of human thought, and have retired broken and powerless."

He himself is led by his reflections on this subject to his theory concerning the Divine Morality.

A writer warmed with polemic against philosophers may regard with something like complacency even the existence of evil, when he contemplates this as an insoluble difficulty, securely baffling all their speculative efforts. But other writers, regarding the struggles of the human mind from a different point of view, display a more sympathising spirit, and use language in which no trace of jubilation can be detected. Tennyson speaks of "the painful riddle of the earth;" and Heine describes this riddle as

"Das qualvoll uralte Räthsel,
Worüber schon manche Häupter gegrübelt,
Häupter in Hieroglyphenmützen,
Häupter in Turban und schwarzem Barett,
Perrückenhäupter und tausend andre
Arme, schwitzende Menschenhäupter—

Sagt mir, was bedeutet der Mensch?
Woher ist er kommen? Wo geht er hin?
Wer wohnt dort oben auf goldenen Sternen?"

Having for their object to solve this "riddle of existence," this "uralte Räthsel," or to obtain, if possible, some light concerning it, Metaphysics cannot be denounced as dealing with topics of no interest. But it is quite possible that whilst inviting us to deal with very interesting matters, and alluring us to their study by the hope of attaining valuable information, they may not be able to gratify our wishes and expectations.

When a person first endeavours to grapple with problems of the nature above described, he is apt to do so without any misgiving as to the powers of the human intellect, and he expects to attain before long a result in which he can acquiesce with confidence. But after a fuller study of the matter, when he finds the great discrepancy of opinion amongst philosophers, and examines the various arguments which have been urged by them against each other, this confidence is apt to be shaken; and he begins to entertain a suspicion that possibly the human intellect may not be so adequate to the task as he had at first supposed. Hence there arises the further question, "Is the human intellect competent to obtain light on these points, or are they beyond its reach?"

Concerning this question very various opinions have been held. Many philosophers have treated confidently of the subjects in question, not doubt-

ing that by the exercise of our natural faculties we can obtain valuable light concerning them. But others deny this, maintaining that our natural faculties can give us no light concerning such questions. All that we can do, say they, is to observe the succession of phenomena, offered to us by physical experience, and generalise our observations into laws. The nature of the unseen cause of the Universe, supposing such a cause to exist, is, say they, wholly beyond our reach. Whether the Universe be produced by design or intelligence, or by blind physical necessity; whether there be a Ruler of the Universe, who is wise and benevolent, or whether there be no Being of the kind; whether man exists after death, or whether when he dies he perishes,—are questions wholly beyond the reach of our faculties. If we could obtain answers to them, the knowledge would be interesting; but as we can obtain no answer on which we can depend, the proper course is not to waste our time in fruitless efforts, but to devote ourselves to those matters which we are competent to know, viz. phenomena, and the laws regulating their succession.

This view of the matter is frequently spoken of as Positivism, and is attributed to Comte and his followers. But some persons assert that this is a complete mistake; that the real doctrine of Comte is quite different from that usually assigned to him.*

The question concerning the power and scope

* See Note A.

of our faculties,—whether they can give us information concerning causes and things, or merely about phenomena; whether the results obtained by them are true relatively to other beings, or whether they are true only in relation to man,—is generally considered a metaphysical question. Kant's great work, the *Critique of the Reason*, has for its object to investigate these points; and this work by common consent is called metaphysical.

Such being the topics of metaphysical inquiry, it is likely that Metaphysics will exist for a long time to come. And it is likely that hostility to Metaphysics will also long continue. A large portion of mankind are engaged in practical pursuits, and regard with aversion speculations which seem to them subtle and useless. There is always too a considerable body of mankind who think that physical experience is the only source of certainty; that whatever cannot be verified by this is so uncertain as to be of no value. Even in Asia, according to M. Gobineau, an empirical sect holding these views exists in considerable numbers.

Again, there is always a large class who, receiving doctrines implicitly on authority, refuse to engage in any metaphysical inquiry, saying:

> *οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσι,*
> *πατρίους παραδοχὰς, ἅς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνῳ*
> *κεκτήμιεθ', οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος,*
> *οὐδ' εἰ δι' ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν εὕρηται φρενῶν.*

These of course cannot approve the attitude of the metaphysician, described by Des Cartes, who

engages resolutely in inquiry, determined to scrutinise all his previous beliefs, and to reject those which he had most cherished, if he finds them unable to stand the scrutiny. Thus it happens that Metaphysics find themselves beset with enemies on all sides.

It would be useless to quote opinions adverse to Metaphysics, as these abound and have long abounded. But it is worth while to adduce the opinions of some writers who do not join in the outcry against them. I will quote that of Schopenhauer, a writer not prejudiced in their favour by any penchant for metaphysical theology, since he opposed Theism in a most resolute manner. Instead of regarding Metaphysics as a product of the human mind in an immature state, he considers them to arise when man passes from the child-like stage to that of mature intelligence; in which condition his need for metaphysics is as urgent as any of his physical needs.

He says: "Mit der Unfähigkeit zum Glauben wächst das Bedürfniss der Erkenntniss. Es giebt einen Siedepunkt auf der Skala der Kultur wo aller Glaube, alle Offenbarung, alle Auktoritäten sich verflüchtigen, der Mensch nach eigener Einsicht verlangt, belehrt, aber auch überzeugt seyn will. Das Gängelband der Kindheit ist von ihm gefallen; er will auf eigenen Beinen stehn. Dabei aber ist sein metaphysisches Bedürfniss so unvertilgbar wie irgend ein physisches."*

* Ueber die vierfache Wurzel, &c. p. 116.

Entertaining these views, Schopenhauer does not look down with contempt on the great metaphysical writers; but speaks with genuine and heartfelt reverence of "Plato der göttliche und der erstaunliche Kant."

Mr. Mill also opposes the opinion which regards Metaphysics as obsolete or as useless; and he has given practical proof of his earnestness, by devoting his great intellectual powers to the discussion of metaphysical questions. Speaking of his recent work, examining the doctrines of Hamilton, he says: "The justification of the work itself lies in the importance of the questions, to the discussion of which it is a contribution. England is often reproached by Continental thinkers with indifference to the higher philosophy. But England did not always deserve this reproach, and is already showing, by no doubtful symptoms, that she will not deserve it much longer. Her thinkers are again beginning to see, what they had only temporarily forgotten, that a true Psychology is the indispensable scientific basis of Morals, of Politics, of the science and art of Education; that the difficulties of Metaphysics lie at the root of all science; that those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved; and that until they are resolved, positively if possible, but at any rate negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundation."*

* Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 2.

In addition to the opinions of Schopenhauer and Mill may be quoted that of Waterland, which will seem obsolete to some, but of high authority to others. Having been accused by his opponents of mixing metaphysics with his theology, he replies: "Let those who object to us the use of Metaphysicks, try if they can come at the proof of the Father's being self-existent, underived, one, simple, uncompounded, undivided, intelligent, Agent, &c. without entering into Metaphysicks."*

Where such a large number of persons entertain a rooted dislike to Metaphysics, topics of complaint against metaphysicians may be expected to abound. One complaint frequently urged against them is that they are dialectical and controversial. Nor indeed can the fact thus complained of be denied, the history of Metaphysics being a tissue of controversy. Plato and Socrates controvert the Sophists; Aristotle controverts Plato; Des Cartes controverts Hobbes and Gassendi; Locke controverts Des Cartes; Leibnitz controverts Locke and Bayle; Hume controverts the world at large; Kant controverts Leibnitz and the mass of dogmatical philosophers; Hamilton controverts Brown, Kant, Cousin; Mill controverts Hamilton. Now this characteristic of metaphysical inquiry is, say its opponents, exceedingly distasteful to us; for however we may differ among ourselves on other points, we all agree on this—that we cannot bear controversial people, that we cordially detest dialectic.

* Waterland on Christ's Divinity, Sermon vi.

This dislike to dialectic is however by no means immutable. If persons listen to arguments to which they find it difficult to reply, directed against some belief or opinion which they cherish, they cannot bear dialectic; but if the arguments are directed in favour of their own views, and their opponents experience difficulty in grappling with them, then they highly admire the dialectical power of their champion, declaring that his logic is irrefragable, that he crushes his opponents with an iron mace, &c.

Few writers have been more controversial or dialectical than St. Augustine; and his opponents used to make this a topic of complaint against him; the Donatist bishops declining to confer with him, and warning their flocks to avoid him, on the ground that he was "dialecticus." St. Augustine defends himself from these attacks, not by disowning, but by justifying dialectic. He urges that "dialectic" in the proper sense signifies "dispute;" that dispute or διάλεξις in behalf of truth is perfectly legitimate, and was practised by St. Paul and Christ. He says to Cresconius: "Si et Paulus dialecticus erat, et ideo conferre cum Stoicis non timebat; . . . . jam cave cuiquam dialecticam pro crimine objeceris, quâ usos Apostolos confiteris." Again: "Si et disputatorem Apostolum negas, qui tam assidue, tam egregie disputabat; nec græce nôsti, nec latine." Again: "Si autem Christum dixeris dialecticum, laudabis dialecticam, quam mihi pro crimine objeceras."

And he explains his views more fully in the following passage:

"Hanc enim artem quam dialecticam vocant, quæ nihil aliud docet quam consequentia demonstrare, seu vera veris, seu falsa falsis, nunquam doctrina christiana formidat . . . . Et ipsa enim fatetur, et verum est, neminem disputando ad conclusionem falsam consequenter impelli, nisi prius consenserit falsis, quibus eadem conclusio velit nollit efficitur. Ac per hoc qui cavet ne se loquente consequantur falsa quæ non vult, volens falsa caveat quæ præcedunt. Si autem præcedentibus veris inhæserit, quæcumque consequentia perspexerit quæ falsa existimabat, vel de quibus dubitabat, admonitus amplectatur, si veritati est pacatissimæ amicior, quam contentiosissimæ vanitati."*

Here St. Augustine declares that false conclusions cannot follow from true premises; that nobody can consistently be brought to a false conclusion, unless he has given his consent to false premises; that a doctrine which is found to lead to false conclusions should be abandoned, though previously it had been believed; and that conclusions which are found to follow from true premises should be embraced, though previously they were disbelieved. And this tracing out of consequences is asserted by him to be the main office of "dialectic," esteemed by him as of great value.

A view similiar to the above is expressed by

* S. Augustinus contra Cresconium, lib. i. cap. 20.

Mr. Mansel. Speaking of doctrinal developments he says: "By intellectual developments I understand logical inferences from doctrines, or from the comparison of doctrines; which, in virtue of the great dialectical maxim, must be true, if legitimately deduced from what is true."* This perfectly agrees with St. Augustine's view concerning the connection of conclusions with premises.

Such being the nature of dialectic, metaphysicians cannot be otherwise than dialectical. For the great object of metaphysical study is to obtain a coherent body of doctrine. An ill-digested congeries, where one assertion conflicts with another and conclusions do not follow from premises, can be obtained at once without labour; and if we are satisfied with such a medley, we need not vex ourselves with studying Metaphysics. Those who devote time and labour to philosophy do so with the hope of removing the discrepancies which embarrass immature thought. And the bringing to light such discrepancies, either in our own doctrines or in those of others, is the office of dialectic.

But just as dialectic is valuable to the metaphysician, it is odious to the non-philosophical person, who dislikes inquiry. He holds probably an immature collection of doctrines, full of contradiction, in which he feels perfect complacency, so long as the contradictions are not made obvious to him; and nothing so greatly excites his ire as

* Bampton Lectures, Lecture viii. note 18.

to find the latent contradiction brought to light. The magnitude of the displeasure thus occasioned is shown by the fate of Socrates, who, making it his business to cross-examine his hearers, and to render clear to them the contradictions into which they fell, became intolerable to them, and was silenced by a dose of hemlock. And seeing the great zeal with which he exercised his dialectical vocation, we may rather wonder that it was not cut short at an earlier period of his life.

Nor can we wonder that troublesome dialecticians were silenced in a very summary manner whilst ecclesiastical authority reigned paramount. They were treated indeed with great leniency, being punished "citra sanguinis effusionem," and accordingly burnt alive; and in order to give them more time for repentance, they were generally burnt by a slow fire. But they did not appreciate the benignity of this treatment; and probably Giordano Bruno would rather have been dealt with by Athenian Dicasts than by Christian Inquisitors.

But however odious dialectic may be to those who dislike philosophy, metaphysicians must esteem it very differently. In examining a metaphysical system, they must carefully trace the conclusions which legitimately follow from the premises; and if these are untenable, or if they conflict with other portions of the doctrine, they should regard this as indicating a flaw in the system. And it does not avail to plead that the philosopher whose work

is examined did not himself draw the consequences in question, and would not have approved them. The purport of the objection is not to make out that the philosopher himself holds the consequences; but to show that premises laid down by him lead to these consequences; that if he maintains the premises, he should accept the consequences; if he will not consent to accept the consequences, he should abandon the premises.

When Hamilton criticises Kant's doctrine, he attacks it on the ground that it leads, by logical sequence, to pernicious consequences,—to "the worst and most pervading scepticism." Hamilton does not suppose that Kant himself drew these consequences, and advocated this pernicious scepticism; but if it had been urged that Kant personally was no sceptic, and that therefore the objection was null, Hamilton would have laughed at such a style of defence.

We have previously noticed that one of the objections made against Metaphysics is, that they deal not with realities, but with void abstractions. In support of this objection, it is pointed out that some of the principal metaphysical disputes are about the Finite, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Conditioned, the Unconditioned, the Divine, the Perfect, &c. Here, it is said, we have nothing but bare adjectives, not united with any noun; and investigations about such void abstractions cannot be interesting or profitable.

In order to examine this objection, it is proper

to consider awhile the nature of abstract and general notions.

A very strange account is sometimes given of these. It is said that the abstract notion of humanity is a notion, in which we conceive all the various qualities which different men are capable of possessing, existing in a purely abstract state. That to conceive the general notion of "Man" or "the Human," we must conceive a man who is neither young nor old, short nor tall, clever nor stupid, black nor white, &c. Sometimes, again, it is said that "the Human" denotes a man or object possessing at the same time all the attributes which can possibly be predicated of any man; being at the same time young and old, black, white, red, olive, clever and stupid, good and bad, &c.

Were this the true account of the nature of abstract and general notions, the only wise course would be to dismiss them at once to limbo. We may, however, denote by the title "abstract and general notions" the mental functions in virtue of which we make an intelligent use of abstract and general terms. And when thus explained, abstract and general notions, so far from being chimerical or useless, are exceedingly valuable, indeed indispensable to the use of language. Language, as Leibnitz and Locke remark, would be impossible if it were necessary to denote every individual object by a separate word; it is only classification which makes it possible; and classifi-

cation is performed by means of abstraction and generalisation. Abstract notions or conceptions when thus explained are not the exclusive property of metaphysicians or philosophers, but are constantly used, even by the simplest persons. When a peasant looking at a number of objects on a hill-side calls them all by the name of sheep, or when a cook putting a number of globular objects into a saucepan calls them all peas, these persons perform the functions of generalisation and abstraction as easily and as unknowingly as Monsieur Jourdain talked prose. If propositions concerning "love" or "beauty" or "marriage" are addressed to a very unlettered maiden, she will not be precluded from understanding them because the words "love," "beauty," &c. are abstract terms, and her intellect is not adequate to the task of framing abstract notions.

Accordingly we find that abstract and general terms are freely used in works intended for the instruction of simple and uneducated persons. They are abundantly used in the Bible. The proposition, "Godliness with contentment is great gain," is one couched in as abstract terms as any proposition can be; yet very simple persons are capable of understanding it. They gather from it without difficulty that it is advantageous to a real living person to be godly and contented. Thus the abstract expressions convey information concerning that which is concrete and actual.

And such must always be the case, in order

that abstract terms may be profitable. Abstract language is legitimate if it can be interpreted into intelligible statements concerning the concrete, but otherwise it is illegitimate, not fulfilling the true function of language. Schopenhauer with much justice likens abstractions to paper money, which is valuable if convertible, but otherwise valueless. The writer who uses abstract terms may be likened to a banker: if he can convert his abstract language into intelligible statements concerning the concrete, he may be regarded as solvent; but if he cannot do this, he must be pronounced insolvent.

When metaphysicians discourse about "the Finite," "the Infinite," "the Divine," "the Human," and the like, this test must be applied. If they can convert their language into profitable statements concerning that which exists, or is possible, they are not to be blamed; but if they cannot give an intelligible interpretation to their language, if their abstractions have no application to the concrete, they must be adjudged guilty of metaphysical insolvency.

Expressions of the form above noticed are frequently used by various writers: for the purpose of illustration I give a few examples.

Mr. Mill says: "Between the true and the false there is a third possibility, the Unmeaning."* It is not difficult to interpret this. We can understand from it that there are three kinds of verbal

* System of Logic, vol. i. p. 305.

statements: those that are true, those that are false, and those that have no meaning at all.

In another passage Mr. Mill says: "The paviour who cannot use his rammer without the accustomed cry, the orator who had so often while speaking twirled a string in his hand that he became unable to speak when he accidentally dropped it, are, it seems to me, examples of a customary which did approach to and even reach the necessary."*

Here the adjectival forms of expression, "a customary" and "the necessary," are, as in the preceding case, capable of being easily interpreted.

In another passage Mr. Mill says: "This, however, is true of the finite as well as of the infinite, of the imperfect as well as of the completed or absolute."†

Malebranche says: "Rien de fini ne peut avoir assez de réalité pour représenter l'infini. Or je suis certain que je vois l'infini. Donc l'infini existe."‡

Des Cartes, in the French version, says: "Ceci ne laisse pas d'être vrai, encore que je ne comprenne pas l'infini; . . . . car il est de la nature de l'infini que moi qui suis fini et borné ne le puisse comprendre."§ And again: "Nous ne nous

* Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 263.

† Ibid. p. 56.

‡ Entretiens sur la Métaphysique.

§ Méditation troisième.

embarrasserons jamais dans les disputes de l'infini ; d'autant qu'il seroit ridicule que nous, qui sommes finis, entreprissions d'en déterminer quelque chose, et par ce moyen le supposer fini en tâchant de le comprendre."*

Again, he speaks of Reason as "la puissance de bien juger, et distinguer le vrai d'avec le faux," frequently repeating this mode of expression.

In Greek we may take as instances :

τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐστι φθονερόν.
οὐδ' εἰ δι' ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν εὕρηται φρενῶν.
πᾶν γὰρ τὸ φαινόμενον ἐξ ἀφανῶν ὀφείλει συνίστασθαι.

Aristotle, speaking of the *λόγοι* of Socrates, says that they all have *τὸ περιττόν, καὶ τὸ κομψόν, καὶ τὸ καινοτόμον.*

But indeed in Greek the mode of expression is so familiar that examples might be readily quoted to any extent.

The following are some further illustrations of the usage.

Mr. Mansel says, "that life in which the marvellous and the familiar are so strangely yet so perfectly united."†

Just as Mr. Mansel here uses the adjectival form "the marvellous," so Voltaire uses that of "le merveilleux." He says: "Une grande preuve que les capitaines de Charles VII employaient le merveilleux pour encourager les soldats."

Mr. Farrar, in his Bampton Lectures, speaks of

* Les Principes de la Philosophie, 1ère partie, § 26.

† Bampton Lectures, lect. v. p. 163.

Paulus as "attributing the supernatural to ignorance," and says that "the appeal to the supernatural" "had never quite died out in the church." Again he says, "the ethical superseded the historic."

Mr. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, says: "If we pass from the Fathers into the middle ages, we find ourselves in an atmosphere that was dense, and charged with the supernatural." And again: "Generation after generation the province of the miraculous has contracted."

Dr. Newman says: "Nor does it avail to object that, in this contrast of devotional exercises, the human is sure to supplant the divine, from the infirmity of our nature."

Mathematicians use the same mode of expression. Professor Sylvester, in his *Astronomical Prolusions*, speaking of geometry and analysis, says: "The interval between the two is as wide as between empiricism and science, as between the understanding and the reason, or as between the finite and the infinite."* And again, in another mathematical paper, he says: "It often happens that the pursuit of the beautiful and appropriate, or as it may be otherwise expressed, the endeavour after the perfect, is rewarded with a new insight into the true."†

As examples of a similar usage among poets we may take the following.

* Philosophical Magazine, January 1866.

† Ibid. March 1866.

Milton says:

"Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced."*

Again:

"Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite?"†

And again:

"Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts."‡

Shelley says:

"Th' inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built above mortal thought,
Far in the unapparent."

Goethe says:

"Das Unzulängliche
Hier wird's Ereigniss;
Das Unbeschreibliche
Hier ist es gethan;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan."

The above examples suffice to show that though the mode of expression in question is not usual in colloquial English, yet it is freely employed by writers of very different kinds, and sanctioned by such high authority, that it were vain to denounce it as illegitimate or unmeaning. Metaphysicians therefore cannot be blamed because they talk about "the Finite, "the Infinite," "the True," "the

* Paradise Lost, book x. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid., book xi.

Divine," &c.; and it is quite unwarrantable to infer from their use of such expressions that Metaphysics are about void abstractions.

It is quite possible that some metaphysicians may have lost their way, and propounded doctrines concerning abstractions which they were incapable of interpreting into truth concerning any thing existent or conceivable. According to the simile above noticed, such writers are unable to cash their notes; and have fallen into a state of metaphysical insolvency. Schopenhauer particularly accuses Schelling and Hegel of having gone astray in this manner; and censures them in consequence with great asperity.

Again, the Platonic theory of Ideas is sometimes censured as a vain reverie about mere abstractions. But many able philosophers wholly dissent from this view. Kant regards the theory in question as in the main profound and valuable. Schopenhauer, who detests speculations about abstractions, and who pursues Schelling and Hegel with biting invective because he thinks they have indulged in it, highly admires Plato's theory of Ideas, regarding it as essentially agreeing with the Kantian doctrine. And Schopenhauer can hardly have been prejudiced in favour of Plato, since he vehemently dislikes and condemns his Theism.*

It is quite likely that in many cases philosophers have gone astray, and lost themselves in a maze of abstractions, admitting of no profitable

* See Note B.

interpretation. Just in the same way mathematicians sometimes lose themselves in a maze of symbols, and produce results which they cannot profitably interpret. But the errors of metaphysicians and mathematicians who have gone astray must not be confounded with the nature of metaphysics and mathematics. Both these make use of abstractions: but the purpose of both is to obtain a knowledge about really existing things.

When, therefore, philosophers dispute concerning the Finite, the Infinite, the Relative, the Absolute, &c., the profitableness of the dispute will depend upon the mode in which the expressions are interpreted. We shall find different expositors proposing a great variety of interpretations.

Sometimes it is said that "the Infinite" and "the Absolute" mean infinite and absolute being; and that this signifies abstract being apart from any attribute—unpropertied, unconditioned, undetermined. Thus the Infinite so explained is held to be neither real nor unreal, neither active nor inactive, neither conscious nor unconscious, &c. Sometimes, again, the Infinite is explained as signifying a being or object of which every possible attribute is predicated in an infinite degree; which is infinitely real and infinitely unreal; infinitely active and infinitely inactive; infinitely good and infinitely bad; infinitely powerful and infinitely weak, &c.

Now when the Infinite and the Absolute are thus explained, it is quite useless to make them

subjects of discussion; and the so-called Metaphysic, which busies itself about them, should be dismissed, as dealing with void abstractions.

But it would be perfectly wrong to conclude that statements about "the Finite," "the Infinite," &c. are necessarily illegitimate; that all writers who discourse about them deal with meaningless abstractions. If a writer wishes to say that every thing which we can imagine is Finite; that we cannot imagine any thing that is Infinite, any Infinite thing, or quality, or object,—he may with perfect correctness express this by the compendious statement, "The Finite alone is imaginable; the Infinite is unimaginable." In like manner he may correctly say, "The Finite only is conceivable; the Infinite is inconceivable;" meaning thereby to express that we can conceive only finite objects, and cannot conceive any infinite thing or object.

We must not suppose that because the expressions "the Finite," "the Infinite," "the Phenomenal," "the Human," have a singular form, and are made to agree with verbs in the singular number, that therefore what is said about them is said only about a single thing or object. In saying that "the Finite is not able to comprehend the Infinite," we assert that no finite mind can comprehend any infinite object: but the number of Finite minds or intelligent beings concerning whom this incapacity is asserted may be exceedingly great. So we may say in the singular "the Fi-

nite exists," though admitting the existence of many finite objects; or again, we may say "the Infinite exists," while we may recognise the existence of many infinite things, or of many infinite persons. In a similar manner, we say in the singular "the nation rejoices," or "the nation mourns;" meaning thereby that a great number of persons rejoice or mourn.

The perplexities which have been caused in recent debates by the use of expressions of the form above considered show that explanation concerning them is not uncalled for; and this must be my excuse for having dwelt on the subject somewhat at length.

What has been said above concerning the attacks on Metaphysics is in a great measure applicable to similar attacks made against "Ontology." Ontology, it is said, is void and vain; since it is discourse about τὸ ὄν, about naked being devoid of attributes, unpropertied and unconditioned; and discourse about such an empty abstraction must be nugatory.

Τὸ ὄν, however, need not be interpreted as signifying naked being without attribute. It may be used to signify that which is, as opposed to τὸ φαινόμενον or τὸ δοκοῦν, that which merely seems to be. If a philosopher wishes to express that we cannot know any thing as it really is, that we can know only seeming or appearance, he may express this by saying that we can know only phenomena, and cannot know τὸ ὄν or τὸ ὄντως ὄν. In this state-

ment τὸ ὄν does not signify a nonentity or void abstraction; but, on the contrary, it signifies something believed to be much more real than phenomena. Though here the expression τὸ ὄν is singular, yet it need not signify only one thing. As τὸ φαινόμενον may be a class including a great number of φαινόμενα, so τὸ ὄντως ὄν may be a class comprising a great number of ὄντως ὄντα. When the expression τὸ ὄν is used in this latter sense, Ontology will mean discourse about reality or real things, not about a nonentity or meaningless abstraction.

Sometimes the sense of the word "Ontology" is shifted in the course of a piece of reasoning; and because Ontology considered as the science of a naked abstraction is nugatory, it is inferred that Ontology in the second sense is nugatory: and thus it is concluded that we can know only illusory appearances, and cannot know real fact or truth. But such a mode of procedure is evidently illegitimate. It may be that we can know only seeming or appearance, not actual fact or truth: but this position cannot be proved by merely shifting the sense of "Ontology" or of any other word.

Persons who have little taste for Metaphysics sometimes represent them as un-English. Let them, say they, be studied by Germans and other foreigners; but the British mind is fitted to occupy itself with matters of a more practical and useful description. And indeed, if the object of Metaphysics were to discuss void abstractions, the British mind would show its good sense in refusing to

meddle with them. We have seen, however, that such is not the object of philosophy; and consequently we cannot infer, on such a ground, that the British mind is unphilosophical or non-metaphysical.

And indeed the truth is, that our island has given birth to numerous thinkers who have shown conspicuous ability in metaphysics. The nation which has produced Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Hamilton, and Mill, besides many other metaphysicians of considerable note, cannot with any justice be deemed to have evinced incapacity for metaphysical pursuits.*

All the above-named philosophers have acted effectively upon European thought; but two of them, viz. Locke and Hume, have done so in a most especial manner. The powerful effect produced by Locke's teaching in France, annulling for a long time that of the native Cartesian school, is sufficiently known. But the philosophical thought of the present day owes more to the influence of Hume. No metaphysical writer in any age or country has exercised a greater influence than

* Schopenhauer frequently praises the English or British metaphysicians, expressing an opinion that their works are not sufficiently studied and valued. He repeatedly testifies the highest admiration of Hume. He also greatly admires Locke, preferring him to Leibnitz, and to all German metaphysicians with the exception of Kant. In one passage he speaks of him as really a *summus philosophus*, to whose honour it redounds that he was called by Fichte the worst of all philosophers: "ein wirklicher *summus philosophus*, Locke, dem es zur Ehre gereicht, von Fichten der schlechteste aller Philosophen genannt zu seyn."

Hume, the Coryphæus of philosophical sceptics. "In his investigations," says Tennemann, "philosophical scepticism appeared with a terrific force, profundity, and logical consequence, such as had never previously been witnessed."* He broke the dogmatic slumber of metaphysicians, among others of Kant and Reid, put the questions of metaphysics in a new light, and paved the way directly for the production of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.* From his powerful influence springs the modern form of philosophical scepticism which now prevails so widely, and which, denounced at first by theologians as pregnant with impiety, has succeeded in rallying a large number of them to its standards, and found in them its warmest adherents.

Hume's scepticism called in question the validity of the human intellect itself. Before him, says Schopenhauer, nobody had doubted that the principle of causality, the principle of sufficient reason, was an eternal and absolute truth, valid for all classes of beings, for men, for angels, and for God. Hume was the first to whom it occurred to question the authority of this principle, and call upon it to show its title-deeds. Schopenhauer does not approve of the answer which Hume gave to the question which he thus put, which he pronounces to be false and easily refutable. (Other philosophers, however, such as Mr. Mill, have adopted Hume's solution.) But Hume's merit, says Scho-

* Quoted in Hamilton's Discussions, p. 116.

penhauer, lay not in the answer, but in the question itself; which stimulated Kant to still profounder researches, and led to a far deeper idealism than that of Berkeley, viz. transcendental idealism —a revival of the ancient Vedantic doctrine, by means of which Kant swept away the old dogmatic systems, and changed the face of European philosophy.

Note A.

The different statements made concerning Comte are curious. Mr. Farrar represents him as teaching that science passes through three stages—the theistic, the pantheistic, and the atheistic; and that its perfection consists in reaching the third stage. He also speaks of his system as silent about God, spirit, and immortality. Dr. MacCosh speaks of him as a rabid atheist. Mr. Mill, who evidently wishes to treat him with perfect fairness, asserts that his religion is without a God; that he neither affirmed nor denied the existence of God or Providence. On the other hand, some persons assert that he fervently embraced Theism, regarding atheists with the greatest contempt. So far from being silent about God, it is asserted that he wrote on this theme so copiously as to be even wearisome; so that less devout persons were tempted to exclaim, "Avec ton Etre Suprême tu commences à m'embêter."

These differences of view remind us of the similar ones concerning Spinosa, who is spoken of by many writers as a rank atheist, blasphemous and irreligious; by others as eminently pure, holy, and inspired by God.

When we become acquainted with the peculiarities of Comte's system, when we learn from Mr. Mill and others that he in a manner deified a large portion of the human race and some brute animals, and that he taught a "Positive Fetishism," ascribing some kind of divinity to the Earth and to pure Space, we can better understand the singular diversities of judgment concerning his doctrine.

Not unfrequently Comte is looked on as a Secularist, who would divert men from thinking about the invisible, about God, or things remote from earth, and would bid them occupy their thoughts only with the phenomena of this life. But we are assured that his favourite work was

the *Imitation of Christ*, which particularly bids us to think little of this transitory life, and to meditate continually about God, the future state, and the unseen world.

So too it is often thought that Comte had a great dislike to Metaphysics. But we are assured that he was particularly fond of Dante, whose great work is full of the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and the schoolmen. And Mr. Mill tells us that he particularly admired Des Cartes and Leibnitz, ontologians par excellence, regarding them as the greatest philosophers of modern times, and considering their minds to bear the nearest resemblance to his own. Apparently, therefore, he esteemed them much more than he did Locke and the empirical or sensational schools.

Note B.

In one passage Schopenhauer says: "Hätte man jemals Kants Lehre, hätte man seit Kant den Platon eigentlich verstanden und gefasst, hätte man treu und ernst dem innern Sinn und Gehalt der Lehren beider grosser Meister nachgedacht, statt mit den Kunstausdrücken des einen um sich zu werfen und den Stil des andern zu parodiren; es hätte nicht fehlen können, dass man längst gefunden hätte, wie sehr die beiden grossen Weisen übereinstimmen und die reine Bedeutung, der Zielpunkt beider Lehren, durchaus derselbe ist." See *Welt als Wille*, &c. Buch iii., the whole of which book is devoted to an exposition of the Platonic doctrine of ideas.

CHAPTER II.

The doctrine which lies at the root of philosophical scepticism is that which affirms the relativity of human knowledge and truth. According to this doctrine there is no absolute standard of truth, no standard valid in relation to all judging persons. A statement which is true in relation to A may be false in relation to B, and *vice versâ;* and neither party is entitled to hold that his opinion is true to the exclusion of the other. Both opinions or judgments have a relative truth; *i. e.* each is true in relation to the person affirming it; and we are not warranted in ascribing to either of the judgments any truth other than truth of this description.

For instance, let us consider judgments obtained by the senses. One person, A, tasting chocolate, pronounces it to be pleasant; another, B, tasting it, pronounces it to be unpleasant. Neither party has a right to say that he cognises the nature of the chocolate more accurately than the other. The one statement is true in relation to A, the other in relation to B, and neither of

them has a truth higher than this merely relative truth.

When, therefore, in common parlance we are said to taste the chocolate, we acquire no knowledge of the chocolate as it really is further than this—that, acting in conjunction with the nerves of our palate, it produces a certain taste or flavour. This flavour is perceived or cognised by us; but we are not entitled to affirm that it in the least resembles the chocolate itself, *i.e.* the agent or thing which, acting in conjunction with our nerves, produced the flavour.

Nor are we entitled to affirm that the flavour experienced or cognised by us, and called by us the taste of chocolate, resembles the flavour experienced by other persons, and called by them the taste of chocolate. A hundred or a thousand persons may taste chocolate, and the flavour experienced by each of them may be entirely different. And no one of them will have a right to say: My constitution is right, and I cognise the true taste of the chocolate; whilst you, who experience a different taste, err, and do not cognise the chocolate correctly.

In the case described, the chocolate, considered as an unknown external agent, is called in Kantian language the Noumenon, while the flavour perceived when it acts on the nerves of our palate is called the Phenomenon. Thus there are two coefficients, the external noumenon and the subject (the sentient person); and the phenomenon results

from the joint action of this pair of agents, varying according to the varying constitution of the subject.

The same applies if we consider the perception of colour. In common parlance we are said to see the colour of an orange, and we pronounce this colour to be yellow. And a child or an unreflecting person is apt to believe that in doing this he sees a real quality of the orange; that the yellow tint perceived by him actually exists on the surface of the orange; and that all persons who see the orange rightly see the same yellow tint. But a slight acquaintance with physics dispels this view of the matter, and shows that the tint perceived varies, according to the light falling on the orange, and according to the nerves of the person who looks at it. A hundred persons may look at the same orange, and all may see a different tint, though they may all call this tint by the same name of yellow.

The judgments, therefore, concerning the taste of the chocolate and colour of the orange are said to be knowledge of a merely relative kind. In terming this knowledge "relative," it is not meant merely that it implies relation, the relation of subject and object; for absolute knowledge, *i.e.* knowledge valid in relation to all knowers, would equally do this. But it is meant that the relation between subject and object is of such a kind that truth varies according to the varying constitution of the subject, so that what is true in relation to

one subject, or one mental constitution, is not true in relation to another.

Let us now consider the perception of form or extension. Looking at an orange and taking it in our hands, we pronounce that it is round—of a nearly spherical form. Ordinary persons believe that the orange really has this form; that all persons who perceive or judge rightly must ascribe to it this form, and no other. And many philosophers, who readily admit that our knowledge of flavours and colours is merely relative, agree with the vulgar in reference to our knowledge of extension, holding that our knowledge in this case is absolutely true; knowledge of real external fact.

But the doctrine of Relativity, which asserts that all human knowledge is merely relative, does not tolerate such a view. According to it, our knowledge of the form of the orange is just as relative as our knowledge of its colour and taste. Like them, it is produced by the joint action of the noumenon and the subject. The noumenon, which is unseen and unknown, acting in conjunction with our perceptive or mental faculty, produces a phenomenon which we cognise as spherical. But the spherical phenomenon thus produced may be no more like the noumenon than the colour or flavour produced by its action on our nerves. The noumenon may not be spherical; it may not be extended or exist in space at all. Moreover this noumenon, acting on the faculties of other beings,

may produce a phenomenon of a form quite unlike that which we perceive and cognise.

According to these two opinions, a totally different view is taken of the truth of geometrical science. The one set of philosophers consider that the propositions demonstrated by Euclid are universal truths; that they are true in relation to all intelligent beings; and they express this by saying that their truth is absolute. According to the other philosophers, the truth of these propositions is merely relative: they are true in relation to beings whose minds are constituted in a particular way; while they may be totally false in relation to beings whose minds are differently constituted.

It is to be observed that when the Absolutist philosophers declare these propositions to be universal truths, valid in relation to all intelligences, they do not mean to assert that they are universally recognised as true, or assented to. The contrary is notorious. It is well known that men are capable of disbelieving the propositions of Euclid; and that they may act on a belief concerning geometrical figures quite opposed to his demonstrations.* But the Absolutists assert that this in no way affects the truth of the propositions, which do not become false because they are disbelieved.

* As an instance of this, it is on record that a water-company, who had supplied water to some works through a pipe of a certain diameter, agreed to supply them through a pipe of twice the diameter for twice the former price; believing that the volumes of the water discharged would vary as the diameters of the pipes, *i. e.* that the areas of the pipes varied as the diameters.

When, therefore, they affirm these propositions to be universal truths, they do not mean that they are universally assented to; but that they are assented to by all persons who judge rightly, and that they cannot be denied by any person without error.

A precisely similar difference of opinion exists in reference to Time, and our judgments concerning time, and objects enduring or changing in time.

The same dispute exists concerning the principle of Causality or of sufficient Reason. Some philosophers ascribe to this an absolute or universal truth; while others think that it is true only in relation to intellects of a particular type; or again, that it may be true on earth, but false in Sirius or in distant stars. And there is a similar dispute concerning our other intellectual conceptions, such as those of Existence, Substance, Reality, Relation, Unity, Plurality, &c.

But the most important application of the doctrine of relativity is that which concerns our moral principles and judgments. Concerning these there is a similar difference of opinion. Some philosophers, who willingly ascribe a merely relative character to our physical and geometrical knowledge, refuse to ascribe a similar character to our moral judgments. They grant that in cognising the taste of chocolate we cognise a phenomenon which may be quite different from the noumenon, and quite different from that cognised by other persons, and thus obtain no knowledge of the chocolate, except that it produces a certain

affection in us. But the case, say they, is otherwise when we cognise the will, character, or moral disposition of a man. In this case, say they, we do not cognise merely a sentiment produced by the noumenon in us, but we cognise the character or disposition which really belongs to the real man. If one person assert this to be morally good, and another to be morally bad, we must not say that both these judgments are relatively true; but we must hold that one of them is true—conformable to fact, and the other false—not conformable to fact. Herein, as they contend, these judgments differ from those of two persons, one of whom asserts that chocolate is pleasant, and the other that it is unpleasant; these latter judgments having a merely relative truth, and neither being superior to the other.

In like manner these philosophers hold that there is an absolute standard of moral good and moral evil; so that certain moral principles have a universal validity, and are binding on all moral beings, at all times and in all parts of the Universe. They refuse to allow that the fundamental principles of Morals, held to be true in relation to man, may be false in relation to angels or to God; or, again, that they may be true on earth, but false in distant parts of the stellar universe.

The doctrine of relativity, which declares all human truth to be merely relative, condemns this view of the subject. According to it, our moral judgments are no less relative than our judgments

about form, taste, colour, &c. Like them they are produced by the joint action of the noumenon and the subject, and give us a knowledge only of phenomena. A certain noumenon, acting in conjunction with the mind or nature of A, produces a certain phenomenon, exciting in A the sentiment of moral approbation. But the phenomenon thus produced may be wholly unlike the noumenon, just as the taste or colour produced by a noumenon may be wholly unlike it. Again, the phenomenon produced may be wholly unlike that which the same noumenon produces in the mind or faculties of another subject differently constituted. The noumenon which, acting in conjunction with A's faculties, excites in him a sentiment of moral approbation, acting in conjunction with B may produce a sentiment of moral disapprobation. A and B each cognise the sentiment experienced by each respectively; just as in tasting chocolate each cognises the flavour which he himself experiences; but in neither case does the sentiment or phenomenon experienced afford any knowledge of the properties or nature of the noumenon.

As to the absolute standard of good and evil affirmed by the Absolutist philosophers, the doctrine of relativity denies its existence. It declares that moral good and evil are merely relative, varying with the peculiar structure and constitution of the judging subject, so that what is good in relation to one man may be bad in relation to another; and moral principles which are

true in relation to man may be false in relation to angels or to God.

This relativist doctrine is expounded on some occasions by Hume, who writes concerning it as follows :

"If we can depend upon any principle which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted—that there is nothing in itself valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection. What seems the most delicious food to one animal appears loathsome to another. What affects the feeling of one with delight produces uneasiness in another. This is confessedly the case with regard to all the bodily senses. But if we examine the matter more accurately, we shall find that the same observation holds even where the mind concurs with the body."*

"We may push the same observation further, and may conclude, that even when the mind operates alone, and, feeling the sentiment of blame or approbation, pronounces one object deformed and odious, another beautiful and amiable,—I say that even in this case those qualities are not really in the objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment of that mind which blames or praises. You will never convince a man who is not accustomed to Italian music, and has not an ear to follow its

* Hume's Essays, Essay xviii.

intricacies, that a Scotch tune is not preferable. You have not even a single argument beyond your own taste which you can employ in your behalf. And to your own antagonist his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow that the other may be in the right; and having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature, and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind."*

Again he says :

"We have already observed that no objects are in themselves desirable or odious, valuable or despicable; but that objects acquire those qualities from the particular character and constitution of the mind which surveys them. To diminish, therefore, or augment any person's value for an object, to excite or moderate his passions, there are no direct arguments or reasons which can be employed with any force or influence. The catching of flies, like Domitian, if it give more pleasure, is preferable to the hunting of wild beasts, like William Rufus, or conquering of kingdoms, like Alexander."†

The diversity of human tastes and sentiments, and the discrepancy of moral judgments, is a topic copiously insisted on by the advocates of the doctrine of relativity. They point out that practices

* Hume's Essays, Essay xviii. † Ibid.

which are admired in one country are censured in another; that one religion enjoins as holy what another condemns as detestable. Some persons especially admire hermits, monks, and saints,—St. Jerome, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas; others regard such a type of character as very defective, while greatly admiring that of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Cromwell, of Napoleon. Some persons greatly admire Danton, Fouquier Tinville, Marat, Robespierre; while others detest them. The Orientals are prone to reverence as divine conquerors like Timour, who devastate wide regions and erect pyramids of human skulls.* Victor Hugo remarks on the profound admiration expressed by Cantemir for the Turkish Sultans, their most cruel acts appearing perfectly right in his eyes. Ivan the Terrible is regarded by some as a monster of cruelty; but we are told that the Russians reverenced him as almost partaking of a divine character. And throughout the world generally, it will be found that some persons ascribe to God and adore as divine a type of character which others regard as cruel and odious.

Then, again, we are told to look at the great diversity of human tastes; that which causes pain to one person causing delight to another. One person delights in tranquil meditation, another in litigation, another in war and bloodshed. One person sympathises with his fellows, so that he

* M. Huc gives as the refrain of a popular Mongolian song, "O âme divine de Timour, quand renaîtras tu?"

cannot bear to see them in pain; but others derive pleasure from witnessing pain and torment. This taste was very strong in some of the Roman Emperors and Italian tyrants, affording to them a principal source of gratification. Gilles de Laval, a French nobleman of high position and reputation, found such pleasure in witnessing torments, that he systematically kidnapped children, whom he tortured and put to death. He confessed to have thus murdered more than 600 children, describing the pleasure which he derived from this procedure as exquisite, and the impulse to indulge in it as irresistible. Whilst acting in this way he was particularly assiduous in his attendance at Mass and the ceremonies of the Church.* Ivan the Terrible had, it is stated, a similar taste, torturing victims with his own hands, and inflicting torture on women previous to subjecting them to his embraces.

Under such circumstances, it is asked, how can it be supposed that man has any absolute standard of right and wrong, of good and evil? Evidently that which is good in relation to one man is evil in relation to another; that which excites in one man the sentiment of pleasure and approbation excites in another the sentiment of uneasiness and blame. It is therefore impossible that our moral judgments can be absolute, or can give us any cognition of the properties of noumena. They

* An account of Gilles de Laval, and of other persons of similar constitution, is given in a work by Mr. Baring Gould.

give us cognition only of a sentiment produced partly by the noumenon and partly by the subject, and varying according to the constitution of the subject. One person says that Christ is good and Ivan bad; but another may hold that Ivan is good and Christ bad. Each has an accurate cognition of his own sentiment; but neither has any knowledge of the noumena. The truth of the judgments is in both cases merely relative. Relatively to one sort of subject Christ is good and Ivan bad; relatively to another sort Ivan is good and Christ bad; and neither class of subjects is entitled to say: My constitution is right, and yours is wrong. And even if all mankind agreed in regarding as true certain moral judgments or principles, we should be no nearer the attainment of absolute truth; since judgments which are true in relation to man may be false in relation to angels or to God, or to beings inhabiting distant portions of the stellar Universe.

Some philosophers admit that there is *de facto* a certain moral standard binding at present on all men living on the earth; but they do not hold that this standard is permanent, universal, absolute. Ten thousand years hence men may be regulated by a very different standard. At the present time the inhabitants of Jupiter, or of distant parts of the stellar regions, or angels, may be regulated by moral standards inconceivably different from the one now valid on earth. Thus according to this view our moral ideas and reason are merely regu-

lative; they are fit to guide us practically during our present life, but they cannot afford to us any knowledge or conception of the absolute morality of God.

A doctrine of this kind has been thought by some theologians to offer great advantages for the defence of orthodox dogma and the refutation of Rationalists. A staple objection urged by these against several theological doctrines is, that they are repugnant to our moral sense, since they ascribe to God a character not conformable to our idea of goodness. Such objections, it is thought, can be summarily disposed of, if it can be shown that the truth of our moral judgments is relative, not absolute; that they merely tell us what is right or wrong according to a human standard, not what is right or wrong according to the principles of the divine morality.

Doctrines of this nature have, as Mr. Mill observes, been frequently advocated by theologians ;* but lately they have attracted especial attention on account of the vigour and ability with which they have been urged by Mr. Mansel in his celebrated Bampton Lectures.

One ecclesiastical dogma which is often objected

* "That we cannot understand God; that his ways are not our ways; that we cannot scrutinise or judge his counsels,—propositions which, in a reasonable sense of the terms, could not be denied by any Theist,—have often before been tendered as reasons why we may assert any absurdities and any moral monstrosities concerning God, and miscall them Goodness and Wisdom."—Mill's *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 90.

to on the grounds above mentioned is the doctrine of Vicarious Punishment. This represents that men being sinful and guilty, and deserving eternal punishment, God, desiring to relieve them from this, inflicts punishment on an innocent substitute, and accepts this punishment in lieu of that merited by the guilty persons.* The claims of justice being thus satisfied, the guilt of the sinners is expiated; God is reconciled to them, treats them with favour, and, provided they believe that their guilt has thus been expiated, confers upon them everlasting bliss.

A great number of writers have at various times objected strongly to this doctrine. Some of the principal objections which have been urged against it are quoted by Mr. Mansel in his Bampton Lectures.

Socinus, quoted by him, says: "Quid enim iniquius quam insontem pro sontibus puniri, præsertim cum ipsi sontes adsunt, qui ipsi puniri possunt?" Froude, also quoted by Mr. Mansel, objects on very similar grounds: "That each should have his exact due is *just*—is the best for himself. That the consequence of his guilt should be transferred from him to one who is innocent (although that innocent one be himself willing to accept it), whatever else it be, is not *justice*."

Coleridge also objects to the doctrine in question. "Is it possible," he asks, "to assent to the

* What is here said of men generally is by some theologians said only of the Elect.

doctrine of redemption as at present promulgated, that the moral death of an unoffending being should be a consequence of the transgression of humanity and its atonement?"

Some theologians combat these objections by urging that the principle of Vicarious Punishment does not shock the human sense of justice; but on the contrary recommends itself to it. It is asserted that this principle was employed in the education of James I.; that when this prince committed a misdemeanour, he was punished not *in propriâ personâ*, but by proxy—a flogging being inflicted on a boy who was kept for the purpose.*

Further, it is pointed out that this principle is extensively used in China. In a recent article in the *Fortnightly Review* Sir J. Bowring gives some interesting particulars concerning this. He says:

"As was said of old time, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' so the Chinese still recognise the principle that the penalty to be paid for a crime need not be visited on the criminal himself; but that the substitution of an innocent for a guilty person to bear the award of the law may satisfy all the demands of justice. In the embarrassments of the imperial treasury during the last war, proclamations of the emperor frequently appeared in the *Pekin Gazette*, authorising the commutation of the judicial sentences which inflicted personal punishment by the payment of sums of money, to be

* I think I have seen a similar statement concerning the education of Charles I.

estimated according to the gravity of the offence and the rank or opulence of the offender. Men are to be found as candidates for the scaffold when a large remuneration is offered for the sacrifice of life. To such a sacrifice posthumous honour is frequently attached; a family is rescued from poverty, and enters on the possession of comparative wealth."

"In the history of the intercourse of the East India Company with the Chinese, it will be found that the authorities were never satisfied with the averment that the individual charged with offences could not be found; they always insisted that some English subject could be found, and delivered over to the penalties of the law. They invariably took high ground, asserted that the laws of China must be respected in China, and that those laws provided a certain and always applicable punishment, by which the demands of justice might and ought to be satisfied. They turned a deaf ear to the representation that, according to European law, the individual who had committed a crime was the only proper person to be punished for that crime; and considered it a sort of 'barbarian' notion that any crime should be passed over without being followed by the appropriate penalty visiting somebody or other."

These examples, however, by no means satisfy the Rationalist objectors, who contend that though the principle in question may be recognised by the Chinese and by other nations, it is still essentially

unjust. Suppose, in England, a Greenacre, or Palmer, or Pritchard, having been convicted of a murder, were allowed to purchase a substitute who should be hung in his stead, would such a proceeding, they ask, be tolerated? would it be held that the majesty of law was vindicated, and the claims of justice satisfied? or would it not be felt that one grievous wrong was added to another? This sentiment of reasonable Englishmen is, they contend, correct; and that of the Chinese mistaken and barbarous.

Some theologians feel that the mode of defence above considered is very precarious, and accordingly think it better to adopt a different one, founded on the doctrine of relativity. They admit that, according to the standard of human reason, the English principle is correct, and the Chinese wrong; that, in the human administration of justice, the person who has committed a crime is the only person on whom the punishment of the crime ought to be inflicted. But this, they urge, is no objection to the theological dogma, since human morality is merely relative; and consequently the principles of human and divine justice may be essentially different. Vicarious punishment may be unjust according to the standard of human reason; but we cannot hence infer that it is incompatible with the principles of divine justice.

Again, Rationalists object to the doctrine which asserts that true believers — a small portion of mankind — are saved, while the rest of the human

race is consigned to everlasting torment. This doctrine has been taught with great zeal by many theologians. Tertullian, in a well-known passage quoted by Mr. Lecky, represents the spectacle of the sufferings of the damned as one of the chief delights enjoyed by the elect in heaven. "How shall I wonder! how shall I laugh! how shall I rejoice! how shall I triumph, when I behold so many and such illustrious kings, who were said to have mounted into heaven, groaning with Jupiter their god in the lowest darkness of hell! Then shall the tragedians exert their vocal powers more loudly, under the stimulus of their own calamity. Then will the actors be seen to advantage, rendered nimbler and more supple by the heat. . . . . Compared with such spectacles, with such subjects of triumph as these, what can prætor or consul, quæstor or priest, afford? and even now faith can bring them near, imagination can depict them as present."*

St. Thomas Aquinas, a very placid saint, quite free from the impetuosity of the fervid African, teaches a similar doctrine concerning the enjoyment which the elect will derive from witnessing the torments of the damned. He pronounces "Beati in regno cœlesti videbunt pœnas damnatorum, UT BEATITUDO ILLIS MAGIS COMPLACEAT."† And this doctrine was considered perfectly ortho-

* See Lecky's History of Rationalism, vol. i. p. 356.

† Quoted by Mr. Lecky, History of Rationalism, vol. i. p. 350.

dox, and held by many eminent theologians and saints.

Now, say Rationalists, we refuse to believe that God and saints in heaven can derive pleasure from such a source. We cannot think that they have tastes analogous to those of Gilles de Laval and Ivan; so that a relish is added to their delights by the contemplation of agony in others. We cannot believe that, under the governance of an omnipotent and beneficent Being, a large portion of the Universe should be peopled by wretched beings who live in everlasting sin and torment, and that this should contribute to the glory of God and the enjoyment of his saints.

But all these difficulties are summarily silenced, if it can be shown that the human standard of morality is not absolute; that the finite mercy and goodness of man may be very different from the infinite mercy and goodness of God; and that the mercy and goodness of the beatified elect may resemble the divine, not the human type.

Another doctrine, which has been taught by theologians, and censured by Rationalists, is that which declares that Baptism is necessary to salvation, and that infants who die unbaptised are damned. This doctrine has been zealously taught by theologians of the highest repute. St. Augustine's labours in enforcing it are well known. He refused to listen to the speculation that the infants went to a separate region, less terrible than the abode of Satan and his company; maintaining that

they went to hell in the strictest sense, and descended into everlasting fire. Mr. Lecky gives references to St. Augustine's teaching on this subject, and he also quotes the following statement of the doctrine from St. Fulgentius:

"Be assured, and doubt not, that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mother's womb and have there died, or who, having been just born, have passed away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism, administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire: for although they have committed no sin by their own will, they have nevertheless drawn with them the condemnation of original sin by their carnal conception and nativity."*

It has been ruled by some divines that the infants sentenced to this doom retain in the infernal regions their tiny dimensions and feeble locomotive powers; so that, as they insist, there are "infants not a span long crawling on the floor of hell."

Some theologians do not consider it perfectly certain that infants who die unbaptised are damned; but they regard it as very probable, and censure those who refuse to admit this, as rash and dogmatising. Others do not hold that all infants who die unbaptised are damned, since they think it possible that some of them may be elect. According to their doctrine, a portion of the infants in

* Lecky's History of Rationalism, vol. i. p. 397.

question are saved and a portion damned. Rationalists object to these doctrines as to the preceding one, on the ground that they ascribe to God conduct which shocks our ideas of mercy, justice, and goodness. Nor do the advocates of the doctrines in question seek to deny this; on the contrary, they sometimes dwell on the point with triumph. Pascal says: "Qu'y a-t-il de plus contraire aux règles de notre misérable justice que de damner éternellement un enfant incapable de volonté pour un péché où il paroit avoir eu si peu de part, qu'il est commis six mille ans avant qu'il fut en être? Certainement rien ne nous heurte plus rudement que cette doctrine, et cependant sans ce mystère, le plus incompréhensible de tous, nous sommes incompréhensibles à nous-mêmes."*

We are thus, it is thought, reduced to the following pass: either we must deny the doctrine concerning baptism and original sin, so generally taught by the Church and divines, or we must assent to the doctrine of the Relativists; viz. that the mercy and goodness of man may be very different from the infinite goodness and mercy of God.

Another doctrine taught by many theologians is that concerning Predestination and Election. This affirms that whereas all mankind are in their own nature totally devoid of goodness, God, by an act of undeserved favour, elects a portion of them to be partakers of everlasting bliss, while he does not so elect the others; it seeming to him right

* Quoted by Mr. Lecky from the Pensées, chap. iii. § 8.

and fit that these latter should not be saved, and should pass to everlasting torment. He is supposed to actuate the elect by his grace, so that they believe aright, and are thus justified; but, as it is not designed that the non-elect shall be saved, he does not influence them in like manner; he either does not act on them at all, or he acts upon them in such a manner that the grace is not operative; so that right belief is not produced, and their hearts remain hardened.

These doctrines have been taught by very eminent theologians—by St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and a great many others. Hamilton quotes the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, which declares that "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."*

Thus, according to this doctrine, the salvation of the elect and the damnation of the reprobate have been ordained unchangeably from all eternity, and when a man is born into the world his fate is irrevocably determined. And it is further taught, by a general consensus, that the number of the reprobate predestined to damnation greatly exceeds that of the elect predestined to salvation.

Hamilton remarks that the Westminster Confession of Faith agrees in teaching the same doc-

* Hamilton's Dissertations, appended to his edition of Reid, p. 977.

trine. And Mr. Young quotes from this Confession the following declaration:

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death."

And again:

"The rest of mankind" (*i. e.* all the human race except the elect) "God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will .... to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice."*

Luther says: "Hic est fidei summus gradus, credere illum esse .... justum, qui suâ voluntate nos necessario damnabiles facit."†

The theologians who hold that the damnation of the reprobate is unchangeably ordained from all eternity by the wise and holy counsel of God, plead in its support the authority of Scripture, especially statements of St. Paul such as the following:

"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy....

* The Life and Light of Men, p. 492.

† Concerning Luther's statements on the subject, see Hamilton's Discussions, pp. 505-510.

"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and *whom he will he hardeneth*. . . .

"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? . . . Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

"Hath not the potter power over the clay, *of the same lump* to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory?"*

It is particularly urged that the elect are not chosen on account of any merit or good quality in themselves, but entirely by the undeserved favour of God. As the potter, taking clay of *the same lump*, converts a portion of it into honourable vessels, and a portion of it into mean vessels, so, it is contended, God, taking human beings of the same quality, equally destitute of merit, converts some of them, by his grace, into vessels of glory, while he does not treat the others in the same way.

Here again Rationalists raise objections. Let it be, say they, that the potter treats the clay with which he works entirely according to his own good will and pleasure; fashioning some portions of it

* St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chap. ix. verses 15-23.

into pots or pipkins, and some portions, of no better quality, into beautiful vases. We do not blame his procedure. But the circumstance which, in our eyes, justifies this arbitrary handling on the part of the potter is, that the material fashioned by him is unconscious, not capable of happiness and misery. Suppose that the clay manipulated by him were conscious, and that he formed some of it into happy and some into miserable vessels. A difficulty would then be imported into the matter which did not previously exist. And if the happiness and misery of the vessels resulting from the different modes of treatment were everlasting, the difficulty would be increased. Under such circumstances, a vessel of wrath, doomed to everlasting misery, could hardly feel that it had been justly treated. It would naturally ask, "Why was I made a vessel of wrath, eternally wicked and wretched, when other pieces of clay, of exactly the same quality, have been made vessels of glory, and enjoy everlasting happiness?" And if it was told, "You have no right to complain, for you have been entirely made by the potter, and the thing formed has no right to complain of the person who formed it," it could hardly be satisfied by such an answer; it could hardly be convinced thereby that its complaints were unreasonable, or that the procedure of the potter displayed benevolence and justice.

The doctrine which asserts that God has a perfect right to deal as he pleases with his own, and that the thing formed has no right to complain of

him that formed it, is strongly held by some Mahometan theologians. Mr. Palgrave mentions a tradition current in the East, and much admired by the Wahabees, which says that "when God resolved to create the human race, he took into his hands a mass of earth, the same whence all mankind were to be formed, and in which they, after a manner, preexisted; and having then divided the clod into two equal portions, he threw the one half into hell, saying, 'These to eternal fire, and I care not;' and projected the other half into heaven, adding, 'And these to Paradise, and I care not.'"*

In this statement God is represented as ordaining the damnation of men with *insouciance;* whereas in the Scotch Confession he is represented as doing so by a most wise and holy counsel. But the Mahometan asserts quite as strongly as the Calvinist that God's procedure in the matter is perfectly wise and holy. And if the goodness of God is essentially different from that of wise and holy men, carelessness about the fate of his creatures may be perfectly compatible with his wisdom and holiness. His wisest and holiest course may be to refrain from electing vast multitudes of his creatures, and to ordain unchangeably their everlasting wickedness and torment, without for one moment disturbing on such an account his own blissful serenity.

Another difference between the two doctrines

* Palgrave's Travels in Arabia, vol. i. p. 367.

may be noted in this, that according to the Mahometans, half the lump of clay is sent to heaven and half to hell; whereas, according to the Christian predestinarians, the number of persons sent to hell greatly exceeds that of the saved, who are but a select few, a very small portion of the human race.

The objections urged by Rationalists against the dogmas of Predestination and Election present grave difficulties so long as it is assumed that divine goodness and human goodness are identical, or closely alike. But the Relativist Theologians, who regard the divine morality as very different from the human, make light of them. They even welcome the difficulties set forth, and press them into the service of their theory. How, they ask, could a Being, animated with goodness and mercy, according to the human notion of those qualities, unchangeably ordain the everlasting wickedness and torment of unnumbered millions of his creatures? How could a Being, animated with human benevolence and compassion, "harden whom he will"? for how could he will or desire to harden any human heart? How could he make, or suffer to be made, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction; *i. e.* fitted for the companionship of devils and everlasting wickedness? By the mere movement of his will he could with the greatest ease make this same material a vessel of mercy; for the elect, whom he prepares for everlasting glory, are not in their own nature a whit better than the

reprobate. If he conferred on both an equal measure of his grace, acting in an equally efficient manner, both would believe and be converted with equal facility. Of course, if his goodness and compassion were identical with the human qualities styled by those names, he would act on all efficiently, so that all would believe and be saved. As he does not act in this way, it is sufficiently evident that his benevolence cannot be the same as the human. Thus, they contend, it is conclusively shown that St. Paul and Mr. Mansel perfectly agree; and that we cannot controvert the latter without impugning the authority of the former.

We thus see the important bearing of the doctrine of relativity on theology. The Rationalist objects to certain doctrines, taught as revealed truths of great importance, relying on the authority of his moral sense or reason. The Relativist rebuts these objections, by challenging the authority of the tribunal; alleging that the moral reason, like the senses and intellect, affords merely relative truth; that though valid in relation to man, it is not necessarily valid in relation to all persons. It is not, therefore, he contends, competent to sit in judgment on statements of a professed revelation concerning the moral nature and conduct of God. The right course, he contends, is not to consider whether the doctrines in question approve themselves to our moral reason, but to examine whether they rest on the authority of teachers whose mission is duly accredited by

miracles. If there is historical evidence to show that such is the case, the doctrines ought to be submissively accepted, and the cavils urged on the pretended authority of the moral reason ought to be overruled.

This mode of proceeding is likened to the inductive or Baconian method, as distinguished from the *à priori* or ontological method.

The examination of the issue thus raised between the Rationalist and the Relativist Theologian pertains to Metaphysics; and such being the case, it cannot rightly be deemed that Metaphysics are uninteresting or frivolous.

In support of the relativist doctrine, Mr. Mansel particularly claims the authority of Bishop Butler; and if he could make good this claim, he would do much to fortify the influence of his own teaching at Oxford. Let us then examine for a while whether Butler does really affirm the mere relativity of moral truth and knowledge.

Butler advocates in a most unflinching manner the doctrine of vicarious punishment, contending that God may transfer the penalty of guilt from the offender to an innocent person; and that he makes large use of this principle in his government of the Universe. At the same time Butler does not appear to suppose that vicarious punishment is conformable to the principle of human justice. He does not appear to think, like the Chinese, that if a person has committed a murder, it would be proper in a human magistrate to hang or decapitate

a substitute in his stead. Had he been tutor to James the First, he would not, we may be almost certain, have inflicted the floggings which his pupil might have merited on the back of any other boy.

Every where he seems to recognise as the principle of human equity, that set forth by Ezekiel—that one person shall not bear the iniquity of another; that the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Accordingly he treats the dogma of vicarious punishment as one not to be received on the evidence of reason, but solely on the authority of external testimony. We cannot conceive or understand *how* it can satisfy justice to punish the innocent instead of the guilty; but if there is external evidence showing that God actually is propitiated by vicarious punishment, it is our duty to believe *that* such is the case, however improbable the fact might previously have appeared to us. And to support this view Butler endeavours to show that we are constantly compelled to believe, by external evidence, what *à priori*, to the eye of reason, appears grossly improbable. He considers himself to have proved "that real internal improbabilities, which rise even to moral certainty, are overcome by the most ordinary testimony;"* and further, "that we scarce know what are improbabilities," when we come to consider the divine

* Analogy, part ii. chap. 3.

government and administration of justice; subjects so vastly above our reach.

Mr. Mansel is well entitled to contend that Butler in this reasoning (which constitutes the critical part of the *Analogy*) proceeds on the principles which he has himself advocated in his Bampton Lectures. Since Butler holds that the divine wrath can be appeased by vicarious punishment, and that sin can thus be atoned for, while he holds that such a principle is not fit to regulate the human administration of justice, and is not sanctioned by human reason, he cannot (Mr. Mansel may fairly say) deny the doctrine taught in the Bampton Lectures; that the human idea of justice is relative, not absolute; that though fitted to regulate our conduct while on earth, it is by no means identical with the justice of God; not competent to measure it, or to give us knowledge concerning it. And as the idea of justice is a fundamental idea of morality, if human justice is merely relative, human morality cannot be absolute. And thus if Butler recognises the relativity of the former, he may fairly be held to teach implicitly the relativity of moral truth.

On other occasions, however, Butler proceeds on the supposition that certain moral principles cognisable by us are absolute, universal. Thus he pronounces that as the world is under the government of a righteous Being, we are justified in holding that finally and upon the whole every one shall

receive according to his personal deserts.* Here he quite abandons the doctrine of relativity, since he assigns to the principle that every body ought on the whole to be treated according to his personal deserts, an absolute or universal character; and considers that it is binding on God, as well as on man.

This is quite contrary to Mr. Mansel's doctrine. According to it the principle in question is merely relative and regulative, and cannot be considered binding on God. He might treat some men according to their personal deserts—according to the Law; while he might treat others much better than they deserve, under a dispensation of grace, superseding the action of the Law. He might confer on this favoured class bliss of an exalted kind, not at all due to their merits. Though they might have little or no merit, and a great deal of demerit, yet he might impute their sins to Christ, and impute the merits of Christ to them; and might treat them as if they merited heavenly bliss, though really they did not do so. And he might treat them in this manner not merely for a short time, but through all eternity. And if it were objected that the procedure thus attributed to God were unjust, as not treating people on the whole according to their personal deserts, this objection,

* "The world's being under the righteous government of God does indeed imply that finally and upon the whole every one shall receive according to his personal deserts." Butler's *Analogy*, Part ii. chap. v.

conformably to Mr. Mansel's teaching, would be summarily overruled, as founded on the erroneous supposition that the human notion of justice is fit to measure the absolute justice of God.

But, according to Butler, if such doctrines are taught as articles of a professed revelation, we are entitled to reject them on the ground that divine justice is like the human in this important respect; that, on the whole, it treats every one according to his personal deserts.*

Similarly, if we were taught, that two men being equally devoid of merit, God elects one to glory, and actuates him efficiently by his grace, while he never so treats the other, according to Mr. Mansel's principle we should not be authorised to criticise or reject this doctrine, while according

* Mr. Mansel specially examines the supposition that God cannot forgive sins freely and fully, finally exempting the sinner from their deserved penalties; that he is bound to treat every one, on the whole, according to strict justice, without grace or favour, so that ultimately every person shall receive the recompense exactly appropriate to his personal deserts. He condemns this view of the case as open to a great number of objections, and considers it to be based on the same erroneous principle which vitiates generally the procedure of the vulgar Rationalists: viz. the assumption that the human idea of justice is adequate to measure the morality and justice of God. He adduces many examples of assertions of like character, blaming them as specimens of the hardihood of human ignorance. (See Bampton Lectures, Lect. vii. pp. 212-217.) Thus it would appear that if Mr. Mansel's principles are correct, the great Butler, generally considered so cautious, has made a serious *faux pas;* has fallen into the errors of the vulgar Rationalism, and afforded a notable example of the hardihood of human ignorance.

to Butler's principle we should be authorised to do so.

Again, if we are taught, that the personal deserts of two infants being equally null, one of them is taken to heaven, because it has been baptised, while the other, being unbaptised, passes to hell, according to Mr. Mansel's principle we could not condemn such teaching, while according to Butler's we could.

It appears, therefore, that Mr. Mansel is justified to some extent in claiming the support of Butler's authority, but not entirely so. It appears that on some occasions, and at very critical portions of his argument, Butler adopts Mr. Mansel's principles, holding that the reason of man is not competent to sit in judgment on statements concerning the moral nature and conduct of God; and that the principles of human and divine morality may be exceedingly different. But it also appears that on some occasions he assumes with great confidence that certain moral principles cognised by us are absolute: binding not merely on man as man, but on all beings capable of morality, and particularly on God. He thus, without any apparent scruple, adopts the very principle which Mr. Mansel condemns as the fundamental error of Rationalism, to prove the illegitimacy of which is the main object of his celebrated Lectures.

Under such circumstances, Butler's authority cannot be claimed effectively either by the Relativist or the Absolutist. We may infer that the

question of relativity had not been brought to a distinct issue in his mind. Had it been so, we can scarcely doubt that he would have treated the subject in a more efficacious and instructive manner.

CHAPTER III.

The doctrine of Relativity was no stranger to the subtle Greek mind. According to Plato, it was held by Protagoras in a very thorough-going manner, being expressed by him in the compendious formula, *πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος*. And Protagoras and his followers appear to have taught it with great emphasis in its application to moral judgments, asserting that there was no absolute criterion of right and wrong; that what was right in relation to A might be wrong in relation to B. Similarly, according to Plato, it was frequently taught that right and wrong were constituted by the law of the state, and thus varied in different countries, or in the same country when the legislative public opinion changed.

The doctrine of Relativity adapted itself well to the requirements of the popular Hellenic orthodoxy. For the actions ascribed by this to the various deities—Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Venus, &c.—could not be defended, if judged by the human standard of morality; and it was thus almost

incumbent on the orthodox believer to hold that the human standard of morals was different from the divine.

Among the various opinions which have been pronounced concerning the philosophy of Socrates, it has been held that its object was to inculcate the doctrine of Relativity. But we cannot adopt this view unless we believe that Plato has entirely misrepresented his master's teaching. It is clear that Plato decidedly opposed the doctrine in question: and if Socrates taught it, why was Plato his admirer and disciple?

In the *Theætetus* Socrates is represented by Plato as strenuously combating the doctrine of Relativity in its application to morals; contending that right and wrong are not mere matters of opinion, but founded in the very nature of things. The gods, he declares, are just and holy: in proportion as man resembles them, he is good; in proportion as he is unlike them, he is bad.

Let us consider the following passage: "It is not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed; since it is a necessity that there should always exist something contrary to good: nor can it have its abode among the gods; consequently it must circulate about our mortal nature and this earthly region. On this account we ought to strive to escape as quickly as possible from this world to that. Now this escape consists in resembling God so far as lies in our power; and this resemblance takes place by becoming just and holy with intel-

ligence. . . . . God is never unjust in any way: on the contrary, he is consummately just; and nothing resembles him more than the man who becomes most eminently just. Upon this hangs the true ability of a man, or his worthlessness and unmanliness: for the knowledge of this is genuine wisdom and virtue; while the want of such knowledge is manifest ignorance and baseness."

"There are in the nature of things two exemplars, one divine and blessed, the other without God and miserable. . . . . The excess of their folly hinders them from perceiving that by their unjust mode of acting they are rendered like the latter, and unlike the former; of which accordingly they bear the penalty, by leading a life suitable to the type to which they are assimilated."

Again, let us consider the following passages in the *Apology:* "If on arriving at Hades, delivered from the so-called judges of earth, we find there real judges—those who are said to administer justice there, Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus, Triptolemus, and the other demigods who were just during their life, would the journey thither be an evil?"

"And you too, my judges, should be of good hope as regards death, and should think over thoroughly this capital truth, that there is no evil for the good man, neither during his life, nor after his death; and that his welfare is never disregarded by the gods."

Again, in the *Phædo* Socrates is represented as

saying: "Certainly, if I did not expect to find gods wise and good, and men who have died better than those who dwell here, I should be wrong in not grieving to die. But you should know that I hope to pass into the company of good men—though I cannot affirm this with full certainty; but that I shall arrive among gods, righteous rulers, of consummate goodness—this, if one can be certain of any thing of the kind, I undertake to affirm with the fullest confidence." In another passage he treats as ridiculous the supposition that a true philosopher, a man who really loves wisdom, and who firmly hopes to find wisdom in Hades, should be grieved to die.

Again, in another passage, he says that "the soul, the invisible principle, passes into another region, excellent, pure, invisible — rightly therefore called Hades—into the presence of the good and wise God; whither, if it please God, my soul will very soon journey."

It can hardly be supposed that the sentiments thus ascribed to Socrates were never really expressed by him, but were invented and put into his mouth by Plato. And if we assume that they really were expressed by Socrates, we cannot regard him as holding the doctrine of Relativity. Clearly he considers that there is a standard of right and wrong, of good and evil, which is constituted by the very nature of things, which cannot be altered by the opinions of men, nor even by the will of the gods. He does not hold that the

gods can make different standards for different places, regulating one class of beings by one standard, and another by another; but he holds that there is an eternal and absolute standard, valid throughout the whole universe; that in every place, and at every time, those who conform to a certain type resemble the gods, and partake of their nature, being thus wise and good; while those who depart from it become unlike the gods, and are so far unwise and bad. And conformably to this view he holds that if two persons judge differently concerning moral principles, concerning the nature of right and wrong, the case is not as when they judge differently concerning chocolate, one affirming that it is pleasant, and the other that it is unpleasant; but that on the contrary one of the persons judges *truly*, in conformity with fact and with the divine mind; while the other person judges *falsely*, in opposition to these.

Again, supposing the sentiments in question to have been rightly ascribed to Socrates, it is clear that he was what is often called an *à priori* speculator and transcendentalist ; not restricting his thoughts to the field of phenomena, but exercising them about matters quite beyond that field, and making with great confidence assertions which cannot be verified by physical experience. He did not regard reason as impotent in reference to such matters, nor did he look upon those who refuse to despair of philosophy as evincing error or infirmity. On the contrary, he regards despair of philosophy

as evincing these defects. He says, relatively to this point: "Let us above all things take heed that one misfortune does not befall us." "What misfortune?" asks Phædo. "Let us not," replies Socrates, "become misologues, as some persons become misanthropes; for no greater evil can befall a man than that of hating reason. Now misology and misanthropy arise from similar causes." He proceeds to explain that a person who has placed great confidence in those who did not deserve it, is led to believe that there is no honesty or goodness in men: whence arises misanthropy. Similarly a man who has placed confidence in reasonings which afterwards turn out to be unsound, is apt to conclude that reason is untrustworthy, and after much disputation may arrive at the conclusion, "that he has become very wise; that he has discovered, by peculiar lights, that neither in things nor in reasonings is there any thing true or stable." Would it not, he asks, be a deplorable thing that when reason is really trustworthy, we, having fallen into perplexity, should not attribute this to our own incapacity, but should shift the blame upon reason, and pass the rest of our lives in hating and calumniating it? "Let us then take care above all things that this evil does not befall us; and let us not allow ourselves to harbour the thought that perhaps there is nothing holy in reasoning."

Again, supposing the sentiments in question to have been really expressed by Socrates, it can hardly be doubted that he adopted the view some-

times spoken of as vulgar Rationalism, according to which reason is competent to sit in judgment on statements of a professed revelation concerning the moral nature and actions of God. For it is sufficiently clear that the wise and holy gods in whom he believed were very different from the gods of the popular mythology—from Jupiter, Bacchus, Venus, &c.—and that he must have dissented very largely from the popular orthodoxy of his day. No doubt his sentiments on this point transpired in various ways. He would thus incur blame from two different classes, and run counter to two different feelings. He would shock the conservative sentiment which reverenced ancient dogma and established religion; while he would also wound popular susceptibilities, as not treating with due respect the opinions of an enlightened Demos. It is probable that even at the present day prejudices arising from these sources continue to be entertained against him.

It does not seem, therefore, that the doctrine of Relativity can claim the authority of Socrates as on its side. However, the doctrine in question, and the philosophical scepticism founded on it, played no inconsiderable part in the schools of ancient philosophy, and numbered among their advocates speculators of distinguished talent.

The middle ages were not on the whole congenial to philosophical scepticism; but the theological disputes accompanying the Reformation were fitted to revive it, and it appears with con-

siderable force in Montaigne, Pascal, and Bayle. The inquiries of Locke naturally led to a closer study of the questions concerning knowledge; and the doctrine of Relativity, with its sceptical answers to these questions, reappeared with vivacity in Hume. Nevertheless it came on the philosophical world with something of the *éclat* of novelty as set forth by Kant, being expounded by him, in his critique of the speculative faculties, in a more rigorous and methodical manner than had previously been done.

Kant teaches in a very emphatic manner that we can know only phenomena, which according to him are produced by the joint agency of two coefficients, the external thing or noumenon, and the mind or subject. The phenomenon thus produced may be altogether unlike the noumenon. Phenomena are cognised by us as in space and time; but we must not conclude that the real things or noumena exist in space and time.

For instance, in common parlance, we have a knowledge of the moon: by the joint use of our senses and our reason, we know that it has an approximately spherical form. Kant does not deny that there is a real thing, external to our mind, which is concerned in producing this knowledge. This may be called the real or noumenal moon, the moon as it really is. This noumenon, acting in conjunction with our faculties, produces a phenomenon, which we cognise as spherical, or approximately so; but we are not entitled to affirm

that the real moon, the noumenon, is spherical, nor even that it is extended at all.

Similarly, phenomena cognised by us suffer change in time: a tree which was small grows to be large; a horse which was sound and swift becomes lame and slow: but we are not entitled to affirm that the things as they really are (the noumena) suffer any change in time, nor even that they exist in time at all.

Nor again are we entitled to affirm that the same noumena will produce the same phenomena in all minds or subjects. Let the constitution of the subject be altered, while the non ego or noumenon remains the same, and the phenomenon produced and cognised may be entirely different. The noumenal sun and moon, acting on the faculties of other beings, may produce phenomena wholly unlike the sun and moon as cognised by us.

Again, Kant examines the conceptions of the understanding, such as those of unity, plurality, reality, causality, &c. and comes to the conclusion that they are valid only for the cognition of phenomena; that if we apply them to noumena, our procedure is illegitimate.

Having, as he conceives, established these results, Kant sweeps away in the most summary manner the dogmatic philosophies of Leibnitz, Wolf, Des Cartes, &c. earning thereby the title of Alleszermalmer. He condemns these systems as invalid, on the ground that they applied the con-

ceptions of the understanding to noumena, instead of restricting their application to phenomena. Dogmatic theology is struck down at once; for God is a noumenon, not a phenomenon, and cannot be legitimately clothed with the conceptions of the understanding, nor reasoned about by their aid.

The most important features in Kant's philosophy are well set forth by Schopenhauer, who greatly admired Kant, and studied his system much more fully than is usually done.* I give some extracts from his account of it.

"Kant's grösstes Verdienst ist die Unterscheidung der Erscheinung vom Dinge an sich,—auf Grund der Nachweisung dass zwischen den Dingen und uns immer noch der Intellekt steht, weshalb sie nicht nach dem, was sie an sich selbst seyn mögen, erkannt werden können."†

"Wie nun also Kant's, auf die oben dargelegte Weise gefasste Sonderung der Erscheinung vom Dinge an sich in ihrer Begründung an Tiefsinn und Besonnenheit Alles was je dagewesen, weit ubertraf; so war sie auch in ihren Ergebnissen unendlich folgenreich. Den ganz aus sich selbst, auf eine völlig neue Weise, von einer neuen Seite, und auf einem neuen Wege gefunden stellte er hierin dieselbe Wahrheit dar, die schon Platon

* At the same time many of his criticisms of Kant may be regarded as very questionable.

† Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille, &c. (Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie), vol. i. p. 494.

unermüdlich wiederholt, und in seiner Sprache meistens so ausdrückt: diese, den Sinnen erscheinende Welt habe kein wahres Seyn, sondern nur ein unaufhörliches Werden; sie sei, und sei auch nicht, und ihre Auffassung sei nicht sowohl eine Erkenntniss, als ein Wahn.

"Die selbe Wahrheit, wieder ganz anders dargestellt, ist auch eine Hauptlehre der Veden und Puranas, die Lehre von der Maja . . . . Kant nun aber drückte nicht allein die selbe Lehre auf eine völlig neue und originelle Weise aus, sondern machte sie, mittelst der ruhigsten und nüchternsten Darstellung, zur erweisenen und unstreitigen Wahrheit; wahrend sowohl Platon, als die Inder, ihre Behauptungen blos auf eine allgemeine Anschauung der Welt gegründet hatten, . . und sie mehr mythisch und poetisch, als philosophisch und deutlich darstellten. . . . . Solche deutliche Erkenntniss und ruhige, besonnene Darstellung dieser traumartigen Beschaffenheit der ganzen Welt ist eigentlich die Basis der ganzen Kantischen Philosophie, ist ihre Seele, und ihr allergrösstes Verdienst. . . . . Alle vorhergehende occidentalische Philosophie, gegen die Kantische als unsäglich plump erscheinend, hatte jene Wahrheit verkannt, und eben daher eigentlich immer wie im Traume geredet. Erst Kant weckte sie plötzlich aus diesem; daher auch nannten die letzten Schläfer (Mendelssohn) ihn den Alleszermalmer."*

* Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille, &c. (Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie), vol. i. p. 496.

The above account well sets forth the distinctive features of Kant's idealism. According to this doctrine, the intellect stands between us and the real object, preventing us from attaining a knowledge of the thing which actually exists. The objects in space and time, which ordinary persons regard as real, and speak of as stones, houses, trees, sun, moon, &c. are according to this view phenomena which we ourselves in a great measure produce, conformably to the laws of our peculiar structure. If this structure were different, the phenomena produced and cognised would be different. Thus the world, commonly regarded as real, is according to this view "traumartig," dream-like, produced to a great extent by ourselves. As Schopenhauer remarks, this doctrine has much resemblance to that of the Vedantists, which represents the phenomenal world as Maya, illusion.

Idealists sometimes strive to explain away their idealism, as agreeing with the belief of ordinary persons. Thus Berkeley, having advanced positions apparently similar to those of the Vedantists, labours afterwards to prove that he quite agrees with ordinary people, and that he denies only an unintelligible doctrine of certain philosophers. But it would be vain to attempt such a course with the idealism of Kant. There can be no question that it differs from the ordinary belief, that it is not merely a novel mode of stating a commonplace opinion. Ordinary persons certainly believe that

the real sun and moon exist in space, and have a certain figure; and when they are told that this figure belongs merely to a phenomenon created by their minds; that the real sun and moon may have no figure, and may not exist in space,—they regard such a view as extraordinary, as scarcely conceivable or intelligible.

Similarly, when, according to common parlance, a certain event happens in time,—when a man, for instance, grows from childhood to old age, or loses an arm or loses his reason,—ordinary persons suppose that the real man suffers a change in time; and if they are told that what has undergone change is only a phenomenon which they themselves have created; that the man or thing as it really is may not have changed in time, and may not exist in time at all,—they are puzzled, and regard such a doctrine as contrary to common sense.

Another important part of Kant's system is his doctrine concerning Reason. He distinguishes Vernunft (usually translated Reason) from Verstand (usually translated Understanding). According to him the peculiar characteristic of Vernunft, or Reason, is, that it seeks "das Unbedingte" and "das Absolut"--the Unconditioned and the Absolute.

By this he does not mean that Reason seeks a void abstraction, an empty adjective, but that she seeks something which is unconditioned, something which is absolute. As we have seen, this mode of

using such expressions is sanctioned by the authority of the best philosophers, and is perfectly legitimate.

With respect to "das Absolut," Kant notices that the word "Absolut" has become ambiguous by unsettled use; and he specifies the sense in which he himself designs to employ it, viz. to denote that which is valid in all relations, as opposed to that which is valid only in some particular respect, or under certain restrictions.

In order to understand his statement, that Reason seeks "das Unbedingte," it is essential that we should understand what he means by the word "Bedingung." According to his use of language, whatever is indispensable to the existence of an object is a "bedingung" of that object. The "bedingungen" of a man's existence are all those things or circumstances which are indispensable in order that the man may exist; in the absence of any one of which the man will not exist. In the case of a man, the number of such "bedingungen" is manifestly very great. The "bedingungen" connected with a promise are all those circumstances or events in the absence of any one of which the promise will not be binding. The "bedingungen" of a proposition are those propositions on the truth of which its truth depends; so that if they are true, it is true; if otherwise, it is not true.

In considering a physical event, the aggregate of Bedingungen constitutes the Ursache or cause; which taking place, the effect necessarily takes

place. Schopenhauer points out this distinction between "Bedingung," condition, and "Ursache" or cause. He says: "Die verschiedenen einzelnen Bestimmungen, welche erst zusammengenommen die Ursache kompletiren und ausmachen, kann man die ursächlichen Momente, oder auch die Bedingungen nennen, und demnach die Ursache in solche zerlegen."* He points out that in ordinary parlance we frequently call one of the Bedingungen or conditions the cause. Thus if all the conditions necessary to the production of a phenomenon exist, with the exception of one, when this last condition comes into play, and the phenomenon accordingly is produced, we are apt to call this one condition the cause of the phenomenon. But such a mode of expression is not accurate: strictly speaking, the aggregate of Bedingungen or conditions is the true cause.†

* Ueber die vierfache Wurzel, &c. § 20.

† Mr. Mill, explaining the word "condition," says: "According to the best notion I can form of the meaning of 'condition,' either as a term of philosophy or of common life, it means that on which something else is contingent, or (more definitely) which being given, something else exists or takes place." (*Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 51.) The more definite explanation here given is open to some objection, as defining Cause (Ursache) rather than Condition (Bedingung). The total aggregate of conditions being given, the contingent event will exist or take place; but one condition or bedingung being given, this need not be so. What follows, however, shows that Mr. Mill takes precisely the same view of the meaning of "condition" as Schopenhauer, regarding the aggregate of the conditions as the cause. And in his work on Logic the same view is explained very fully. See *System of Logic*, vol. i. chap. v., On the Law of Causation, particularly p. 365.

Such being the meaning of the word "Bedingung" as used by Kant, there is no difficulty in understanding what he means by the words "bedingt" and "unbedingt." An event, A, is "bedingt," if its occurrence is contingent or dependent on something else, B; so that if B take place, A will take place; if otherwise, A will not take place. A proposition is "bedingt" if its truth depends on that of some other proposition; so that if proposition A is true, proposition B is true; if A is not true, B is not true. A promise is "bedingt" when the obligation to perform it is contingent or dependent on certain circumstances; so that if these events occur, the promise is binding; if otherwise, it is not.

From such a meaning of the word "bedingt" that of "unbedingt" necessarily follows. If an event is not contingent or dependent on any other event, it is "unbedingt." If the truth of a proposition does not depend on that of any other proposition, such a proposition is "unbedingt." If a Being is self-existent, *αὐτάρκης*,—if his existence is not contingent or dependent on the existence of any thing else,—such a Being is "unbedingt."

The word "unbedingt" or unconditional is frequently used not in a perfectly strict sense. Thus, in common parlance, a promise is said to be "unconditional," though the existence of many conditions is tacitly understood. But when theologians speak of the Divine Being as "unbedingt" or non-contingent in a strict sense, they consider that such

a Being does not exist in one place to the exclusion of another, or at one time to the exclusion of another, nor under certain circumstances to the exclusion of others. They hold that "das Unbedingte" exists under all change of circumstances; that no possible change of these can bring about its non-existence.

It is the more important to understand rightly the meaning attached by Kant to the word "bedingung," because the English word "condition," employed to translate it, is capable of expressing a different meaning. Sometimes the English word "condition" corresponds accurately to the German word "bedingung." Thus when we speak of the "conditions" of a promise, of a treaty, of a surrender, what we here call "conditions" are what a German would call "bedingungen." If we say that a promise is "conditional," the word "conditional" here is equivalent to the German word "bedingt." If we say that the surrender of a garrison was "unconditional," the word "unconditional" here is equivalent to the German word "unbedingt." But we very frequently use the word "condition" to signify not the *conditio sine quâ non*, but the internal state or mode of being of a thing: as when we talk of the condition of England, of the condition of a horse, of a prize-fighter, of a boating crew, of a picture, &c. The word "condition" thus used would not be translated in German by the word "bedingung." To say that the "bedingung" of wine or of a picture was good;

that a horse was in good "bedingung;" that the "bedingung" of a country was good or bad, with the view of expressing what is meant by the English word "condition" when used in cases of this kind, would not be German. In such cases a German would use the word "Zustand," "Lage," or some similar word.

The words "conditioned" and "unconditioned" are by no means usual; but the word "ill-conditioned" is familiar, and in this adjective condition bears the second of the senses above explained, viz. that of mode of being. An "ill-conditioned fellow" means a person whose internal state or disposition is bad. Accordingly when we hear of the "unconditioned" our thoughts are naturally directed to this meaning of the word "condition," and we are prone to interpret the expression as signifying that which has no mode of being at all—that of which no attribute or property can be predicated. It is obvious that this meaning is very different from the other, and that the statement, "God is unconditioned," will have a widely different purport according as one or the other sense of the term is used. In the former sense it will signify that there is nothing external to God which is a *sine quâ non* of his existence; that no change of circumstances can cause his non-existence. In the latter sense it will signify that God has no distinctive mode of Being, that he has no attributes, faculties, or properties. Both these propositions have been asserted by theologians; but they are

by no means identical; and a theologian may hold the former as true, while rejecting the latter as a pernicious error.

The above remarks concerning the meaning of words may perhaps seem censurable to some persons. "Why," they may exclaim, "grovel in the region of logic, and busy ourselves about terms, notions, conceptions, and ideas, when the main thing needed is to emancipate ourselves entirely from these, and to put ourselves in immediate and vital contact with that which is?" So long, however, as we are dealing with language, we cannot get out of the region of logic—λογική—nor disembarrass ourselves of notions, conceptions, intellections, ideas—functions indispensable to the use of language. Kant has endeavoured to communicate truth to our minds by means of language—by characters written in a book; and if we are to profit by his instructions, it is indispensable that we should understand the meaning which he has attached to his terms.

CHAPTER IV.

When we understand the meaning of the word "bedingung" as used by Kant, we shall not have difficulty in understanding his doctrine concerning Reason, asserting that it endeavours to find or attain "das Unbedingte."

When a person endowed with Reason looks at the various phenomena of Nature, he is not satisfied with simply observing them as isolated data, but he desires to grasp the data together in a system—to ascertain the laws of their connection. Accordingly when he perceives a phenomenon, he desires to know its "bedingungen" or conditions. And supposing him to have discovered these, by the same impulse of curiosity he desires to learn the conditions of these phenomena, the conditions of the conditions. Now it is supposable that in thus ascending from conditioned to condition we may ultimately reach a condition that is unconditioned, — something of which nothing else is a *sine quâ non*, which does not stand to any thing in

the relation of "bedingtes" to "bedingung." Or it may be that the regressus from conditioned to condition admits of no termination; in which case, Kant tells us, though each member of the series is conditioned, the totality of the series is unconditioned, since there exist no conditions beyond it on which it can depend. Thus, then, according to Kant, that insatiable curiosity of Reason which prompts it always to inquire for the cause of phenomena, which led Epicurus to ask, "And Chaos whence?" is a nisus to reach "das Unbedingte."

Evidently this is very different from a search after a meaningless abstraction.

As we have seen, according to Kant, an infinite series of conditioned events, and an uncaused first term, are both "unbedingt"—unconditioned. If we call an uncaused first term absolute, then, according to this doctrine, an infinite causal series, and an absolute commencement of such a series, are both "unbedingt"—unconditioned.

In a chain of demonstration, where one proposition is said to follow from another, Kant considers a like connection (viz. that of "bedingtes" to "bedingung") as existing between the propositions; and the search for the unconditioned is here the search for a first principle,—for a proposition whose truth does not depend on the truth of some anterior proposition.

Time is considered by Kant as a series, in which all past time is the "bedingung" (condition) of the

present moment. He says: "I can consider the present moment in relation to past time only as 'bedingt' (conditioned) . . . . since this moment comes into existence only through the past time, or rather through the passing of the past time." According to this view a totality of time, whether infinite or finite, would be "unbedingt"—unconditioned, since there would be no preceding time by which it would be "bedingt" or conditioned. So that in considering time, there is again, according to Kant, a series of conditions, and a search for the unconditioned—"das Unbedingte."

With respect to space, Kant points out that in apprehending it we measure it, and that this process is successive, takes place in time, and contains a series. In this series each portion of space successively added in thought is the "bedingung" of the limits of those previously thought; and thus the measurement of a space is to be viewed as a synthesis of a series of "bedingungen" or conditions. Accordingly a totality of space, whether infinite or finite, would be "unbedingt"—unconditioned, as in the case of time. And thus here again we find a series of conditions, and a search for the unconditioned.

A terminated space, beyond which there is no space, may be called an absolute space; and in like manner a terminated time, beyond which there is no time, may be called an absolute time.* If we adopt this phraseology, then, conformably with

* This phraseology is employed by Hamilton.

Kant's view, we may say that infinite space and absolute space, infinite time and absolute time, are both "unbedingt"—unconditioned.

When we consider the acts or volitions of a person, here again the relation of "bedingtes" to "bedingung" comes under discussion. On the one side it is held that the acts and volitions of a person called free are in reality "bedingt"—conditioned; that they depend on antecedents in such a way that, given the antecedents, the act or volition cannot but follow. On the other side it is held that a free act or volition does not stand to antecedents in the relation of "bedingtes" to "bedingung;" that the antecedents in two cases being precisely the same, the act or volition may be different. According to this latter view of the subject, the free acts or volitions of a person are "unbedingt"—unconditioned.

We have thus four principal topics in reference to which the relation of "bedingtes" to "bedingung" may be considered. It may be considered in reference to physical phenomena, to propositions to space and time, and to volitions or voluntary acts. These four cases are discussed at length by Schopenhauer in his treatise *Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde.* He points out that to these four different cases there correspond four different kinds of necessity, viz.

1. Physical necessity.
2. Logical necessity.
3. Mathematical necessity.

4. Moral necessity.

The existence of this latter kind of necessity is affirmed by Schopenhauer, who strongly maintains that acts and volitions commonly called free are conditioned, *i.e.* that given the antecedents, the act or volition cannot but ensue. But it is not recognised by many philosophers, who maintain that free acts or volitions are unconditioned.

From the above we see the very important part which the words "bedingt" and "unbedingt" play in the philosophy of Kant, and also the very important part which the notions, corresponding to the words as used by him, play in philosophy. Mr. Mill, after criticising Hamilton's usage of the word "unconditioned," pronounces that the word is an interloper in philosophy, and that it ought to be discarded. And indeed the word has been so used by many English writers as to produce a great amount of confusion. They have not distinguished the sense of the German word "Bedingung" from the more ordinary sense of the word "Condition," in which it corresponds to "Zustand" or "Lage:" the latter sense has been uppermost in their minds, and yet they have imagined the words "conditioned" and "unconditioned" thus used to be proper equivalents for the Kantian words "bedingt" and "unbedingt." They have thus produced results of a very chaotic kind, not calculated to add lustre to British metaphysics. But if we give up the words "conditioned" and "unconditioned," we ought to have some others capable of expressing the sense

which Kant and Schopenhauer attached to the words "bedingt" and "unbedingt."

Examining the procedure of Reason, in its endeavours to penetrate to the unconditioned, Kant finds that it becomes involved in a conflict of opposing theses; one asserting that the world has commenced in time, the other denying this; or, again, one asserting that the spacial extension of the world is infinite, the other denying this; and others of a like nature; each of these opposite theses being, as he asserts, maintainable with an equal show of reason, so that neither can definitely prevail. He calls this conflict "the Antinomy of Reason." He teaches that it arises from an illegitimate use of Reason,—viz. when, instead of applying the principles of the understanding to objects of possible experience, we try to extend their use beyond those boundaries. He says: "Wenn wir unsere Vernunft nicht blos zum Gebrauch der Verstandesgrundsätze auf Gegenstände der Erfahrung verwenden, sondern jene über die Grenze der letztern hinaus auszudehnen wagen, so entspringen vernünftelnde Lehrsätze, die in der Erfahrung weder Bestätigung hoffen, noch Widerlegung fürchten dürfen, und deren jeder nicht allein an sich selbst ohne Widerspruch ist, sondern sogar in der Natur der Vernunft Bedingungen seiner Nothwendigkeit antrifft, nur das unglücklicher Weise der Gegensatz eben so gültige und nothwendige Gründe der Behauptung auf seiner Seite hat."*

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Die Antinomie der Reinen Vernunft, 2 Abschnitt.

Censuring thus as illegitimate the "transcendent" use of Reason, Kant recognises as valid and fruitful its "immanent" use, when it is employed to order and systematise the cognitions obtained by experience. Used in this way, it constructs the various sciences, Astronomy, Zoology, Botany, &c. The possession of Reason, therefore, in a great measure distinguishes man from beasts, who, though endowed with Verstand (Understanding), cannot systematise the data afforded to them, as man does in elaborating sciences.

Kant teaches that there is a natural temptation to employ the ideas of Reason illegitimately, owing to a certain natural illusion, termed by him *transcendental illusion*, which disposes us to believe that these ideas, whose right use is purely immanent, can enable us to extend our cognitions beyond the limits of experience. Critical examination shows us that this appearance is illusory, and prevents us from being deceived by it; yet though *delusion* is thus prevented, *illusion* still remains. As examples of illusion thus existing without delusion, Kant instances the appearance of the sea, which seems to be higher at the horizon than near the shore, though we know that this is not the case; and again the appearance of the moon, which seems larger near the horizon than near the zenith, though we know both by measurement and by calculation that the appearance in question is illusory.

These views are expressed by Kant in a great

number of passages, of which the following may be quoted:

"The result of all the dialectical attempts of pure Reason not only confirms the truth of what we have already proved in our transcendental analytic, namely, that all inferences which would lead us beyond the limits of experience are fallacious and groundless, but it at the same time teaches us this important lesson, that human reason has a natural inclination to overstep these limits. . . . .

"Whatever is grounded in the nature of our powers will be found to be in harmony with the final purpose and proper employment of those powers, when once we have discovered their true direction and aim. We are entitled, therefore, to suppose that there exists a mode of employing transcendental ideas which is proper and *immanent;* although, when we mistake their meaning, and regard them as conceptions of actual things, their mode of application is *transcendent* and delusive. . . . . Thus all errors of misapplication are to be ascribed to defects of judgment, and *not to understanding or Reason.*"*

"I accordingly maintain that transcendental ideas can never be employed as constitutive ideas, that they cannot be conceptions of objects, and that, when thus considered, they assume a fallacious and dialectical character. But, on the other

* Critique of Pure Reason. On the Regulative Employment of the Ideas of Pure Reason. Conf. Meiklejohn's Translation. See Note A.

hand, they are capable of an admirable and indispensably necessary application to objects as regulative ideas, directing the understanding to a certain aim, the guiding lines towards which all its lines follow, and in which they all meet in one point. This point, though a mere idea (focus imaginarius) .... serves notwithstanding to give to these conceptions the greatest possible unity combined with the greatest possible extension. Hence arises the natural illusion which induces us to believe that these lines proceed from an object which lies out of the sphere of empirical cognition, just as objects reflected in a mirror appear to be behind it. But this illusion, *which we may hinder from imposing upon us*, is necessary and unavoidable if we desire to see, not only those objects which lie before us, but those which are at a great distance behind us. . . . If we review our cognitions in their entire extent, we shall find that the peculiar business of reason is to arrange them into a *system*, that is to say, to give them connection according to a principle."*

In the rest of the section Kant proceeds to explain the principles on which reason proceeds, when legitimately, *i. e. regulatively*, employed, in thus arranging our cognitions into a system, and elaborating the sciences.

In the next section Kant repeats the same teaching. He opens it with the following declaration:

"It is quite impossible that the ideas of the pure

* Critique of Pure Reason. Ibid. See Note B.

reason can be dialectical* in their own nature; it must be the mere abuse of them which causes them to generate in our minds a deceptive appearance.

"For," he proceeds to say, "they are constituted by the nature of our reason; and it is impossible that this supreme tribunal of all the rights and claims of speculation should itself be an original source of fallacies and deceptions. It is to be expected, therefore, that these ideas should have a genuine and legitimate aim. Nevertheless, the mob of Sophists raise against reason the cry of inconsistency and contradiction, and pour abuse on the government of that faculty whose constitution they cannot understand, while it is entirely to its beneficial influences that they owe the position and the intellectual culture which enable them to criticise and blame it."†

Afterwards again he says: "And now we can see clearly the result of all transcendental dialectic, and can accurately determine the real purpose of the ideas of the pure reason, which become dialectical solely from misunderstanding and want of due circumspection."‡

* It may be observed that Kant uses the word "dialectical" in a peculiar sense, connected with his doctrine of the Antinomies. He means by it not simply disputative or argumentative, but disputing about matters beyond the legitimate scope of reason (*i. e.* about things not in the field of experience), so that the disputation or reasoning is void and vain.

† Critique of Pure Reason. On the Ultimate End of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason. See Note C.

‡ Ibid. Ibid. See Note D.

Again:

"Thus pure Reason, which at first seemed to promise us nothing less than the extension of our cognition beyond the limits of experience, is found, when thoroughly examined, to contain nothing but regulative principles, the function of which is to introduce into our cognition a higher degree of unity than the empirical use of the understanding can compass. These principles, by placing the goal to which we approximate at so great a distance, enable us to elaborate to the highest degree the coördination of our cognitions into a systematic whole. But, on the other hand, if misunderstood, and employed as constitutive principles of transcendent cognition, they, by a brilliant but misleading illusion, produce an appearance of knowledge, accompanied by endless controversies and contradictions."*

Having thus shown the difference between the illegitimate and the legitimate use of Reason—the former "transcendent," seeking to transcend the limits of experience; the latter "regulative," or "immanent," not overstepping those limits, but seeking to systematise our empirical cognitions—Kant devotes the concluding portion of his work, the Methodenlehre, or doctrine of Method, to an examination of the principles which guide Reason in its *legitimate* use.

Such is the real nature of Kant's doctrine; and it is important to set it clearly forth, inasmuch as

* Critique of Pure Reason. Ibid. See Note E.

Sir W. Hamilton has wholly misrepresented it. He represents Kant as teaching that Reason, when *legitimately* exercised, is essentially *delusive;* whence, as he observes, the most pervading scepticism inevitably results; and he represents himself as correcting this erroneous doctrine, by discovering and showing that the antinomies expounded by Kant result only from an *illegitimate* use of Reason.

The following are passages from Hamilton's writings setting forth this view.

Speaking of Kant, Hamilton says:

"He endeavoured to evince that pure Reason, that Intelligence, is naturally, is necessarily repugnant with itself, and that speculation ends in a series of insoluble antilogies. In its highest potence, in its very essence, thought is thus infected with contradiction, and the worst and most pervading scepticism is the melancholy result. If I have done any thing meritorious in philosophy, it is in the attempt to explain the phenomena of these contradictions; in showing that they arise only when intelligence transcends the limits to which its legitimate exercise is restricted; and that within those bounds (the conditioned) natural thought is neither fallible nor mendacious—

'Neque decipitur, nec decipit umquam.'

If this view be correct, Kant's antinomies, with their consequent scepticism, are solved; and the human mind, however weak, is shown not to be the work of a treacherous Creator."*

* Lectures, vol. i. p. 402.

In another passage concerning Kant, after stating his doctrine relative to Phenomena and Noumena, Hamilton says:

"In accordance with this doctrine, he explicitly declares Reason (or Intelligence) to be essentially and of its own nature delusive; and thus more overtly than the others he supersedes (what constitutes the fundamental principle and affords the differential peculiarity of the doctrine of the conditioned) the distinction between Intelligence *within* its legitimate sphere of operation, impeccable, and Intelligence *beyond* that sphere, affording (by abuse) the occasions of error."*

In another passage, after describing the idea of the unconditioned as "self-contradictory," "a mere fasciculus of negations," he declares that Kant "appropriated Reason as a specific faculty to take cognisance of these negations, hypostatised as negative, under the Platonic name of Ideas."†

He further adds: "His doctrine leads to absolute scepticism. Speculative Reason, on Kant's own admission, is an organ of mere delusion. The idea of the unconditioned, about which it is conversant, is shown to involve insoluble contradictions, and yet to be the legitimate product of intelligence. Hume has well observed that 'it matters not whether we possess a false reason, or no reason at all.' If 'the light that leads astray be light from heaven,' what are we to believe? If our intellectual

* Discussions, p. 633. † Ibid. p. 17.

nature be perfidious in one revelation, it cannot be presumed truthful in any."*

The passages previously quoted from Kant show how entirely different his real doctrine is from that thus ascribed to him by Hamilton. As we have seen, instead of teaching that Reason is delusive and perfidious in its very nature, he strongly blames such a view, ascribing it to the "mob of Sophists," who vilify a faculty the nature of which they cannot understand. Instead of appropriating Reason as a specific faculty to take cognisance of the unconditioned, he expressly declares that Reason cannot give us any cognition of an unconditioned object; that its true office is to systematise data furnished by experience, and thus to construct science. As to *hypostatising* negations under the name of Ideas, Kant does nothing of the sort; the ideas of which he treats are not regarded by him as *hypostases*, but as conceptions or ideas†—mental functions which guide and regulate the mind in systematising data gathered from experience.

Instead of teaching, as Hamilton represents, that contradiction and antinomy spring from the *legitimate* use of Reason, Kant declares such a view to be wholly untenable, asserting that antinomy and perplexity cannot possibly spring from Reason rightly used; that it must be the *abuse* of Reason which gives rise to such results. He expressly

* Discussions, p. 18.

† The words "Begriff" and "Idee" are both applied by Kant to these Ideas; the "Idee" being a "Begriff" of a peculiar kind.

warns us that they are to be ascribed to defects of our own judgment, to errors of *misapplication*, *not* to Understanding or Reason.*

Thus the explanation of the antinomies put forward by Hamilton as a discovery of his own, his most meritorious philosophical achievement, is no other than the explanation which Kant himself gives, not once merely, but in a great number of passages.

It appears, therefore, that Hamilton first imputes to Kant a doctrine which Kant strongly condemns; next puts forward the doctrine which Kant clearly and repeatedly asserts, and represents this as a discovery of his own, a valuable improvement on Kant's teaching. And he tells us that if he has done any thing meritorious in philosophy, it is in making this discovery!

We are forced to conclude that Hamilton had a very imperfect knowledge of Kant; that he undertook to criticise and correct him, while leaving a great portion of his work unread.

It is possible that Hamilton's error arose in some degree from a cursory reading of the passages in which Kant says that the transcendental illusion, which tempts us to regard the ideas of reason as valid beyond the limits of experience,

* It deserves to be noticed that, according to Kant, even the *illegitimate* use of Reason (*i.e.* the transcendent use) does not in all cases produce Antinomy. It does so, according to him, only in Cosmology. In Psychology and Theology it leads, as he teaches, to void results, which do not extend our knowledge; but it does not in these cases produce Antinomy.

can never be thoroughly removed. Hamilton has not distinguished between *illusion* and *delusion*.* But the fault here is not at all imputable to Kant, who has signalised the distinction with perfect clearness by the illustration which he gives, viz. the appearance of the moon near the horizon; and also by distinctly telling us that though the *illusion* is unavoidable, we can hinder it from imposing on us.

If we wanted other illustrations of illusory appearance besides those mentioned by Kant, there are plenty of them. A very good example is afforded by the stereoscope. We know that the objects placed in this are two in number and flat; yet we never get rid of the illusion, according to which these appear to be one object in relief. Here there is inevitable illusion, yet without delusion. Though this illusion springs from the nature of our perceptive faculties, and cannot be got rid of, yet we do not on that account regard our senses as perfidious and delusive in their very nature. Kant, therefore, may believe a similar illusion to be generated in the exercise of Reason, without regarding that organ as mendacious, as a faculty of lies, as "the work of a treacherous Creator."†

* Kant uses for the former of these the two terms "Illusion" and "Schein." See Note F.

† As another instance of a natural illusion, we may notice that which occurs when a marble or ball is touched by two fingers crossed; the result being that we seem to feel two marbles or balls. Here the illusion is *natural;* yet we do not on this account conclude that the sense of touch is essentially perfidious and untrustworthy.

Hamilton attacks Brown (his favourite aversion) with much asperity as having misunderstood and misrepresented Reid:* but it may be questioned whether any philosopher ever misrepresented another more completely than Hamilton has Kant, in reference to the points above noticed—points of primary importance.

Holding, as we have seen, that the functions of intellect are valid only with reference to objects of experience, Kant takes a different view of the nature of necessary truths from that which most preceding philosophers had done. It had been held by Des Cartes and many others that such truths were absolute and eternal; valid not merely in relation to man, but also in relation to angels, to God, and to all intelligent beings. Kant, in treating of the Intellect, regards their necessity as merely subjective, depending on the peculiar constitution of our faculties. Schopenhauer sets forth the difference between Kant and his predecessors in reference to this point. Both, he says, agree in asserting that axioms or principles impressed with the character of necessity, and not taught by mere experience, exist. But Kant's predecessors said, "'Diese Grundsätze, oder Erkenntnisse aus reiner Vernunft sind Ausdrücke der absoluten Möglichkeit der Dinge, *æternæ veritates*, Quellen der Ontologie: sie stehen über der

* Mr. Mill considers that here again Hamilton has gone astray; that Brown correctly understood and represented Reid's doctrine; and that the person who misunderstood it was Hamilton himself.

Weltordnung, wie das Fatum über der Göttern der Alten stand.' Kant sagt: es sind blosse Formen unsers Intellekts, Gesetze, nicht des Daseyns der Dinge, sondern unserer Vorstellungen von ihnen, gelten daher bloss für unsere Auffassung der Dinge, und können demnach nicht über die Möglichkeit der Erfahrung hinausreichen."*

And again:

"Ich habe es oben als das Hauptverdienst Kants aufgestellt dass er die Erscheinung vom Dinge an sich unterschied, diese ganze sichtbare Welt für Erscheinung erklärte, und daher den Gesetzen derselben alle Gültigkeit über die Erscheinung hinaus absprach."†

Now here again it is important to pay attention to Kant's doctrine, because it is not always correctly seized and represented. Let us, for instance, consider the account of it given in Mr. Lewes's *History of Philosophy;* a work displaying careful research, and a desire to state correctly the various opinions criticised.

It is said in this, with reference to Kant:

"The vital point in his system is, we repeat, the question as to whether we have ideas independent of experience. This is all-important. And what gives it this importance? The conviction that if we are sent into the world with certain connate principles of truth, those principles cannot be false; that if, for example, the principle of

* Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie, p. 505.

† Ibid. p. 514.

causality is one which is antecedent to all experience, and is inseparable from the mind, we are forced to pronounce it an ultimate truth."*

And again, it is said of Kant's doctrine: "It proclaims that knowledge has another origin besides experience; and that the ideas thus acquired are necessarily true. In this the veracity of consciousness is established, and scepticism is defeated."

This account fails to put before us the distinctive feature of Kant's doctrine on the subject of *a priori* truths; such, for instance, as the principle of Causality. We might infer from it that Kant regarded the principle of Causality as an *æterna veritas*, and that he ascribed to it this character on the ground that it is *a priori*, not derived from experience: whereas in truth Kant especially combats this view, maintaining that though the principle of Causality is *a priori*, it is not therefore to be regarded as absolutely or universally true. He even considers that it may not be true in reference to the origin of the voluntary actions of men.

Kant considers that in cognition the mind is not passive—a mere recipient of data brought into it *ab extra*. He holds that knowledge results from the joint action of the Mind and the external Reality, called by him the Noumenon. Those who deny this can scarcely hold the doctrine of Relativity. Attributing activity to the mind, and considering it

* History of Philosophy, p. 550.

as one of the co-efficients by means of which empirical phenomena are produced, he ascribes to it a constitution, in virtue of which it acts, according to law. As he considers experience to be produced and determined by the native constitution of the Mind, acting in conjunction with the Noumenon, he cannot regard the constitution of the Mind as *a posteriori*, as posterior to experience. To do this would, according to his view, be to put the cart before the horse. On the contrary, he regards the native structure of the Mind as a condition (bedingung) of experience, not experience as the bedingung of the mental structure; and he expresses this by calling the elements native to the Mind *a priori*. But while thus affirming the existence of *a priori* energies or functions, he refuses, so far as the Intellect is concerned, to regard these as a source of universal or absolute truth, holding that the constitution of our intelligence may be very unlike that of other beings, and that the cognisable objects produced by us may be very different from those produced and cognised by them. This is, in fact, the doctrine of Relativity.

Such a doctrine does not defeat philosophical scepticism, but rather is the main pillar on which it rests.

Some persons might perhaps be disposed to question Schopenhauer's statement that Kant denies to our intellectual conceptions all validity (alle Gültigkeit) beyond the domain of phenomena and experience. They might point out that Kant in some

passages appears to recognise a certain "problematical" application of categories and conceptions to noumena. We find, however, that according to Kant no knowledge or profitable result can come from this "problematical" application, whatever its nature may be; since in a great number of passages he declares with the greatest explicitness that all judgments in which we apply conceptions or categories to noumena are illegitimate; that the only function for which the categories were intended, and for which they can be legitimately used, is for conceiving and cognising phenomena; that they are valid only within the field of possible experience.

He sums up his investigation of the Principles of the Understanding in the following way:

"The final result of the whole of this section is, then, as follows: All principles of the pure understanding are nothing more than *a priori* principles of the possibility of experience; and to this latter alone do all synthetical *a priori* propositions relate; nay, their very possibility rests entirely on this relation."*

In his exposition of the Categories he heads a section as follows:

"Die Kategorie hat keinen andern Gebrauch zum Erkenntnisse der Dinge, als ihre Anwendung auf Gegenstände der Erfahrung"—*i. e.*

"The Category has no use or function in cog-

* Critique of Pure Reason. On the System of Principles. See Note G.

nition, except its application to objects of experience."

Again, he says of the Categories: "Sie dienen nur zur Möglichkeit empirischer Erkenntniss"—*i. e.* "they serve only to render possible empirical cognition." "But this," he proceeds to say, "is called experience (Erfahrung). Consequently the categories have no other use or function (Gebrauch) in cognition, except in so far as they are applied to objects of possible experience."

Again, he says: "It is absolutely impossible for the categories to possess any application beyond the limits of experience." "If we abandon the senses, how can it be made conceivable that the categories . . . have any sense or meaning at all?"*

Again, criticising rational theology, he represents its procedure as vain, because it tries to think or cogitate (denken) the Supreme Being "by conceptions which have properly no applicability except in the world of sense."† And he declares that "the very conceptions of reality, substance, causality, nay even of necessary existence, lose all significance, and become mere empty titles, devoid of all content, when I venture with them beyond the domain of the senses."‡

Again: "All the categories by which I attempt to form a conception of such an object (viz. a

* Critique of Pure Reason. On Phenomena and Noumena. See Note H.

† Ibid. On the Natural Dialectic of the Human Reason.

‡ Ibid. Ibid.

cause of cosmical order) have exclusively an empirical application, and are utterly devoid of meaning, except when applied to objects of possible experience, or, in other words, to the world of sense."*

And as we have above seen, in the passages previously quoted concerning the true function of Reason, Kant again and again inculcates the same view, declaring that Reason is employed legitimately and fruitfully when it regulates the employment of the categories in the field of possible experience; but that if it ventures to use them otherwise, it acts illegitimately, and generates as a consequence worthless results.

Now this doctrine of Kant concerning the use and function of categories, conceptions, and forms of the intellect, serves his purpose admirably so long as it is his business to crush (zermalmen) the metaphysical systems of his predecessors; but if we apply it to test Kant's own doctrine, it no longer does him equal service. For Kant has himself a certain portion of positive or affirmative doctrine. He does not come before us a thoroughgoing sceptic, who doubts the existence of every thing except himself or his own sensations. He has even been understood as undertaking in the second edition of his work to refute by rigorous demonstration the egoistic idealism which denies or doubts the existence of real things, differing from the Ego and its modes or affections.

* Critique of Pure Reason. Ibid. See Note I.

Thus then Kant, in his anti-sceptic character, affirms that Noumena exist. In doing this he applies to Noumena the category or conception of existence. He affirms that they really exist; thus applying to them the category of reality. He affirms that they are *Noumena*, *i.e.* objects of our νοῦς; thus applying to them the conception of relation, and specially of the relation of νοούμενον to νοῦς. He affirms that they are to be believed by us, —that they are objects of our belief; thus applying to them the conception of credibility, and again that of relation. He supposes that there are Noumena existing besides himself,—indeed he generally speaks of Noumena in the plural number,—thus applying to Noumena the category of plurality. He declares Noumena to be different from Phenomena;—the peculiar merit of his doctrine is held to be that he distinguishes Phenomena from things in themselves, or Noumena; thus he applies to Noumena the category or conception of difference.

Again, he teaches that Noumena are active or operative; that by the joint action of the external Noumenon and of our faculties the Phenomenon is produced. And this is evidently an important part of his doctrine. For if we considered that Phenomena might take place and be cognised without any operation or agency of Noumena, we should have no ground to affirm the existence of Noumena at all. Here, then, he applies to Noumena the category of activity, of causality.

Thus then Kant, in his own teaching, does

apply to Noumena the conceptions or categories of existence, reality, activity, relation, difference, &c., and propounds to us the judgments formed in virtue of such an application as valid and legitimate, as important truths; while on the other hand he forbids Leibnitz and other philosophers to apply categories or conceptions to Noumena, and proclaims it as the main purpose of his labours to establish that such a procedure is wholly illegitimate.

As to any attempt to demonstrate the existence of Noumena, clearly, if the negative part of Kant's doctrine is right, the attempt must be hopeless. For the demonstration must be conducted by thought, which cannot be done without employing the categories; and the conclusion must apply some of the categories to Noumena, and that not problematically but assertorically. If such a procedure be altogether illegitimate, as Kant so repeatedly asserts, the pretended demonstration must be illegitimate.

Thus then it appears that the negative principle enunciated by Kant, and established, as he asserts, by his critical labours, is too negative for his purposes; that it is in truth Alleszermalmend; crushing the doctrines of his predecessors, Des Cartes, Leibnitz, &c., but crushing with equal completeness his own teaching, so far as this is positive.

Again, after having shown, as he conceives, the vanity of all theology based on the intellect

and speculative Reason, Kant professes to restore what he had apparently destroyed, by means of the moral or practical Reason. Relying upon this, he re-introduces to us the theological doctrine, that the world is governed by a Personal God, a righteous Judge, who awards to men after death the lot which they deserve: appropriate misery to the bad, and appropriate bliss to the good.

But if the principles employed in the Critique of the speculative Reason are correct, how can judgments obtained by means of the practical Reason possess any absolute truth? Is it urged that they have a character of necessity or universality, and that judgments having this character should be regarded as absolutely true? If the Critique was correct, it has been shown that the character in question may arise simply from the fact that our minds are constituted in a particular way; and that it does not authorise us to believe that other beings think or judge in like manner. If this be the case, the judgments in question, however useful they may be for the regulation of our conduct, cannot authorise us to affirm the existence of an unseen Noumenon wholly beyond the field of experience, and to affirm that this Noumenon governs the Universe according to our idea of justice.

Further, according to the principles of the Critique, we cannot know the character or moral disposition of persons as they really are—of Noumena. Our moral judgments or cognitions must be produced partly by the action of the Noumenon,

and partly by that of the Subject or Ego. And we have no right to affirm that the constitution of one subject resembles that of all other subjects, nor consequently that they all produce like Phenomena when acted on by the same Noumenon. Socrates or Washington, or Moses or Christ, as they really are, may produce one sort of phenomenon when acting in conjunction with our faculties, and a totally different phenomenon when acting upon beings gifted with a different constitution; so that A may cognise Socrates as good and Heliogabalus as bad; while B may cognise Heliogabalus as good and Socrates as bad. The truth of the cognitions being of this kind, the theological edifice raised upon them cannot possess truth of a higher character, in which case it would be quite profitless.

Further it is evident that when Kant, in his moral theology, affirms God to exist,—to be a righteous governor of the Universe, rewarding the good and punishing the bad,—he quite sets at nought the principle laid down in his Critique, that categories and conceptions have no valid application except to phenomena and to objects of experience. For it is uniformly assumed by Kant that God is a noumenon, not a phenomenon, and that he does not lie within the field of possible experience. Were this otherwise, all Kant's critique of rational theology would fall to the ground. If, then, we can legitimately predicate of God existence, goodness, righteousness, power, and the attributes of a moral governor, we can legitimately

make application of categories and conceptions to a Noumenon, and that too not merely problematically, but assertorically.

The discrepancy between the principles adopted by Kant in the two portions of his teaching has been pointed out and blamed by many writers, and is censured with much severity by Mr. Mansel. Mr. Mansel especially desires to lower the authority of the Moral Reason, this being the organ principally employed by Rationalists in their criticism of theological dogmas. When therefore Kant, having refused all absolute validity to the Speculative Reason, and pronounced it incompetent to occupy itself concerning God, proceeds to ascribe an absolute character to judgments of the Practical Reason, and by means of these to set forth doctrines concerning God, Mr. Mansel regards him as undoing all that was most valuable in his labours. "If," says he, "I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." He points out that Kant, when considering the necessity of moral judgments, wholly abandons the doctrine which he held in reference to the necessity of geometrical and other *a priori* judgments. In treating of the latter he regarded necessity as arising from the peculiar structure of our faculties,—as no indication that the so-called necessary truth was true to other beings; while in treating of moral judgments he falls into the old view, as if in their case necessity was indicative of absolute or universal truth. This, says Mr. Mansel, is indeed a marvellous at-

tempt to send forth from the same fountain sweet waters and bitter.*

The remarks made by Mr. Mansel concerning the discrepancy of the two views taken by Kant seem to me well founded; and indeed even Kant's admirers generally admit that he has not conciliated these two portions of his doctrine.

In explaining the distinction between the speculative and the practical Reason, Kant tells us that the former seeks cognisance of "that which is," while the latter concerns itself with "that which ought to be." Clearly if this be the case, it is impossible to establish the existence of God by means of the practical Reason alone. The practical Reason may affirm that there *ought to be* a God or Moral Governor of the world, but not that there *is* such a being. To enable us to do this, it is necessary that the speculative Reason should step in, and assure us that what according to the practical Reason ought to be, may reasonably be affirmed to exist. But according to Kant the speculative Reason cannot take this step, since it is not authorised to pass beyond the domain of Phenomena and Experience. All its efforts to help the practical Reason at this critical conjuncture are thus paralysed.

Under such circumstances it cannot be wondered at that Kant's moral theology, viewed in

* The waters called sweet by Mr. Mansel seem to be the negative portions of Kant's doctrine, wherein he impugns the authority of the Intellect; while the waters which he esteems bitter are apparently those in which Kant exalts the authority of the Moral Reason.

connection with his previous doctrine, has generally failed to give satisfaction. Indeed Schopenhauer considers that Kant himself perfectly knew its weakness, and did not propound it seriously; that his real object was to uproot Theism; and that his pretended moral proof of the existence of God was merely a weak pillar with which he propped up the theistic edifice, so that he might have time to get out of it before it fell to the ground. "Kant," he says, "als er alte, ehrwürdige Irrthümer einriss und die Gefährlichkeit der Sache kannte, nur hatte, durch die Moral-theologie einstweilen ein Paar schwache Stützen unterschieben wollen, damit der Einsturz nicht ihn träfe, sondern er Zeit gewönne, sich wegzubegeben."*

Holding, however, that Kant has attacked and subverted Theism, Schopenhauer will not allow that he has attacked or injured religion, since he maintains that true religion is not theistic, Buddhism being an example of this. He considers that if Kant's Critique had appeared in a Buddhist country, it would have been regarded as a highly religious work, defending orthodox idealism, and thoroughly refuting the theistic heresy.

It is difficult to accept this view of Kant's purpose, since there are many passages in which he uses theistic language in an apparently natural and spontaneous manner; at the same time it must be admitted that it is difficult to make out with certainty his precise view; for, after apparently affirm-

* Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie, p. 606.

ing the existence of a God, a Moral Governor of the world, he throws every thing back again by explaining that such affirmations have only a practical or regulative, not a speculative validity. Thus the doctrine seems to come to this: not that God does really exist, but that it is very useful to act as if a God did exist; that such a supposition regulates our moral conduct in a salutary manner; that "si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer." Undoubtedly this kind of teaching affords fair ground for Schopenhauer's assertion that Kant was not in earnest with his Moral-Theologie: "da ein theoretisches Dogma von ausschliesslich praktischer Geltung der hölzernen Flinte gleicht, die man ohne Gefahr den Kindern geben kann; auch ganz eigentlich zum 'wasch mir den Pelz, aber mach' ihn mir nicht nass' gehört."*

Thus then we are justified in concluding that Kant has not successfully solved the problems with which he has grappled. In his negative teaching he displays great profundity and intellectual power; and in his moral philosophy he displays a moral elevation recalling that of Socrates; but he has not fulfilled the requirements of Metaphysics; he has not successfully expounded to us a coherent body of doctrine.

* Ueber die vierfache Wurzel, &c. p. 114.

NOTE A, p. 110.

"Der Ausgang aller dialektischen Versuche der reinen Vernunft bestätigt nicht allein, was wir schon in der transscendentalen Analytik bewiesen, nämlich dass alle unsere Schlüsse, die uns über das Feld möglicher Erfahrung hinausführen wollen, trüglich und grundlos sind; sondern er lehrt uns zugleich dieses Besondere, dass die menschliche Vernunft dabei einen natürlichen Hang habe, diese Grenze zu überschreiten, dass transscendentale Ideen ihr eben so natürlich seien, als dem Verstande die Kategorien, obgleich mit dem Unterschiede, dass, so wie die letzteren zur Wahrheit, d. i. der Uebereinstimmung unserer Begriffe mit dem Objecte führen, die ersteren einen blosen, aber unwiderstehlichen Schein bewirken, dessen Täuschung man kaum durch die schärfste Kritik abhalten kann.

"Alles, was in der Natur unserer Kräfte gegründet ist, muss zweckmässig und mit dem richtigen Gebrauche derselben einstimmig sein, wenn wir nur einen gewissen Missverstand verhüten und die eigentliche Richtung derselben ausfindig machen können. Also werden die transscendentalen Ideen allem Vermuthen nach ihren guten und folglich immanenten Gebrauch haben, obgleich, wenn ihre Bedeutung verkannt und sie für Begriffe von wirklichen Dingen genommen werden, sie transscendent in der Anwendung und eben darum trüglich sein können. Denn nicht die Idee an sich selbst, sondern blos ihr Gebrauch kann entweder in Ansehung der gesammten möglichen Erfahrung überfliegend (transscendent), oder einheimisch (immanent) sein, nachdem man sie entweder geradezu auf einen ihr vermeintlich entsprechenden Gegen-

stand, oder nur auf den Verstandesgebrauch überhaupt, in Ansehung der Gegenstände, mit welchen er zu thun hat, richtet, und alle Fehler der Subreption sind jederzeit einem Mangel der Urtheilskraft, niemals aber dem Verstande oder der Vernunft zuzuschreiben." *Kant's Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. G. Hartenstein, Leips. 1853, pp. 466, 7.

Note B, p. 111.

"Ich behaupte demnach: die transscendentalen Ideen sind niemals von constitutivem Gebrauche, so dass dadurch Begriffe gewisser Gegenstände gegeben würden, und in dem Falle, dass man sie so versteht, sind es blos vernünftelnde (dialektische) Begriffe. Dagegen aber haben sie einen vortrefflichen und unentbehrlich nothwendigen regulativen Gebrauch, nämlich den Verstand zu einem gewissen Ziele zu richten, in Aussicht auf welche die Richtungslinien aller seiner Regeln in einem Punkt zusammenlaufen, der, ob er zwar nur eine Idee (*focus imaginarius*), d. i. ein Punkt ist, aus welchem die Verstandesbegriffe wirklich nicht ausgehen, indem er ganz ausserhalb den Grenzen möglicher Erfahrung liegt, dennoch dazu dient, ihnen die grösste Einheit neben der grössten Ausbreitung zu verschaffen. Nun entspringt uns zwar hieraus die Täuschung, als wenn diese Richtungslinien von einem Gegenstande selbst, der ausser dem Felde empirisch-möglicher Erkenntniss läge, ausgeschlossen wären, (so wie die Objecte hinter der Spiegelfläche gesehen werden,) allein diese Illusion, (welche man doch hindern kann, dass sie nicht betrügt,) ist gleichwohl unentbehrlich nothwendig, wenn wir ausser den Gegenständen, die uns vor Augen sind, auch diejenigen zugleich sehen wollen, die weit davon uns im Rücken liegen, d. i. wenn wir, in unserem Falle, den Verstand über jede gegebene Erfahrung, (den Theil der gesammten möglichen Erfahrung) hinaus, mithin auch zur

grösstmöglichen und äussersten Erweiterung abrichten wollen.

"Uebersehen wir unsere Verstandeserkenntnisse in ihrem ganzen Umfange, so finden wir, dass dasjenige, was Vernunft ganz eigenthümlich darüber verfügt und zu Stande zu bringen sucht, das Systematische der Erkenntniss sei, d. i. der Zusammenhang derselben aus einem Princip." *Ibid.* p. 468.

Note C, p. 112.

"Die Ideen der reinen Vernunft können nimmermehr an sich selbst dialektisch sein, sondern ihr bloser Missbrauch muss es allein machen, dass uns von ihnen ein trüglicher Schein entspringt; denn sie sind uns durch die Natur unserer Vernunft aufgegeben, und dieser oberste Gerichtshof aller Rechte und Ansprüche unserer Speculation kann unmöglich selbst ursprüngliche Täuschungen und Blendwerke enthalten. Vermuthlich werden sie also ihre gute und zweckmässige Bestimmung in der Naturanlage unserer Vernunft haben. Der Pöbel der Vernünftler schreit aber, wie gewöhnlich, über Ungereimtheit und Widersprüche, schmäht auf die Regierung, in deren innerste Plane er nicht zu dringen vermag, deren wohlthätigen Einflüssen er auch selbst seine Erhaltung und sogar die Cultur verdanken sollte, die ihn in den Stand setzt, sie zu tadeln und zu verurtheilen." *Ibid.* pp. 483, 484.

Note D, p. 112.

"Nunmehr können wir das Resultat der ganzen transscendentalen Dialektik deutlich vor Augen stellen und die Endabsicht der Ideen der reinen Vernunft, die nur durch Missverstand der Unbehutsamkeit dialektisch werden, genau bestimmen." *Ibid.* p. 490.

Note E, p. 113.

"So enthält die reine Vernunft, die uns Anfangs nichts Geringeres, als Erweiterung der Kenntnisse über alle Grenzen der Erfahrung zu versprechen schien, wenn wir sie recht verstehen, Nichts, als regulative Principien, die zwar grössere Einheit gebieten, als der empirische Verstandesgebrauch erreichen kann, aber eben dadurch, dass sie das Ziel der Annäherung desselben so weit hinaus rücken, die Zusammenstimmung desselben mit sich selbst durch systematische Einheit zum höchsten Grade bringen, wenn man sie aber missversteht und sie für constitutive Principien transscendenter Erkenntnisse hält, durch einen zwar glänzenden, aber trüglichen Schein Ueberredung und eingebildetes Wissen, hiemit aber ewige Widersprüche und Streitigkeiten hervorbringen." *Ibid.* pp. 503, 504.

Note F, p. 118.

"Der logische Schein, der in der blosen Nachahmung der Vernunftform besteht, (der Schein der Trugschlüsse,) entspringt lediglich aus einem Mangel der Achtsamkeit auf die logische Regel. Sobald daher diese auf den vorliegenden Fall geschärft wird, so verschwindet er gänzlich. Der transscendentale Schein dagegen hört gleichwohl nicht auf, ob man ihn schon aufgedeckt und seine Nichtigkeit durch die transscendentale Kritik deutlich eingesehen hat, (z. B. der Schein in dem Satze: die Welt muss der Zeit nach einen Anfang haben.) Die Ursache hievon ist diese, dass in unserer Vernunft, (subjectiv als ein menschliches Erkenntnissvermögen betrachtet,) Grundregeln und Maximen ihres Gebrauchs liegen, welche gänzlich das Ansehen objectiver Grundsätze haben und wodurch es geschieht, dass die subjective Nothwendigkeit einer ge-

wissen Verknüpfung unserer Begriffe, zu Gunsten des Verstandes, für eine objective Nothwendigkeit der Bestimmung der Dinge an sich selbst gehalten wird. Eine Illusion, die gar nicht zu vermeiden ist, so wenig, als wir es vermeiden können, dass uns das Meer in der Mitte nicht höher scheine wie an dem Ufer, weil wir jene durch höhere Lichtstrahlen als diese sehen, oder noch mehr, so wenig selbst der Astronom verhindern kann, dass ihm der Mond im Aufgange nicht grösser scheine, ob er gleich durch diesen Schein nicht betrogen wird.

"Die transscendentale Dialektik wird also sich damit begnügen, den Schein transscendentaler Urtheile aufzudecken, und zugleich zu verhüten, dass er nicht betrüge; dass er aber auch (wie der logische Schein) sogar verschwinde und ein Schein zu sein aufhöre, dass kann sie niemals bewerkstelligen. Denn wir haben es mit einer natürlichen und unvermeidlichen Illusion zu thun, die selbst auf subjectiven Grundsätzen beruht und sie als objective unterschiebt, anstatt dass die logische Dialektik in Auflösung der Trugschlüsse es nur mit einem Fehler in Befolgung der Grundsätze, oder mit einem gekünstelten Scheine in Nachahmung derselben zu thun hat. Es gibt also eine natürliche und unvermeidliche Dialektik der reinen Vernunft, nicht eine, in die sich etwa ein Stümper, durch Mangel an Kenntnissen, selbst verwickelt, oder die irgend ein Sophist, um vernünftige Leute zu verwirren, küntslich ersonnen hat, sondern die der menschlichen Vernunft unhintertreiblich anhängt, und selbst, nachdem wir ihr Blendwerk aufgedeckt haben, dennoch nicht aufhören wird, ihr vorzugaukeln und sie unablässig in augenblickliche Verirrungen zu stossen, die jederzeit gehoben zu werden bedürfen." *Ibid.* pp. 264, 265.

Note G, p. 123.

"Die letzte Folgerung aus diesem ganzen Abschnitte ist also: alle Grundsätze des reinen Verstandes sind Nichts weiter als Principien *a priori* der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung, und auf die letztere allein beziehen sich auch alle synthetische Sätze *a priori*, ja ihre Möglichkeit beruht selbst gänzlich auf dieser Beziehung." *Ibid.* p. 223.

Note H, p. 124.

"Dass also der Verstand von allen seinen Grundsätzen *a priori*, ja von allen seinen Begriffen keinen andern als empirischen, niemals aber einen transscendentalen Gebrauch machen könne, ist ein Satz, der, wenn er mit Ueberzeugung erkannt werden kann, in wichtige Folgen hinaussieht. Der transscendentale Gebrauch eines Begriffs in irgend einem Grundsatze ist dieser: dass er auf Dinge überhaupt und an sich selbst, der empirische aber, wenn er blos auf Erscheinungen, d. i. Gegenstände einer möglichen Erfahrung, bezogen wird. Dass aber überall nur der letztere stattfinden könne, ersieht man daraus. Zu jedem Begriff wird erstlich die logische Form eines Begriffs (des Denkens) überhaupt, und dann zweitens auch die Möglichkeit, ihm einen Gegenstand zu geben, darauf er sich beziehe, erfordert. Ohne diesen letzteren hat er keinen Sinn und ist völlig leer an Inhalt, ob er gleich noch immer die logische Function enthalten mag, aus etwanigen *datis* einen Begriff zu machen. Nun kann der Gegenstand einem Begriffe nicht anders gegeben werden, als in der Anschauung, und wenn eine reine Anschauung noch vor dem Gegenstande *a priori* möglich ist, so kann doch auch diese selbst ihren Gegenstand, mithin die objective Gültig-

keit nur durch die empirische Anschauung bekommen, wovon sie die blose Form ist. Also beziehen sich alle Begriffe und mit ihnen alle Grundsätze, so sehr sie auch *a priori* möglich sein mögen, dennoch auf empirische Anschauungen, d. i. auf *data* zur möglichen Erfahrung. Ohne dieses haben sie gar keine objective Gültigkeit, sondern sind ein bloses Spiel, es sei der Einbildungskraft oder des Verstandes, respective mit ihren Vorstellungen.... Daher erfordert man auch, einen abgesonderten Begriff sinnlich zu machen, d. i. das ihm correspondirende Object in der Anschauung darzulegen, weil ohne dieses der Begriff, (wie man sagt,) ohne Sinn, d. i. ohne Bedeutung bleiben würde..... Hieraus fliesst nun unwidersprechlich, dass die reinen Verstandesbegriffe niemals von transscendentalem, sondern jederzeit nur von empirischem Gebrauche sein können." *Ibid.* pp. 226, 227, 230.

"Wenn man von den Sinnen abgeht, wie will man begreiflich machen, dass unsre Kategorien (welche die einzigen übrig bleibenden Begriffe für Noumena sein würden) noch überall Etwas bedeuten?" *Ibid.* p. 237.

Note I, p. 125.

"Ich denke mir alsdenn dieses höchste Wesen durch lauter Begriffe, die eigentlich nur in der Sinnenwelt ihre Anwendung haben; .....und selbst die Begriffe von Realität, Substanz, Causalität, ja sogar der Nothwendigkeit im Dasein verlieren alle Bedeutung und sind leere Titel zu Begriffen, ohne allen Inhalt, wenn ich mich ausser dem Felde der Sinne damit hinauswage." *Ibid.* pp. 489, 490.

"Fragt man denn also (in Absicht auf eine transscendentale Theologie) erstlich: ob es etwas von der Welt Unterschiedenes gebe, was den Grund der Weltordnung und ihres Zusammenhanges nach allgemeinen Gesetzen

enthalte, so ist die Antwort: ohne Zweifel. Denn die Welt ist eine Summe von Erscheinungen; es muss also irgend ein transscendentaler, d. i. blos dem reinen Verstande denkbarer Grund derselben sein. Ist zweitens die Frage: ob dieses Wesen Substanz, von der grössten Realität, nothwendig u. s. w. sei, so antworte ich: dass diese Frage gar keine Bedeutung habe. Denn alle Kategorien, durch welche ich mir einen Begriff von einen solchen Gegenstande zu machen versuche, sind von keinem anderen, als empirischen Gebrauche und haben gar keinen Sinn, wenn sie nicht auf Objecte möglicher Erfahrung, d. i. auf die Sinnenwelt angewandt werden. Ausser diesem Felde sind sie blos Titel zu Begriffen, die man einräumen, dadurch man aber auch Nichts verstehen kann." *Ibid.* p. 500.

The passage last quoted illustrates very well, in a short compass, the apparently contradictory nature of Kant's teaching about the use of the categories. In the first part of the passage an assertorical application of various categories is made to a transcendental thing or object wholly beyond experience, called "der Grund der Weltordnung," an expression in itself involving the employment of various categories; and the proposition resulting from this employment of the categories is declared to be unquestionably legitimate and true. But immediately after this has been done, the passage goes on to say that *no* category has any signification or sense ("Bedeutung" or "Sinn") when applied to such an object; that *all* application of the categories to an object out of the field of possible experience is illegitimate and completely void; being a procedure by means of which the human mind can *understand nothing*— "Nichts verstehen kann."

CHAPTER V.

The doctrine of the Relativity of Knowledge holds a very prominent place in the philosophy of Sir W. Hamilton, whose treatment of this subject is regarded by his admirers as especially valuable. On the other hand, his teaching concerning it has been sharply assailed by Mr. Mill and Mr. Stirling, who condemn it as full of inconsistency. They have set forth copious extracts of passages from his works, which they declare to be irreconcilable. Mr. Mill comes to the conclusion, that though Hamilton in many places asserts with such emphasis the doctrine of Relativity, he did not understand the real meaning of that doctrine, and that he repudiated it in every sense which renders it other than a barren truism.

Hamilton's doctrine of Relativity is especially taught and enforced in his celebrated article on the Philosophy of the Unconditioned. It is impossible to understand his doctrine about knowledge (or Gnosiology) unless we understand his views concerning the Conditioned and the Unconditioned. These have been very differently expounded by

different interpreters, and disputes concerning their real meaning will probably continue for some time to come.

The immediate object of Hamilton's article is to review the philosophy of Cousin. After giving a summary of Cousin's principal positions, he says: "Now it is manifest that the whole doctrine of M. Cousin is involved in the proposition, *that the Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Infinite, is immediately known in consciousness, and this by difference, plurality, and relation.*" * Proposing to examine this position, he thinks it well to premise a statement of the opinions which it is possible to entertain in reference to the Unconditioned (Absolute and Infinite).

These opinions, he says, may be reduced to four, which he describes as follows:

"1°. The Unconditioned is incognisable and inconceivable, its notion being only negative of the Conditioned, which last alone can be positively known or conceived.

"2°. It is not an object of knowledge; but its notion, as a regulative principle of the mind itself, is more than a mere negation of the Conditioned.

"3°. It is cognisable, but not conceivable: it can be known by a sinking back into identity with the Infinito-Absolute, but it is incomprehensible by consciousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality.

"4°. It is cognisable and conceivable by consci-

* Discussions, p. 12.

ousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality."*

Hamilton states that the first of these opinions is the one which he maintains as true; the second being that of Kant, the third that of Schelling, and the fourth that of Cousin.

He undertakes to refute the three last, and to establish the first, this being the task to which he devotes his article.

Thus, then, Hamilton undertakes to prove that we cannot conceive or know the Unconditioned, either by consciousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality, or by any faculty of a peculiar kind, in the exercise of which consciousness and reflection, with their accompanying conditions, are dispensed with.

Now there is one opinion which it is possible to entertain concerning the Unconditioned, which is not mentioned in Hamilton's enumeration: viz. the opinion that the Unconditioned is not merely incogitable and incognisable, but that it is also incredible; that it is nothing at all—a mere zero.

If Hamilton entertained this opinion, it would be his duty to state it. As he does not do so, we may presume that he did not regard it as one of the opinions which could possibly be entertained by a philosopher. It would seem, therefore, that, whilst rejecting the doctrines of Schelling and Cousin, so far as they affirm the cognisability of the Unconditioned, he agreed with them in believing

* Discussions, p. 12.

that the Unconditioned exists, and that knowledge of it, if it could be obtained, would be important and valuable.

Before proceeding to combat the three doctrines which he disapproves, Hamilton sets forth more fully his own. "The Reviewer's doctrine of the Unconditioned" is explained by him as follows:

"In OUR opinion, the mind can conceive, and consequently can know, only the *limited, and the conditionally limited.* The unconditionally unlimited or the *Infinite*, the unconditionally limited or the *Absolute*, cannot positively be construed to the mind; they can be conceived, only by a thinking away from, or abstraction of, those very conditions under which thought itself is realised; consequently, the notion of the Unconditioned is only *negative*,—negative of the conceivable itself. For example: On the one hand we can positively conceive, neither an absolute whole, that is a whole so great, that we cannot also conceive it as a relative part of a still greater whole; nor an absolute part, that is, a part so small that we cannot also conceive it as a relative whole, divisible into smaller parts. On the other hand, we cannot positively represent, or realise, or construe to the mind (as here Understanding and Imagination coincide), an infinite whole, for this could only be done by the infinite synthesis in thought of finite wholes, which would itself require an infinite time for its accomplishment; nor, for the same reason, can we follow out in thought an infinite divisibility of parts.

The result is the same, whether we apply the process to limitation in *space*, in *time*, or in *degree*. The unconditional negation, and the unconditional affirmation of limitation; in other words, the *Infinite* and the *Absolute*, *properly so called*, are thus equally inconceivable to us.

"As the conditionally limited (which we may briefly call the *Conditioned*) is thus the only possible object of knowledge and of positive thought, —thought necessarily supposes condition. *To think* is *to condition;* and conditional limitation is the fundamental law of the possibility of thought. For, as the greyhound cannot outstrip his shadow, nor (by a more appropriate simile) the eagle outsoar the atmosphere in which he floats, and by which alone he is supported; so the mind cannot transcend that sphere of limitation, within and through which exclusively the possibility of thought is realised. Thought is only of the conditioned; because, as we have said, to think is simply to condition. The *Absolute* is conceived merely by a negation of conceivability; and all that we know, is only known as

'——— won from the void and formless *Infinite*.'

How, indeed, it could ever be doubted that thought is only of the Conditioned, may well be deemed a matter of the profoundest admiration. Thought cannot transcend consciousness; consciousness is only possible under the antithesis of a subject and object of thought, known only in correlation, and

mutually limiting each other; while, independently of this, all that we know either of subject or object, either of mind or matter, is only a knowledge in each of the particular, of the plural, of the different, of the modified, of the phænomenal. We admit that the consequence of this doctrine is,—that philosophy, if viewed as more than a science of the Conditioned, is impossible. Departing from the particular, we admit, that we can never, in our highest generalisations, rise above the Finite; that our knowledge, whether of mind or matter, can be nothing more than a knowledge of the relative manifestations of an existence, which in itself it is our highest wisdom to recognise as beyond the reach of philosophy. This is what in the language of St. Austin,—'*Cognoscendo ignoratur, et ignorando cognoscitur.*'

"The Conditioned is the mean between two extremes,—two inconditionates, exclusive of each other, *neither of which can be conceived as possible*, but of which, on the principles of contradiction and excluded middle, *one must be admitted as necessary.* On this opinion, therefore, our faculties are shown to be weak, but not deceitful. The mind is not represented as conceiving two propositions subversive of each other, as equally possible; but only, as unable to understand as possible, either of two extremes; one of which, however, on the ground of their mutual repugnance, it is compelled to recognise as true. We are thus taught the salutary lesson, that the capacity of thought is not to be

constituted into the measure of existence; and are warned from recognising the domain of our knowledge as necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith. And by a wonderful revelation, we are thus, in the very consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in the existence of something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all reprehensible reality."*

Having thus stated his own doctrine, Hamilton proceeds to examine the second of the opinions mentioned by him, viz. that of Kant. He considers this doctrine to be in the main the same as his own; but to stand in need of some important corrections. It pronounces the Unconditioned to be incognisable, and so far is right; but it regards the notion of the Unconditioned as having a certain regulative efficacy, instead of treating it as purely negative: and herein, says Hamilton, it is wrong.

The following passages set forth Hamilton's view of Kant's teaching on the subject.

"The second opinion, that of KANT, is funda-

* "True, therefore, are the declarations of a pious philosophy:—'A God understood would be no God at all;'—'To think that God is, as we can think him to be, is blasphemy.'—The Divinity, in a certain sense, is revealed; in a certain sense is concealed; He is at once known and unknown. But the last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar—'Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ—'*To the unknown and unknowable God.*' In this consummation, nature and revelation, paganism and christianity, are at one: and from either source the testimonies are so numerous that I must refrain from quoting any.—Am I wrong in thinking, that M. Cousin would not repudiate this doctrine?"—*Discussions*, pp. 14, 15.

mentally the same as the preceding. Metaphysic, strictly so denominated, the philosophy of Existence, is virtually the doctrine of the Unconditioned. From Xenophanes to Leibnitz, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, formed the highest principle of speculation; but from the dawn of philosophy in the school of Elea until the rise of the Kantian philosophy, no serious attempt was made to investigate the nature and origin of this notion (or notions) as a psychological phænomenon. Before Kant, philosophy was rather a deduction from principles, than an inquiry concerning principles themselves. At the head of every system a cognition figured, which the philosopher assumed in conformity to his views; but it was rarely considered necessary, and more rarely attempted, to ascertain the genesis, and determine the domain, of this notion or judgment, previous to application. In his first *Critique* Kant undertakes a regular survey of consciousness. He professes to analyse the conditions of human knowledge,—to mete out its limits,—to indicate its point of departure,—and to determine its possibility. That Kant accomplished much, it would be prejudice to deny; nor is his service to philosophy the less, that his success has been more decided in the subversion of error than in the establishment of truth. The result of his examination was the abolition of the metaphysical sciences,—of Rational Psychology, Ontology, Speculative Theology, &c., as founded on mere *petitiones principiorum*. Existence is revealed to

us only under specific modifications; and these are known only under the conditions of our faculties of knowledge. 'Things in themselves,' Matter, Mind, God, — all, in short, that is not finite, relative, and phænomenal, as bearing no analogy to our faculties, is beyond the verge of our knowledge. Philosophy was thus restricted to the observation and analysis of the phænomena of consciousness; and what is not explicitly or implicitly given in a fact of consciousness, is condemned, as transcending the sphere of a legitimate speculation. A knowledge of the Unconditioned is declared impossible; either immediately, as an intuition, or mediately, as an inference. A demonstration of the Absolute from the Relative is logically absurd; as in such a syllogism we must collect in the conclusion what is not distributed in the premises: And an immediate knowledge of the Unconditioned is equally impossible.—But here we think Kant's reasoning complicated, and his reduction incomplete. We must explain ourselves.

"While we regard as conclusive, Kant's analysis of Time and Space into formal necessities of thought, (without however admitting, that they have no external or objective reality;) we cannot help viewing his deduction of the 'Categories of Understanding,' and of the 'Ideas of Speculative Reason,' as the work of a great but perverse ingenuity. The Categories of Understanding are merely subordinate forms of the Conditioned.

Why not, therefore, generalise the *Conditioned—Existence conditioned*, as the supreme category, or categories, of thought ?—and if it were necessary to analyse this form into its subaltern applications, why not develope these immediately out of the generic principle, instead of preposterously, and by a forced and partial analogy, deducing the laws of the understanding from a questionable division of logical propositions ? Why distinguish Reason (*Vernunft*) from Understanding (*Verstand*), simply on the ground that the former is conversant about, or rather tends towards, the Unconditioned; when it is sufficiently apparent, that the Unconditioned is conceived only as the negation of the Conditioned, and also that the conception of contradictories is one ? In the Kantian philosophy both faculties perform the same function, both seek the one in the many;—the Idea (*Idee*) is only the Concept (*Begriff*) sublimated into the inconceivable; Reason only the Understanding which has 'overleaped itself.' Kant has clearly shown, that the Idea of the Unconditioned can have no objective reality,—that it conveys no knowledge,—and that it involves the most insoluble contradictions. But he ought to have shown, that the Unconditioned had no objective application, because it had, in fact, no subjective affirmation; that it afforded no real knowledge, because it contained nothing even conceivable; and that it is self-contradictory, because it is not a notion, either simple or positive, but only a fasciculus of negations—negations of

the Conditioned in its opposite extremes, and bound together merely by the aid of language and their common character of incomprehensibility. (The Unconditioned is merely a common name for what transcends the laws of thought—for the *formally illegitimate.*) And while he appropriated Reason as a specific faculty to take cognisance of these negations, hypostatised as positive, under the Platonic name of *Ideas;* so also, as a pendant to his deduction of the Categories of Understanding from a logical division of *propositions*, he deduced the classification and number of these Ideas of Reason from a logical division of *syllogisms.*—Kant thus stands intermediate between those who view the notion of the Absolute as the instinctive affirmation of an encentric intuition, and those who regard it as the factitious negative of an eccentric generalisation. . . . . .

"The imperfection and partiality of Kant's analysis are betrayed in its consequences. His doctrine leads to absolute scepticism. Speculative reason, on Kant's own admission, is an organ of mere delusion. The Idea of the Unconditioned, about which it is conversant, is shown to involve insoluble contradictions, and yet to be the legitimate product of intelligence. Hume has well observed, 'that it matters not whether we possess a false reason, or no reason at all.' If 'the light that leads astray, be light from heaven,' what are we to believe? If our intellectual nature be perfidious in one revelation, it cannot be presumed

truthful in any; nor is it possible for Kant to establish the existence of God, Free-will, and Immortality, on the supposed veracity of reason, in a practical relation, after having himself demonstrated its mendacity in a speculative.

"Kant had annihilated the older metaphysic, but the germ of a more visionary doctrine of the Absolute (Infinito-absolute) than any of those refuted, was contained in the bosom of his own philosophy. He had slain the body, but had not exorcised the spectre, of the Absolute; and this spectre has continued to haunt the schools of Germany even to the present day. The philosophers were not content to abandon their metaphysic; to limit philosophy to an observation of phænomena, and to the generalisation of these phænomena into laws. The theories of Bouterweck, (in his earlier works,) of Bardili, of Reinhold, of Fichte, of Schelling, of Hegel, and of sundry others, are just so many endeavours, of greater or of less ability, to fix the Absolute as a positive in knowledge; but the Absolute, like the water in the sieves of the Danaides, has always hitherto run through as a negative into the abyss of nothing."*

Having criticised Kant's doctrine, and pointed out, as he conceives, its imperfections, Hamilton proceeds to examine the third doctrine mentioned by him, viz. that of Schelling. Concerning this he says:

"His opinion constitutes the third of those

* Discussions, pp. 15-19.

enumerated; and the following is a brief statement of its principal positions:—

"While the lower sciences are of the relative and conditioned, *Philosophy*, as the science of sciences, must be of the *Absolute—the Unconditioned.* Is the Absolute then beyond our knowledge?—philosophy is itself impossible.

"But how, it is objected, can the Absolute be *known?*—As unconditioned, identical, and one, it cannot be cognised under conditions, by difference and plurality; not therefore, if the subject of knowledge be distinguished from the object of knowledge. In a knowledge of the Absolute, existence and knowledge must be identical: the Absolute can only be known, if adequately known; and it can only be adequately known, by the Absolute itself. But is this possible? We are wholly ignorant of existence in itself:—the mind knows nothing, except in parts, by quality, and difference, and relation; consciousness supposes the subject contradistinguished from the object of thought; the abstraction of this contrast is a negation of consciousness; and the negation of consciousness is the annihilation of thought itself. The alternative is therefore unavoidable:—either finding the Absolute, we lose ourselves; or retaining self, and individual consciousness, we do not reach the Absolute.

"All this Schelling frankly admits. He (and Fichte also) explicitly admits that a knowledge of the Absolute is impossible, in personality and con-

sciousness: he admits that, as the understanding knows, and can know, only by consciousness, and consciousness only by difference, we, as conscious and understanding, can apprehend, can conceive only the Conditioned; and he admits that, only if man be himself the Infinite, can the Infinite be known by him.

'Nec sentire Deum, nisi qui pars ipse Deorum est;'
('None can feel God, who shares not in the Godhead.')

"But Schelling contends that there is a capacity of knowledge above consciousness, and higher than the understanding, and that this knowledge is competent to human *reason, as identical with the Absolute itself.* In this act of knowledge (which, after Fichte, he calls the *Intellectual Intuition*), there exists no distinction of subject and object,—no contrast of knowledge and existence; all difference is lost in mere indifference,—all plurality in simple unity. The Intuition itself,—Reason,—and the Absolute are identified. The Absolute exists only as known by Reason; and Reason knows only as being itself the Absolute.

"This act (act!) is necessarily ineffable:

'The vision and the faculty divine,'

to be known must be experienced. It cannot be conceived by the understanding, because beyond its sphere; it cannot be described, because its essence is identity, and all description supposes discrimination. To those who are unable to rise

beyond a philosophy of reflection, Schelling candidly allows that the doctrine of the Absolute can appear only a series of contradictions; and he has at least the negative merit of having clearly exposed the impossibility of a philosophy of the Unconditioned, as founded on a knowledge by difference, if he utterly fails in positively proving the possibility of such a philosophy, as founded on a knowledge in identity, through an absorption into, and vision of, the Absolute.

"Out of Laputa or the Empire it would be idle to enter into an articulate refutation of a theory, which founds philosophy on the annihilation of consciousness, and on the identification of the unconscious philosopher with God. The Intuition of the Absolute is manifestly the work of an arbitrary abstraction, and of a self-delusive imagination. To reach the point of indifference,—by abstraction we annihilate the object, and by abstraction we annihilate the subject, of consciousness. But what remains?—*Nothing.* '*Nil* conscimus nobis.' We then hypostatise the zero; we baptize it with the name of *Absolute;* and conceit ourselves that we contemplate absolute existence, when we only speculate absolute privation. This truth has been indeed virtually confessed by the two most distinguished followers of Schelling. Hegel at last abandons the Intuition, and regards '*pure* or *undetermined existence*' as convertible with '*pure nothing;*' whilst Oken, if he adhere to the Intuition, intrepidly identifies the Deity or Absolute

with zero. God, he makes the Nothing, the Nothing he makes God ;

'And Naught is ev'rything, and ev'rything is Naught.'

Nor does the negative chimæra prove less fruitful than the positive ; for Schelling has found it as difficult to evolve the one into the many, as his disciples to deduce the universe and its contents from the first self-affirmation of the 'primordial Nothing.'

'Miri homines! *Nihil* esse aliquid statuantve negentve ;
Quodque negant statuunt, quod statuuntque negant.'

"To Schelling, indeed, it has been impossible, without gratuitous and even contradictory assumptions, to explain the deduction of the finite from the infinite. By no *salto mortale* has he been able to clear the magic circle in which he had enclosed himself. Unable to connect the unconditioned and the conditioned by any natural correlation, he has variously attempted to account for the phænomenon of the universe, either by imposing a necessity of self-manifestation on the absolute, *i.e.* by conditioning the unconditioned ; or by postulating a fall of the finite from the infinite, *i. e.* by begging the very fact which his hypothesis professed its exclusive ability to explain.—The veil of Isis is thus still unwithdrawn; and the question proposed by Orpheus at the dawn of speculation will probably remain unanswered at its setting,—

Πῶς δέ μοι ἓν τι τὰ πάντ' ἔσται, καὶ χωρὶς ἕκαστον ;
('How shall I think—each, separate and all, one ?')

"In like manner, annihilating consciousness in order to reconstruct it, Schelling has never yet been able to connect the faculties conversant about the conditioned, with the faculty of absolute knowledge. One simple objection strikes us as decisive, although we do not remember to have seen it alleged. 'We awaken,' says Schelling, 'from the Intellectual Intuition as from a state of death; we awaken by Reflection, that is, through a compulsory return to ourselves.' We cannot, at the same moment, be in the intellectual intuition and in common consciousness; we must therefore be able to connect them by an act of memory—of recollection. But how can there be a *remembrance* of the Absolute and its Intuition? As out of time, and space, and relation, and difference, it is admitted that the Absolute cannot be construed to the understanding? But as remembrance is only possible under the conditions of the understanding, it is consequently impossible to remember anything anterior to the moment when we awaken into consciousness; and the *clairvoyance* of the Absolute, even granting its reality, is thus, after the crisis, as if it had never been. We defy all solution of this objection.—But it may be put in another form: *To know* the Absolute and *to be* the Absolute are, ex hypothesi, one and the same. Therefore, in the Intellectual Intuition, the individual speculator, the conscious Schelling, Steffens, Oken is annihilated; and, e contra, the Intellectual Intuition is impossible for the philosopher in a state of personal individual-

ity and consciousness. But it is in this state of personality, and non-intuition of the Absolute, that the philosopher writes; in writing therefore about the Absolute, he writes of what is to him as zero. His system is thus a mere scheme of words."*

In the above description and criticism of Schelling's doctrine, the word "consciousness" plays a conspicuous part. We are told that the Absolute† cannot be known by *consciousness*, in or under *consciousness*, in personality and *consciousness*, &c. We are told that Schelling postulates the existence of some faculty *above consciousness*, by means of which the philosopher can attain knowledge of the Unconditioned—of the Absolute. And this pretension is condemned as flagrantly absurd; as not needing serious discussion.

Now the question arises, what is the sense which Hamilton here attaches to the word Consciousness?

Hamilton, in his Lectures, defines Consciousness as "the recognition by the mind or ego of its acts and affections;—in other words, the self-affirmation, that certain modifications are known by me, and that these modifications are mine."‡ At the same time he explains that we must not regard Consciousness as different from the modes or affections of which we are conscious. And in the same

* Discussions, pp. 19-23.

† It is to be observed that in discussing the doctrines of Schelling and Cousin, Hamilton uses the word "Absolute" in conformity with their usage, according to which the Infinite and the Absolute are not opposed, or contraries, as in Hamilton's own terminology.

‡ Lectures, vol. i. p. 193.

chapter he says: "Whatever division of the mental phænomena may be adopted, all its members must be within consciousness. Let consciousness, therefore, remain one and indivisible, comprehending all the modifications—all the phænomena, of the thinking subject."*

If such be the meaning of the word Consciousness, then a state above consciousness, or out of consciousness, would signify a state in which we do not recognise our own existence—in which we cannot affirm "I exist," "this affection or modification is mine."

Some persons, however, think that Hamilton occasionally uses the word Consciousness in a much more restricted sense, viz. to signify immediate as opposed to mediate knowledge; and that when he denies the possibility of knowing the Absolute in or under consciousness, he uses the word in this restricted sense.

A little attention will suffice to show, that in the above criticism of Schelling the word Consciousness is used in the larger, not in the more restricted sense. For we are told that "the annihilation of consciousness is the *annihilation of thought itself*." And after it has been urged that the mind knows nothing except in parts, that consciousness supposes the distinction of subject and object, we are told that the following alternative is unavoidable. "Either, finding the Absolute, we *lose ourselves;* or retaining self and individual conscious-

* Lectures, vol. i. p. 183.

ness, we do not reach the Absolute." Here the alternative presented to us is sufficiently clear; if we find the Absolute, we cease to be conscious—we lose the knowledge of our own existence; if we continue conscious—cognisant of our own existence—we cannot know the Absolute.

Again: we are told that Schelling and Fichte frankly admit that "as the understanding knows, and can know, only by consciousness, and consciousness only by difference, we, *as conscious* and understanding, can apprehend, can conceive, only the Conditioned." It is scarcely possible to mistake the doctrine here stated, viz. that *while we are conscious*, we cannot apprehend or conceive the Unconditioned.

Again: Hamilton objects to Schelling's theory, because it founds philosophy on the *annihilation of consciousness*, and on the identification of the *unconscious philosopher* with God. He describes the pretended mode of knowledge, absurdly, as he thinks, laid claim to by Schelling, as one in which "Nil conscimus nobis," and speaks of the pretended mystical state as one in which "the *conscious* Schelling, Steffens, Oken is annihilated."

It appears, therefore, sufficiently clear that Hamilton ascribes to Schelling the following doctrine. "It is impossible for man to cognise the Absolute so long as he is conscious—(so long as he is cognisant of his own existence)—because consciousness implies relation and difference—the antithesis of subject and object. But the philosopher

can rise into an ecstatic state, beyond the reach of the vulgar, in which he loses consciousness and individuality, ceases to be Schelling or Steffens or Oken, becomes identified with the Absolute, and in this state enjoys knowledge of the Absolute, of the Unconditioned."

Hamilton signifies his approval of one portion of this teaching, while he condemns the remainder. His view may be stated as follows.

Fichte and Schelling are quite right in maintaining that man, so long as he is conscious, cannot enjoy knowledge of the Absolute. The reasonings by which they demonstrate this point, on the ground that consciousness implies relation and difference, the antithesis of subject and object, are perfectly correct and convincing. But when Schelling proceeds to assert that the philosopher can obtain cognition of the Absolute in a state of unconsciousness, he commits absurdity. It is only while we are conscious—*i. e.* while we are cognisant of our own existence and affections—that we can know any thing; if we cease to be conscious, we can neither know the Absolute nor any thing else. Schelling ought to have perceived that if we cannot cognise the Absolute while we are conscious, we cannot cognise it at all. He ought to have taught the first part of his doctrine, and given up the latter part. He would thus have come to the sound and correct conclusion, that the Absolute, the Unconditioned, cannot be known at all by the human mind.

Having examined, and severely condemned the doctrine of Schelling, Hamilton proceeds to examine the fourth of the opinions set forth by him, viz. that of Cousin, according to which the Unconditioned is cognisable in the ordinary state of consciousness.

To refute this doctrine Hamilton employs the reasonings previously urged by Fichte and Schelling, viz. that consciousness implies the antithesis of subject and object, and thus involves difference, relation, and plurality. He deduces from these considerations the following alternative. "*Either* the Absolute cannot be known or conceived at all, *or* our author is wrong in subjecting thought to the conditions of plurality and difference. It was the iron necessity of the alternative that constrained Schelling to resort to the hypothesis of a knowledge in identity through the Intellectual Intuition; and it could only be from an oversight of the main difficulties of the problem, that M. Cousin, in abandoning the Intellectual Intuition, did not abandon the Absolute itself."*

Again, he says: "If a knowledge of the Absolute were possible under these conditions) *i. e.* those of relation, plurality, and difference,) it may excite our wonder that other philosophers should have viewed the supposition as utterly impossible; and that Schelling, whose acuteness was never questioned, should have exposed himself gratuitously to the reproach of mysticism, by his pos-

* Discussions, p. 33.

tulating for a few, and through a faculty above the reach of consciousness, a knowledge already given to all in the fact of consciousness itself. Monstrous as is the postulate of the Intellectual Intuition, we freely confess that it is only through such a faculty that we can imagine the possibility of a science of the Absolute; and have no hesitation in acknowledging, that if Schelling's hypothesis appear to us incogitable, that of Cousin is seen to be self-contradictory."*

As we have seen, the postulate of the Intellectual Intuition, as described by Hamilton, was the postulate that the philosopher could cognise the Absolute whilst himself *unconscious*. Hamilton condemned this hypothesis as ridiculous, because we cannot know any thing except when we are conscious. And now he declares that if we could cognise the Absolute at all, we could only do so in the mystical state described by Schelling, *i.e.* in a state of unconsciousness. Monstrous as such a supposition is, he deems it better than the doctrine of those who think that we can cognise the Absolute in the normal conscious state.

It appears, therefore, that Hamilton conceives himself to have brought the matter to the following pass.

It is impossible for man to obtain knowledge of the Unconditioned (Absolute and Infinite) either in the ordinary state, in which he is conscious of his own existence, or in an ecstatic state, in which

* Discussions, p. 32.

he loses consciousness, and becomes identified with the Absolute or the Infinite. The first supposition is refuted by the consideration that all modes or faculties of which we are conscious imply plurality, relation, and difference; consequently no such faculty can enable us to conceive or know the Unconditioned—the Absolute. The second supposition is refuted by the simple consideration, that when a man is unconscious, he cannot know any thing at all.

Consequently we are brought to the conclusion, that knowledge of the Unconditioned (Infinite and Absolute) is entirely beyond the reach of man in his present state: and thus Hamilton conceives that he has established his thesis.

It would be very strange that Hamilton should take all this trouble to demonstrate the incognisability of a zero; and very strange, if the theme of these laborious demonstrations were regarded by him as a zero, that he should nowhere express such an opinion. Some expositors, however, who believe themselves to be advocates of Hamilton's doctrine, have endeavoured to explain it in conformity with such an hypothesis. According to them, Hamilton's object is to prove that every thing which exists, divine or human, is conditioned; *i.e.* exists in a specific state, which renders it different from other things. He wishes, say they, to show that God is not unconditioned, as philosophers have foolishly supposed: that the Unconditioned is a nonentity, a meaningless ab-

straction, and that all discourse about it is vain—mere babble about nothing.

If, however, we examine with attention Hamilton's language and mode of procedure, we shall see that such an interpretation of his doctrine is quite untenable.

In the first place it may be observed that the exposition in question would entirely vitiate Hamilton's criticism of Kant. For "das unbedingte," about whose cognisability Kant inquires, is not a mere zero—a meaningless abstraction. The question examined by Kant is this—"Can we obtain any knowledge of a thing or Being, which stands to other things in the relation of bedingung to bedingtes (conditio to conditionatum), but does not stand to any thing in the relation of bedingtes to bedingung (conditionatum to conditio). In order that Hamilton's criticism of Kant may be valid and pertinent, it behoves him to show that such a thing or Being is entirely inconceivable; that our notion of it is purely negative, *i.e.* no notion at all. If, instead of doing this, he proves the incognisability of a nugatory Unconditioned, of a meaningless abstraction, his criticism of Kant is based on a misunderstanding, and is a complete fiasco.

But further, when we examine Hamilton's language, we find it repeatedly indicating in an unmistakable manner, that the Unconditioned, whose inconceivability and incognisability he is engaged in demonstrating, is not regarded by him as a non-

entity or zero. He constantly intimates his belief that the knowledge of the Unconditioned, which he declares to be wholly beyond the reach of man, is knowledge of a most important kind, much superior in dignity and value to knowledge of the Conditioned.

For instance, he tells us that "the mind can conceive *only* the limited and the conditionally limited;" that "thought is *only* of the Conditioned;" that "philosophy, if viewed as *more* than a science of the Conditioned, is impossible;" that knowledge is "*only* of the modified and phenomenal." Expressions of this sort would be quite absurd if he believed that every thing which exists is conditioned, and that the Unconditioned, whose incognisability he proclaims, were alike incognisable and incredible.

Further he declares that the Conditioned is a mean between two extremes, both wholly incogitable, but of which *one* must be regarded as *necessary*. In conformity with this doctrine, he teaches that infinite space, infinite time, infinite attributes, and the infinite Divine Being (God) are unconditioned. This is quite opposed to the view ascribed to him by some expositors, that every thing which really exists is conditioned, and that the Unconditioned is nothing at all.

Again, after urging that thought is *only* of the Conditioned, and that the Unconditioned is wholly incogitable, he deduces from this, by way of inference: "True, therefore, are the declarations of

a pious philosophy, 'A God understood would be no God at all;' 'To think that God is as we can think him to be is blasphemy.'" This indicates the view that God, as he really exists, is unconditioned, and very different from God as we think him to be, viz. as finite and conditioned.

If we examine Hamilton's criticism of Kant, we find it to express the following view.

Kant did great service by abolishing Rational Psychology, Cosmology, and Theology, and by proving that Things in themselves—Matter, Mind, God—all that is not finite, relative, and phenomenal, as bearing no analogy to our faculties, is beyond the verge of our knowledge. But he marred his work by one error, viz. by teaching that our Idea of the Unconditioned has some regulative validity; instead of recognising that it is purely negative, properly no notion or idea at all. By this part of his doctrine he afforded a loop-hole to the Absolutists, who are not content to restrict themselves to the mere observation of phenomena, and the generalisation of phenomena into laws, but aspire to treat about that which is not phenomenal and not finite, more particularly about God. Availing themselves of the loop-hole thus afforded them by Kant's doctrine, they again began to speculate about that which is not phenomenal and not finite, again busied themselves with theology; and thus Kant's teaching failed of its promised effect.

Hamilton undertakes to set this right by showing that our Idea of the Unconditioned is purely

negative; that it has no regulative efficacy or validity, as Kant asserts; that the Unconditioned has no affirmation at all, subjective or objective. This being proved, the loop-hole which Kant's doctrine afforded to Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, &c. will be closed; philosophers will be compelled to recognise that that which is not phenomenal and finite (consequently that God) bears no analogy to our faculties, and is beyond the verge of our knowledge. They will therefore be compelled to restrict themselves to that humble office which they so much dislike, viz. the observation of phenomena, and the generalisation of those phenomena into laws; and accordingly must cease to busy themselves with theological speculation. All this is to be effected by proving that our Idea of the Unconditioned is purely negative; that it has no regulative value, as Kant maintained; that the Unconditioned has no subjective affirmation, as Kant supposed. Clearly, in order that such reasoning may be valid, we cannot regard the Unconditioned, whose notion is here in question, as incredible, as a mere piece of nonsense. Were we to do so, we must look on Hamilton's reasonings as fit only for Laputa; for no rational person could hold that in proving the incogitability of a mere zero, he was restricting us to the observation of phenomena, and preventing us from speculating about God. In order that we may regard Hamilton's procedure as rational, we must suppose him to believe that the Unconditioned, though its Idea is

purely null and negative, is not itself unreal and incredible; that though wholly beyond Intellect and Reason, it lies within the sphere of Faith; and that its existence cannot be denied by those who recognise the existence of God.

The Unconditioned reasoned about by Hamilton in his criticisms of Schelling and Cousin is manifestly supposed by him to be the same as that previously treated of in the criticism of Kant. The reasonings are clearly designed to establish the doctrine maintained by him against Kant, by which the imperfection of Kant's doctrine is to be remedied, and the loop-hole which it afforded to Absolutists effectually closed. For this purpose it is sought to demonstrate, by an examination of the conditions of consciousness, that we cannot obtain knowledge of the Unconditioned while we are conscious; and the supposition that we can obtain such a knowledge in a state of unconscious ecstasy is dismissed as absurd. In this way it is supposed to be proved that the limits of speculation laid down by Kant cannot be overpassed; and that however distasteful these restrictions may be to philosophers, they must consent to submit to them, if they would not perpetrate sheer absurdity.

After Hamilton has finished his discussion, and demolished, as he conceives, the doctrines of Schelling and Cousin, he states that, though so widely dissenting from Cousin, he yet "owns a strong feeling of interest and admiration for those qualities, even in their excess, which have betrayed

him, with so many other aspiring philosophers, into a pursuit which could only end in disappointment—we mean his love of truth, and his reliance on the powers of man. Not to despair of philosophy is 'a last infirmity of noble minds.' 'The wish is parent to the thought.' Loath to admit that our science is at best the reflection of a reality we cannot know, we strive to penetrate to existence in itself; and what we have laboured intensely to attain, we at last fondly believe we have accomplished, but, like Ixion, we embrace a cloud for a divinity."*

In these desponding utterances Hamilton appears to proceed as before on the view, that if we cannot conceive or know the Unconditioned, then we must despair of philosophy, recognise that we cannot penetrate to "existence in itself," and that our science is at best the reflection of a reality we cannot know. And in the appendices to his Article this view of the great imperfection of human knowledge (caused by the circumstance that man can only know the conditioned, the phenomenal, the finite) is expressed in still more forcible and still more desponding accents. Thus he says:

"Our whole knowledge of mind and of matter is relative — conditioned — relatively conditioned. Of things absolutely or in themselves,—be they external, be they internal,—we know nothing, or know them only as incognisable; and become aware of their incomprehensible existence only as this is

* Discussions, p. 37.

indirectly and accidentally revealed to us through certain qualities related to our faculties of knowledge, and which qualities, again, we cannot think as unconditioned, irrelative, existent in and of themselves. All that we know is therefore phenomenal—phenomenal of the unknown. The philosopher speculating the worlds of matter and of mind is thus, in a certain sort, only an ignorant admirer. In his contemplation of the universe, the philosopher indeed resembles Æneas contemplating the adumbrations on his shield; as it may equally be said of the sage as of the hero:

'Miratur: Rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet.'

Nor is this denied; for it has been commonly confessed, that as substances, we know not what is Matter, and are ignorant of what is Mind."*

In another passage he says:

"We philosophise to escape ignorance, and the consummation of our philosophy is ignorance; we start from the one, we repose in the other; they are the goals from which and to which we tend; and the pursuit of knowledge is but a course between two ignorances. . . . We never can emerge from ignorance; our dream of knowledge is a little light rounded with a darkness. . . . . Science is a drop; Nescience is the ocean in which that drop is whelmed."†

Again he declares that "the doctrine of the Conditioned" (the doctrine which he professes, and has laboured to establish in his Article) is "a phi-

* Discussions, p. 643. † Ibid. p. 634.

losophic nescience;" that the "relative knowledge" furnished by it is confessed to be "absolute ignorance;" that "the knowledge of Nothing is the principle and consummation of all true philosophy." "Scire Nihil—studium quo nos lætamur utrique."*

Such language indicates a profound conviction on Hamilton's part that the knowledge attainable by man in his present state (knowledge of the Conditioned) cannot for a moment be compared with the knowledge enjoyed by those superior beings whose mental constitution enables them to conceive and to know the Unconditioned.

In his Lectures, recurring to his doctrine concerning human knowledge, he states it thus in a summary form: "Whatever we know is not known as it is, but only as it seems to be."† And he quotes a copious array of authorities in support of this view. Among these may be noticed that of Bacon, who says: "est intellectus humanus instar speculi inæqualis ad radios rerum, qui suam naturam naturæ rerum immiscet, eamque distorquet et inficit."‡ Also that of Seneca, who says: "Tota rerum natura umbra est aut inanis aut fallax."§ This assertion reminds us of the Hindoo doctrine of Maya, and of Schopenhauer's statement that, according to the true, the Kantian doctrine, the external nature which we perceive and cognise is "traumartig."

* Discussions, p. 609.
† Lectures, p. 146.
‡ Ibid. p. 147.
§ Discussions, p. 636.

As might be expected under such circumstances, Kant figures as a prominent authority in favour of Hamilton's Phenomenalist doctrine. A number of Philosophers are quoted as "Testimonies to the fact that all our knowledge, whether of Mind or Matter, is *only* phænomenal;" and the list is closed by Kant, a passage being quoted from his Critique, with the remark, that "a hundred testimonies to the same truth might be adduced from the philosopher of Kœnigsberg, of whose doctrine it is, in fact, the foundation."*

In these parts of his teaching Hamilton appears fully to espouse Kant's doctrine, viz. that Phenomena are produced partly by real external things (Noumena), and partly by our Minds, and that owing to the action of our minds, they differ to an unknown extent from the external co-efficient which co-operated in producing them. And he appears to declare, with great emphasis, that these Phenomena—conditioned—modified by our minds, are the *sole* objects of our knowledge, so that we know things only as they seem to us, distorted by our faculties—not as they really are.

From the above examination, it seems pretty clear that knowledge of the Unconditioned was regarded by Hamilton as knowledge of real fact, of things as they really are: while knowledge of the Conditioned was regarded by him as knowledge of distorted appearance—the reflection of a reality we cannot know—a nescience rather than a

* Discussions, p. 636.

knowledge. In proving, therefore, that the conditions of consciousness preclude us from attaining knowledge of the Unconditioned (the supposition of a knowledge out of consciousness being rejected by him as ridiculous) he imagined himself to be proving that the constitution of our consciousness, the fact that it implies subject and object, relation and difference, precludes us from attaining knowledge of things as they really are; and particularly of God as he really is.

Some expositors, believing themselves to be advocates of Hamilton's doctrine, have asserted that he uses the phrase "the Unconditioned" in two very different senses; so that sometimes it stands for God, and sometimes for a zero, for a ridiculous figment. It is manifest that this hypothesis is very awkward. In reference to it, let us hear what Locke says concerning the practice of shifting the meaning of words and phrases.

"Another great abuse of words is inconstancy in the use of them. It is hard to find a discourse written of any subject, especially of controversy, wherein one shall not observe, if he read with attention, the same words (and those commonly the most material in the discourse, and upon which the argument turns) used sometimes for one collection of simple ideas, and sometimes for another, which is a perfect abuse of language. Words being intended for signs of my ideas, to make them known to others, not by any natural signification, but by a voluntary imposition, it is plain cheat

and abuse when I make them stand sometimes for one thing, and sometimes for another; the wilful doing whereof can be imputed to nothing but great folly, or greater dishonesty. . . . . One who would speak thus in the affairs and business of the world, and call eight sometimes seven, and sometimes nine, as best served his advantage, would presently have clapped upon him one of the two names men are commonly disgusted with. And yet, in arguings and learned contests, the same sort of proceeding passes commonly for wit and learning; but to me it appears a greater dishonesty than the misplacing of counters in the casting up of a debt, and the cheat the greater, by how much truth is of greater concernment and value than money."

Hamilton has nowhere notified to us that he shifts the sense of his terms so that "the Unconditioned" sometimes signifies God, and sometimes nothing. To suppose that he uses such a license without saying any thing about it, would not be to defend him. For if it be improper to mak the same sign stand sometimes for seven and sometimes for eight, it would be much worse to make it stand sometimes for nothing, and sometimes for God.

At the same time, it is not difficult to understand the reasons which have led some expositors to adopt the hypothesis in question. Hamilton, on various occasions, declares in the strongest manner the total inconceivability or incogitability

of the Unconditioned. Now a large number of persons regard total inconceivability as involving incredibility. Hence, when Hamilton declares that the Unconditioned is totally inconceivable, that it cannot be affirmed at all in conformity with the conditions of our intellect, &c., they naturally suppose that the Unconditioned of which he thus speaks is both incogitable and incredible—a mere nonentity or zero. And if other expositors ascribe to him the opinion that the Unconditioned of which he thus speaks is not unreal or incredible, they are apt to resent this as grossly unjust, as imputing to him a flagrant absurdity.

That *partial* inconceivability does not involve incredibility is generally admitted: it is probable, indeed, that nothing is conceived fully or adequately by the human mind. If Hamilton merely said that the Unconditioned, though *partially* inconceivable, nevertheless could be a legitimate object of belief, his statement would occasion no difficulty. But if it is said that the Unconditioned is *wholly* inconceivable, as inconceivable as a circular square, or a virtuous logarithm, and yet that its existence ought to be believed, then a great number of persons feel themselves staggered; and they think that Hamilton cannot have taught such a doctrine.

It is urged, indeed, that conception is of the *how*, and belief of the *that;* that because we cannot conceive *how* A is possible, we are not thereby incapacitated from believing *that* A exists. A cir-

cular square and a virtuous logarithm are inconceivable, *i.e.* we cannot conceive *how* a square can be circular, or *how* a logarithm can be virtuous; but this, it is urged, does not render us incapable of believing *that* a square is circular, or *that* a logarithm is virtuous. But these representations do not satisfy the expositors in question, who declare that when they find themselves unable to understand *how* a circle can be square, or *how* a logarithm can be virtuous,—when they find themselves unable to conceive, or mentally take together the attributes verbally united in the written symbols,—they do find themselves greatly impeded in believing *that* circular squares or virtuous logarithms exist. Accordingly, this class of interpreters do not like to attribute to Hamilton the doctrine that the Unconditioned is *totally* inconceivable and incogitable, and yet credible, real, existent. And they try to relieve him from the difficulty attending such a doctrine, by supposing that there are two different Unconditioneds, one nugatory, the other divine; that some of his language has reference to one of these, and some of it to the other.

Another class of expositors regard such a view as feeble and erroneous, calculated to damage Hamilton, and to mar his doctrine. According to them, the principal merit of Hamilton's labours consists in this, that he effects the complete disjunction of cogitability from credibility. In support of this view they appeal to the language of Hamilton himself—as for instance, when he says:

"What I have said as to the infinite being (subjectively) inconceivable, does not at all derogate from our belief of its (objective) reality. In fact, the main scope of my speculation is to show articulately, that we *must believe*, as actual, much that we are unable (positively) to *conceive*, as even possible."* When once, say they, we frankly recognise that inconceivability even of the most extreme kind is no proof of incredibility, then we shall be able to understand that the Unconditioned may be as inconceivable as a circular square, or a virtuous logarithm, or coloured time, and yet that it may not be incredible, or a zero. We shall understand that Hamilton may regard its notion as purely negative, and may pronounce it to have no affirmation, either subjective or objective, under the conditions of our intellect, and yet may believe it to exist. An Unconditioned thing or Being may be wholly incogitable, all our attempts to think about such an object or about affirmations concerning it may be frustrated by contradiction; and yet belief *that* an Unconditioned Being exists may be perfectly legitimate, and even necessary. This, say they, is the grand truth, which Hamilton has demonstrated by strict logical reasoning in the most irrefragable manner.

* Letter to Mr. Calderwood. Lectures, vol. ii. p. 535.

CHAPTER VI.

To illustrate the differences of opinion which have arisen concerning the true meaning of Hamilton's doctrine of the Unconditioned, I propose here to examine the accounts given of it by Mr. Mill, who opposes Hamilton, and by a recent writer in the *Contemporary Review*, who defends Hamilton, and complains that Mr. Mill has wholly misunderstood him. In paying attention to this latter work I shall perhaps be blamed by some critics, who think that an author loses dignity in noticing "ephemeral literature." But I do not myself share this view. Writers of great ability, amongst others Dr. Dorner and Mr. Mansel, have contributed to the journal in question; and a writing of ability does not lose in importance because it appears in the pages of a Review. It may be remembered that Hamilton's article on the Unconditioned made its appearance in this very manner.

Mr. Mill says: "The question really at issue in Sir W. Hamilton's celebrated and striking review of Cousin's Philosophy is this: Have we or have

we not an immediate intuition of God? The name of God is veiled under two extremely abstract phrases, 'the Infinite' and 'the Absolute.'"* Mr. Mill proceeds to say: "In this contest it is almost superfluous for me to say that I am entirely with Sir W. Hamilton. The doctrine that we have an immediate or intuitive knowledge of God, I consider to be bad metaphysics, involving a false conception of the nature and limits of the human faculties, and grounded on a superficial and erroneous psychology. Whatever relates to God I hold with Sir W. Hamilton to be matter of inference; I would add, of inference a posteriori."†

The writer in the *Contemporary Review* asserts that Mr. Mill has wholly missed the meaning of Hamilton's doctrine concerning the incognisability of the Absolute and the Infinite, and says that he will make this clear. He takes objection at once to Mr. Mill's statement that "'the name of God is veiled under two extremely abstract phrases, 'the Infinite and the Absolute,'" and complains that by substituting the word God in place of the Infinite, Mr. Mill wholly perverts Hamilton's argument. He has failed, we are told, to see that the Infinite treated of by Hamilton is "the pseudo-Infinite," which is wholly different from "the true Infinite," and so far from being identical with God, or like God, is the name of nothing at all.

We have, however, seen, from the previous

* Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 32.

† Ibid. p. 33.

examination of Hamilton's language, that he cannot have designed to prove the incognisability of a mere zero; that he evidently supposes himself to have proved that the *true Infinite* is inconceivable and incognisable. And the reviewer himself would scarcely deny that what is said concerning the true Infinite has its application to God. Mr. Mill therefore, as it seems to me, is perfectly right in supposing that the debate between Hamilton and Cousin has reference to the knowledge of God, and was understood by both parties to derive its principal importance from this circumstance.*

But is Mr. Mill right in representing Hamilton as denying *only* an *intuitive* or *immediate* knowledge of the Unconditioned, of the Infinite? Does Hamilton admit that we can obtain a knowledge of the Unconditioned by means of reasoning—by demonstration or inference?

We have seen that, according to Hamilton, consciousness includes all phenomena of the conscious subject; all modes concerning which we can say, "this mode or operation is mine." And we have seen that according to him no faculty of

* It need not, however, be supposed to concern *exclusively* the knowledge of God. As has been previously pointed out, the assertion that "the Unconditioned is incognisable," may be employed as a compendious mode of stating that every thing which is unconditioned is incognisable. Now Hamilton, there is reason to believe, considers that every thing as it really exists, not altered by subjective forms, conceptions, predications, is unconditioned. If this be so, then in maintaining the incognisability of the Unconditioned, he would signify that we cannot know any thing as it is, unaltered by the medium through which we perceive or cognise it.

this description is fitted to afford us knowledge of the Unconditioned, because all such faculties imply subject and object, relation and difference. It is evident that if this reasoning is correct, no ratiocination of which we are conscious can afford us knowledge of the Unconditioned; that while we are conscious we cannot obtain the knowledge in question, either by immediate knowledge or by a train of reasoning. And it is further evident that ratiocination in a state of ecstasy, or unconsciousness, would not be considered by Hamilton as more efficacious for the purpose in question, since he considers that out of consciousness we can neither know nor reason.

Further, the following point is to be noticed: Hamilton particularly contends that *thought* is valid only when exercised about the Conditioned; that if we exercise it about the Unconditioned, we use it illegitimately, and produce antinomy. Now if first principles are valid only for the Conditioned (as, according to Mr. Mill, is decidedly proclaimed by Hamilton), and if thought, the indispensable instrument of reasoning, is valid only within the same sphere—how can we, by means of ratiocination, obtain conclusions which are valid for the Unconditioned, and give us information concerning it? How can our conclusions have a validity or a scope which is denied to our premises, and to the organ by means of which our reasonings are conducted?

Indeed, Hamilton tells us that if we could

obtain knowledge of the Unconditioned at all, it would be by a faculty like that asserted by Schelling, which is one of *intuition*. So that apparently he regards knowledge of the Unconditioned by inference, as more hopelessly beyond our reach than knowledge of it by intuition.

If Hamilton thought that we can attain a knowledge of God by means of ratiocination, he could not approve Kant's assault on Rational Theology. Kant examines the reasonings by which it is attempted to prove that God exists, that he made the world by design, &c. He pronounces them all defective, and asserts that this deficiency is due to the nature of our thought and reason, which are not fit to be exercised about such matters, transcending, as they do, the field of experience. Now Hamilton declares his opinion that Kant has established his case, and has effectually demolished Rational Theology. He could not reasonably do this if he thought that we can obtain a knowledge of God by means of ratiocination or inference.

It seems to me, therefore, that Hamilton would utterly repudiate the doctrine, that we can obtain a knowledge of an infinite or an unconditioned object by deduction or inference. And if Mr. Mill were to set forth those propositions relating to God, to a Supreme Being, Infinite or Absolute, which he regards as "matter of inference"—if he were to attempt to establish by inference even the existence of such a Being,—he would be liable to the cen-

sure of Hamilton's negative teaching. He would be exposed to its censure, as not contenting himself with the observation of Phenomena, and the generalisation of Phenomena into laws; as vainly endeavouring to restore that Rational Theology which Kant had thoroughly destroyed; as making a transcendental illegitimate use of his thought and reasoning faculty.*

The writer in the *Contemporary Review* having accused Mr. Mill of entirely misunderstanding Hamilton's doctrine about the Unconditioned, undertakes to expound it properly himself.

He tells us that "'the unconditioned' is a term which, while retaining the same general meaning, admits of many applications, particular or universal. It may be the unconditioned as regards some special relation, or the unconditioned as regards all relations whatever. Thus there may be the unconditioned in Psychology—the human soul considered as a substance ; the unconditioned in Cosmology—the world considered as a single whole ;

* It is curious to notice the result obtained by combining the expositions of Mr. Mill and his Reviewer. Hamilton contends that we cannot conceive or know the Unconditioned by consciousness. This, says Mr. Mill, means that we cannot know God by immediate knowledge or intuition. No, says the Reviewer, the question is not about the knowledge of God ; the Unconditioned whose knowledge is thus denied by Hamilton is not God, but an empty figment, a zero. If Mr. Mill's interpretation of the word Consciousness and the Reviewer's of the phrase "the Unconditioned" were correct, we should thus obtain for Hamilton the singular thesis that we cannot conceive or know a void figment by *immediate* knowledge, but only *mediately*, by means of ratiocination or inference.

the unconditioned in Theology—God in his own nature, as distinguished from his manifestations to us; or, finally, the unconditioned in Ontology—the being on which all other being depends. . . . .

"The general notion of the unconditioned is the same in all these cases, and all must finally culminate in the last, the unconditioned *par excellence*. The general notion is that of the One as distinguished from the Many, the substance from its accidents, the permanent reality from its variable modifications. Thought, will, sensation, are modes of my existence. What is the *I* that is one and the same in all? Extension, figure, resistance, are attributes of matter. What is the one substance to which these attributes belong? But the generalisation cannot stop here. If matter differs from mind, the *non-ego* from the *ego*, as one thing from another, there must be some special point of difference which is the condition of the existence of each in this or that particular manner. Unconditioned existence, therefore, in the highest sense of the term, cannot be the existence of *this* as distinguished from *that;* it must be existence *per se*, the ground and principle of all conditioned or special existence. This is the unconditioned, properly so called; the unconditioned in Schelling's sense, as the indifference of subject and object; and it is against this that Hamilton's arguments are directed.

"The question is this: 'Is this Unconditioned a mere abstraction, the product of our own minds;

or can it be conceived as having a real existence *per se*, and, as such, can it be identified with God as the source of all existence? Hamilton maintains that it is a mere abstraction, and cannot be so identified; that far from being a name of God, it is a name of nothing at all. 'By abstraction,' he says, 'we annihilate the object, and by abstraction we annihilate the subject of consciousness. But what remains? Nothing.' When we attempt to conceive it as a reality, we 'hypostatise the zero.'"

Had the above exposition been propounded by a French or German philosopher, by a partisan of Brown, or by any writer whom Hamilton desired to combat, what abundant matter for censure would he have found in it! He would have pointed out, in the first place, that there is a radical error in talking about four different kinds or sorts of Unconditioned; since each of these sorts, being different from the other, must be conditioned in a special way; so that the four different sorts of (so-called) Unconditioned are in reality four Conditioneds. He would have pronounced it equally erroneous to define "the general notion of the Unconditioned" as that of "the one *as distinguished* from the many." He would have summarily condemned such a definition as suicidal, on the ground that it defines by distinction and difference what is conceived only as exclusive of both.

He would have made a similar objection on being told that the notion of the Unconditioned is that of the *substance* as distinguished from its acci-

dent. Substance implies relation; that which *substat* must be related to something *under* which it stands. So that here again the definition would be censurable, as defining by relation and distinction what is conceived only as exclusive of both.

Similarly, when the notion in question is further explained as that of "*permanent* reality," he would have raised the same objection. Permanence implies relation; *per* (through) is a particle which implies relation. Moreover, permanence implies duration. To say that A is permanent, is to say that A endures through a portion of time. So that the notion of the Unconditioned, as thus expounded, involves the idea of time; and the so-called Unconditioned is conditioned in time.

Again, when we are taught that "the Unconditioned *par excellence*," "the Unconditioned properly so called," is "the ground and principle of all conditioned existence"—"the being on which all other being depends"—there is here again the same objection: relation and distinction are introduced into the very definition of the Unconditioned.

It is manifest that if the Reviewer's account of the matter had fallen under the adverse criticism of Hamilton, it would have experienced little mercy at his hands. He would have declared that the pretended Unconditioned defined in it was, in every case, nothing but a conditioned and a relative; and that the attempted exposition betrayed complete ignorance of the very elements of the subject.

Further we are told by the Reviewer, respecting

the four different Unconditioneds, that the three first are to be distinguished from the last, called the Unconditioned in Ontology. The Unconditioned in Theology is awful and divine: the Unconditioned in Ontology is nothing at all—nugatory and ridiculous.

Now, according to the Reviewer's own account, the Unconditioned in Theology is not a Phenomenon, not God as he merely seems, but God as he actually and verily is. But discourse about this pertains to Ontology, not to Phenomenology. Thus the Unconditioned in Theology and the Unconditioned in Ontology are bound together; if the latter is to be ridiculed as a chimera, the former must share the same fate. Or again, suppose we define the Unconditioned in Theology as the primal being, the first cause, on which all conditioned or contingent being depends, this Unconditioned also pertains to Ontology, and discourse about it is ontological, not phenomenological. Thus we cannot separate the Unconditioned in Theology from the Unconditioned in Ontology, treating one as real and divine, the other as nugatory and ridiculous. Discourse about an unconditioned divine Being is at one and the same time Theology and Ontology. It is ontological Theology; *i. e.* it is discourse about God, not merely as he seems, but as he actually and verily is. If Ontology is chimerical, such Theology is chimerical likewise.

Similarly, the Unconditioned in Psychology and Cosmology are not Phenomena, not the soul and

world as they merely seem to us, but the soul and world as they really and actually are, as ὄντως ὄντα. And discourse about these pertains not to Phenomenology, but to Ontology; so that if the Unconditioned in Ontology is nonsensical, the Unconditioned in Psychology and Cosmology are so too. In other words, if Ontology is chimerical, ontological Psychology and ontological Cosmology have the same character.

If Hamilton had held that the Unconditioned in Theology is God, and the Unconditioned in Ontology nothing at all, it was his duty to inform us of this important distinction; and it behoved him to let us know whether the Unconditioned, whose incognisability he undertakes to demonstrate in his celebrated article, were the former or the latter—God as he is, or Nothing. But he has nowhere notified to us the distinction in question. He seems fully persuaded that if he can prove the Unconditioned to be incognisable, he thereby destroys Ontology; and that if he destroys Ontology, he thereby prevents philosophers from speculating about any thing as it actually is; about the soul as it is, about the world as it is, or about God as he is. The supposition that there are three Unconditioneds (in Psychology, Cosmology, and Theology) whose incognisability is not proved by his reasonings, would not have been endured by him. Such a supposition would render his attack on Rational Theology a complete failure; for, manifestly in such a case he would not have closed

the door which Kant, as he complains, left open to the Absolutists; on the contrary, he would himself have left it wide open. Philosophers, in the case supposed, might laugh at his labours. They might say, "You have with great labour demonstrated the incognisability of the Unconditioned in Ontology; but this does not affect us, for this Unconditioned is nothing at all, and we do not seek to obtain knowledge about it, since the knowledge of Nothing is not the aim or consummation of *our* philosophy. We desire to obtain knowledge about the Unconditioned in Psychology, in Cosmology, and in Theology; and you have not proved these to be inconceivable or incognisable. We can speculate about the soul as it is, the world as it is, and God as he is, just as freely as if you had never written. Your examination of the laws and conditions of consciousness has not the slightest efficacy in restricting us to the observation of phenomena, and the generalisation of those phenomena into laws—the domain within which you pretend to confine us."

From our previous examination of Hamilton's language, we have seen that he could not have believed himself to be proving the incognisability of a zero; that he evidently imagined himself to be engaged in a far more important task, viz. in proving that knowledge of a most exalted and valuable kind is beyond the reach of man in his present state. And it is to be observed that the Reviewer himself, though laying down that the

Unconditioned in Ontology is a mere zero, nevertheless proceeds to connect it with God, and to treat it as something awful and mysterious. Thus, while telling us that the Unconditioned *par excellence* is the name of nothing at all, he nevertheless assures us that the notion of the Unconditioned, *in all cases*, is that of *permanent reality*. Here the notions of blank vacuity and permanent reality are treated as interchangeable, and the mere zero figures as the permanently real. Already it claims some connection with the Eternal and Divine.

Again, we are told that the Unconditioned in Ontology, the Unconditioned *par excellence*, is "the being on which all other being depends," "the ground and principle of all conditioned existence;" while a few lines further on we are told that it is a mere zero, the name of nothing at all. Thus we find ourselves introduced to the esoteric doctrine that the Unconditioned in Ontology, though a mere zero, is the being on which all other being depends, the ground and principle of the universe.

Again, the Reviewer asserts that the various different Unconditioneds, that in Psychology, in Theology, &c., all finally culminate in the last—the Unconditioned in Ontology, or the Unconditioned *par excellence*, which, as we have learnt, is a mere zero. Thus there comes to light the further esoteric doctrine, that the Divine Unconditioned, God as he really is, *culminates* in the nugatory Unconditioned, the ridiculous zero.

In another passage the Reviewer tells us: "By

our immediate consciousness of a moral and personal nature, we are led to the belief in a moral and personal God; by our ignorance of the Unconditioned, we are led to the further belief that behind that moral and personal manifestation of God there lies concealed a mystery—the mystery of the Absolute and the Infinite." So that, behind the moral and personal God (a mere conditioned and relative) there lies concealed the mystery of the Unconditioned *par excellence*, the Absolute Unconditioned, the ground and principle of the Universe, in which (though it is a mere zero, the name of nothing at all) Nature and God finally culminate.

Again, the Reviewer, after quoting extracts from the leading authorities among the fathers and the schoolmen, expounds them as teaching the following doctrine: "We believe that God in his own nature is absolute and unconditioned; but we can only positively conceive him by means of relations and conditions suggested by created things. We believe that His own nature is simple and uniform, admitting of no distinction between various attributes, nor between any attribute and its subject; but we can conceive Him only by means of various attributes, distinct from the subject and from each other. We believe that in His own nature He is exempt from all relations of time; but we can conceive Him only by means of ideas and terms which imply temporal relations . . . Our thought, then, must not be taken as the measure and limit of our belief; we think by means of relations and

conditions derived from created things; we believe in an Absolute Being, in whose nature these conditions and relations, in some manner unknown to us, disappear in a simple and indivisible unity."

Thus, then, though we may talk of God as many different Persons, we ought to believe that his real nature is purely simple and uniform, not admitting of distinction of Persons; that in his real Absolute Being the three different Persons about whom theologians talk vanish in some manner unknown to us—are sublated, and disappear. We ought to believe that the real nature of God is unconditioned, unpropertied, free from plurality, relation, and difference; imperfections which are unavoidably attached to it when distorted by the action of our predicating faculty, but which Faith assures us not to sully the nature of God as he really is, as ὄντως ὤν, unaltered by our conceptions and categories. If this be the case, when Hamilton proves that we cannot conceive any thing unconditioned, because thought implies plurality, relation, and difference, while the nature of the Unconditioned excludes these, his argument *does* apply to the conception of God. If the real nature of God is purely unconditioned, in the sense of unpropertied; if in it there is no distinction of persons, attributes, or faculties—no plurality, relation, or difference—then, manifestly, the arguments urged by Hamilton against Cousin and Schelling prove with perfect cogency that we cannot conceive or cognise God as he really is.

Under such circumstances it is perfectly correct to contend that God as he is cannot be known by us while conscious, since consciousness implies plurality, relation, and difference; and that he cannot be known by us in an ecstatic unconscious state, since in such a state conception and knowledge cease.

Doctrines which interchange God and Nothing, representing the Unconditioned now as Divine, the ground and principle of the Universe, and now as nugatory, devoid of attributes, the name of nothing at all, may seem strange and almost blasphemous to some persons; but they are by no means novel, being abundantly found in the teaching of Buddhists, Neo-Platonists, Gnostics, and others. The Valentinians taught that the Divine ground or principle was *βυθός*, an abyss, unpropertied—unconditioned. Plotinus, with his school, taught that the Divine ground or principle was *τὸ ἓν ἁπλοῦν*, devoid of consciousness, of thought, of faculties. The Kabbalah teaches that "God is boundless in his nature. He has neither will, intention, desire, thought, language, or action. He cannot be grasped or depicted, and for this reason is called En Soph, and as such he is in a certain sense not existent."*

Many Christian theologians have taught doctrines of a similar kind. Cardinal de Cusa quotes with approval the statement of "magnus Dionysius," who asserts "intellectum Dei magis accedere ad *nihil* quam ad aliquid." And Hamilton quotes

* See the Kabbalah, by Dr. Ginsburg, p. 63.

with approval the statements of Cusa, declaring that his doctrine, so far as it is negative, coincides with the principles of his own philosophy. And a great number of other Christian theologians are quoted by Mr. Mansel, and writers on his side, setting forth that though we speak of God as many different Persons, and as endowed with many different attributes, such as power, wisdom, goodness, justice, &c., yet all this is spoken merely anthropopathetically, and that in the real Divine Nature as it verily is, undistorted by the predicating forms of our intellect, there is no distinction of one Person from another, nor of one attribute from another, nor even of substance from attribute—nothing but a perfectly pure unity, totally devoid of relations, diversity, attributes, faculties.

A doctrine of this nature affords a good deal of opportunity for Protean tactics; and Hamilton's disciples seem disposed to avail themselves of these, so that whatever account be given of Hamilton's doctrine, they may denounce it as grossly erroneous. Is it represented that Hamilton, in reasoning about the knowledge of the Unconditioned, intends to reason about the knowledge of God? O! they exclaim, this is a gross error. The Unconditioned has no attributes or properties; it is the barest of abstractions, a foolish figment, a mere zero. Hamilton wishes to prove this, and to show that God and every thing real must be conditioned.

On the other hand, is it urged that the Uncon-

ditioned about which Hamilton reasons is nothing at all, and that in proving its incognisability, Hamilton proves merely the incognisability of a zero? O! it is exclaimed, this is a gross error. Though the *notion* of the Unconditioned is a mere zero, the Unconditioned itself is not a zero: its existence cannot be denied without Atheism. All the best divines teach that though we speak of God as conditioned, yet in reality God is unconditioned, unpropertied, devoid of faculties. In proving that we cannot know the Unconditioned, Hamilton proves that we cannot know God as he really is, and thus effectually annihilates Metaphysical Theology; a result of immense value.

By shifting backwards and forwards from one of these views to the other, and by occasionally mixing them both together, it may be hoped to obtain for Hamilton's doctrine the protection of obscurity. But such a method of procedure is not calculated, on the whole, to be more successful than that of the ostrich, when, burying its head in the sand, it imagines itself to be invisible, and safe from its pursuers.

CHAPTER VII.

We have already seen from our examination of Hamilton's statements, that he evidently regards knowledge of the Unconditioned as greatly superior to knowledge of the Conditioned. The former is knowledge of actual fact, of that which really is; while the latter is knowledge only of that which seems,—the reflection of a reality we cannot know, —an ignorance or nescience rather than a knowledge.

But why, it may naturally be asked, does Hamilton regard that which is conditioned as shadowy and comparatively unreal, and that which is unconditioned as so much more real and important? What is the meaning which, in taking such a view, he attaches to the words Conditioned and Unconditioned?

He can hardly be using the word "condition" in the sense which properly belongs to the German word "bedingung," according to which the aggregate of conditions, "bedingungen," constitute the cause. For in this sense of the word, the condi-

tioned (das Bedingte) is not shadowy or unreal. That which is contingent, that which stands to something else in the relation of conditionatum to conditio (or of bedingtes to bedingung), may nevertheless be perfectly real. For instance, according to many theologians, the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity are not self-existent, but stand to the First Person in the relation of bedingtes to bedingung, and yet the Second and Third Persons are considered by these Theologians to be perfectly real. Again: the great body of Theologians regard the world—sun, stars, earth, animals, men, angels, devils, as contingent, as standing to God in the relation of conditionatum to conditio, and yet as real. And Hamilton probably would concur in this view. To regard the self-existent or non-contingent Being as alone real, and every thing else as unreal, would probably be denounced by him as Pantheism.

Mr. Mill considers this meaning of the word Condition (*i.e.* that in which it corresponds with the German word Bedingung), and shows that it does not suit Hamilton's doctrine.* After trying some other senses, which he does not find satisfactory, Mr. Mill suggests the following. "He means by Conditions something similar to Kant's Forms of Sense, and Categories of Understanding . . . . . He is applying to the mind the scholastic maxim—'Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis.' He means that our per-

* See Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, pp. 51 and 52.

ceptive and conceptive faculties have their own laws, which not only determine what we are capable of perceiving and conceiving, but put into our perceptions and conceptions elements not derived from the thing perceived or conceived, but from the mind itself."*

Thus the doctrine, "to think is to condition," would mean, that in thinking we put into the object of thought elements derived from the mind itself, so that the Phenomenon cognised by us differs from the Noumenon, the external co-efficient which co-operates with our faculties in producing the Phenomenon. The "conditioning" action of the intellect thus understood is that described by Bacon, when he says that "intellectus humanus suam naturam naturæ rerum immiscet, eamque distorquet et inficit." The Noumenon, the real external agent, or thing as it is, is *unconditioned*, because not altered or distorted by the action of the intellect.

When this is the sense attached to the words "conditioned" and "unconditioned," we readily understand why Hamilton considers the Unconditioned as real, and the Conditioned as only the distorted reflection of a reality—as that which seems to us, not that which actually is.

The writer in the *Contemporary Review*, previously noticed, gives an explanation of the matter much agreeing with that of Mr. Mill. He says: "The assertion that all our knowledge is relative,

* Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 54.

in other words, that we know things only under such conditions as the laws of our cognitive faculties impose upon us, is a statement which looks at first sight like a truism, but which really contains an answer to a very important question—'Have we reason to believe that the laws of our cognitive faculties impose any conditions at all? that the mind in any way reacts on the objects affecting it, so as to produce a result different from that which would be produced were it merely a passive recipient?' 'The mind of man,' says Bacon, 'is far from the nature of a clear and equal glass, wherein the beams of things shall reflect according to their true incidence; nay, it is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced.' Can what Bacon says of the fallacies of the mind be also said of its proper cognitions? Does the mind, by its own action, in any way distort the appearance of the things presented to it; and if so, how far does the distortion extend, and in what manner is it to be rectified? To trace the course of this inquiry from the day when Plato compared the objects perceived by the senses to the shadows thrown by the fire on the wall of a cave, to the day when Kant declared that we know only phenomena, not things in themselves, would be to write the history of philosophy. We can only at present call attention to one movement in that history, which was, in effect, a revolution in philosophy. The older philosophers in general distinguished

between the senses and the intellect, regarding the former as deceptive, and concerned with phenomena alone; the latter as trustworthy, and conversant with the realities of things. Hence arose the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible world, between things as perceived by sense and things as apprehended by intellect, between Phenomenology and Ontology. Kant rejected this distinction, holding that the intellect as well as the sense imposes its own forms on the things presented to it, and is therefore cognisant only of phenomena, not of things in themselves. The logical result of this position would be the abolition of ontology as a science of things in themselves, and *a fortiori*, of that highest branch of ontology which aims at a knowledge of the Absolute κατ' ἐξοχήν, of the unconditioned first principle of all things. If the mind in every act of thought imposes its own forms on its objects, to think is to condition, and the unconditioned is the unthinkable."*

In this exposition the Reviewer seems to attach to the word "condition" the sense previously suggested by Mr. Mill. Our thought is held to "condition" objects, because it puts into them elements which do not exist in the external thing as it actually is, undistorted by our minds. And this real thing is said to be "unconditioned," because it is not altered, modified, distorted, by the action of our Senses or Intellect.

* Contemporary Review, No. II. p. 185.

In one of Hamilton's statements of the doctrine of Relativity, he explains it thus: "Our knowledge is relative; 1°, because existence is not cognisable absolutely and in itself, but only in special modes; 2°, because these modes can be known only if they stand in a certain relation to our faculties; and, 3°, because the modes, thus relative to our faculties, are presented to and known by the mind only under modifications *determined by these faculties themselves.*"* This last paragraph expresses the doctrine ascribed to Hamilton by Mr. Mill and the Reviewer, as above quoted, viz. that the objects of our cognition are made to a considerable extent by our own faculties, and that in consequence of this they differ from the external agent which co-operated with our faculties in producing them.

In illustration of his view, Hamilton says: "Suppose that the total object of consciousness in perception is = 12; and suppose that the external reality contributes 6, the material sense 3, and the mind 3, this may enable you to form some rude conjecture of the nature of the object of perception."†

In this example the Phenomenon, the object of cognition, is supposed to contain 12 elements, of which 6 are furnished by the external agent (the Noumenon), while 6 are furnished by our Senses and Intellect. This action of our faculties (Sense and Intellect) is what Hamilton calls the "condi-

* Lectures, vol. i. p. 148. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 129.

tioning" action of our faculties, in virtue of which to perceive, or to think, or to know, is to "condition," and all the objects of our thought and knowledge are "conditioned." The external agent (Noumenon) which co-operated with our faculties in producing the Phenomenon, putting it into 6 elements, while they on their side put into it an equal number, is regarded by Hamilton as "unconditioned," because it has not been thus altered or distorted by our faculties, *i.e.* it contains no elements which have been put into it by our Senses or by our Intellect. In this state, according to Hamilton, it is not capable of being cognised by us, our knowledge of the qualities of the Phenomenon giving us no knowledge of the qualities or nature of this Unconditioned Agent.

Thus, then, the doctrine which asserts that we perceive and know only the Conditioned, that to think is to condition, that the Unconditioned is totally inconceivable and incognisable, will signify that every act of perception and of intellectual predication is a modifying and distorting act, putting into the perceptible or cogitable Phenomenon elements which do not exist in the Noumenon; and that we cannot perceive, conceive, or know any thing which is not modified and distorted by this conditioning action of our Senses and Intellect.

This doctrine coincides with that expressed by Schopenhauer, "dass zwischen den Dingen und uns immer noch der Intellekt steht, weshalb sie nicht nach dem, was sie an sich selbst seyn

mögen, erkannt werden können." The intellect is considered to be a distorting medium, *standing between* us and the real thing, and *preventing* us from conceiving or cognising it as it really is. And it is not admitted that there is any medium other than the Senses and Intellect, which is free from this defect, and which enables us to view or cognise the real thing without distortion. Evidently, this Gnosiological doctrine is one of great importance.

This doctrine of Hamilton is frequently commented on by Dr. MacCosh, who does not approve of it. He speaks of Hamilton as expounding a doctrine "which makes us perceive objects under forms, and with additions imposed by the perceiving mind, which landed him avowedly in a system of nescience."* Again, he describes his doctrine as "thoroughly Kantian." "It makes the mind look at things, but through a glass so cut and coloured that it gives a special shape and hue to every object." "To suppose that in perception or cognition proper we mix elements derived from our subjective stores, is to unsettle our whole convictions as to the reality of things; for if the mind adds three things, why not thirty things—why not three hundred? till we are landed in absolute idealism."†

We see from the above extracts that Hamilton does not profess to decide how far the mind "conditions" its object, *i. e.* puts into it elements of its

* Defence of Fundamental Truth, p. 12. † Ibid. p. 219.

own, and thus makes it different from the Noumenon; yet he clearly asserts that it does exercise this action. He does not say we cannot tell whether the objects which we cognise are conditioned by the mind, and rendered different from the Noumenon, or whether they are unconditioned, identical with the Noumenon; but he asserts that they certainly are conditioned, and that in cognising them we do not cognise the Noumenon. And further, he asserts that the "conditioning" action of the Mind takes place in *all* cases, so that in no single case do we know the Unconditioned, *i.e.* the genuine external Reality unaltered or undistorted by our minds.

Since, according to the doctrine above explained, every act of predication is a "conditioning" act, putting into the object of thought some element which does not exist in the Noumenon, or external co-efficient, the unconditioned reality can have no predicate at all predicable by our minds. Thus it comes to pass that the unconditioned, the real *par excellence* (that which is undistorted by our minds), is regarded as totally devoid of predicable attributes, as having no affirmation, subjective or objective, under the conditions of our intellect.

Together with his doctrine of Relativity Hamilton conjoins that which he calls Natural Realism; and in the latter he appears to maintain what in the former he denies. Whereas in the former he asserts that we know only that which seems, not that which is, in the latter he declares that

we know real external things, and qualities or properties as they exist in real external things. Passages setting forth this doctrine have been so copiously quoted by Mr. Mill and Mr. Stirling, that it is not needful for me to cite many of them. It is sufficient to notice the following.

Hamilton declares that the true belief, the belief given by consciousness, and entertained by all who accept its authority, is this: "*I believe that I immediately know a material world existing;* in other words, *I believe that the external reality itself is the object of which I am conscious in perception.*"* He represents the "Hypothetical Realist" as refusing to accept this deliverance of Consciousness, and as propounding a false doctrine, which he describes as follows: "The Hypothetical Realist contends that he is wholly ignorant of *things in themselves*, and that these are known to him only through a vicarious phenomenon, of which he is conscious in perception:

'*Rerum*que ignarus *imagine* gaudet.'"†

Here the Hypothetical Realist is blamed as making two erroneous statements: that we are wholly ignorant of things in themselves, and that man "rerum ignarus imagine gaudet." Yet both these statements have been made by Hamilton himself, who, in his doctrine of Relativity, maintains *totidem verbis* that we cannot know things in themselves, and that man "Rerum ignarus imagine gaudet."‡

* Discussions, p. 89. † Ibid. p. 57. ‡ See above, p. 172.

Again: in his Dissertations Hamilton contends that we have an *immediate* knowledge of external objects, and he explains immediate knowledge as follows:

"A thing is known *immediately* or *proximately*, when we cognise it *in itself; mediately* or *remotely*, when we cognise it *in or through something numerically different from itself.*"* "In a presentative or immediate cognition there is *one sole object;* the thing (immediately) known and the thing existing being one and the same."†

And he follows up this doctrine at length in his dissertation on the Primary and Secondary Qualities of Body; from which Mr. Mill has given copious extracts. He here divides the qualities of body into three classes, called by him primary, secondary, and secundo-primary; and he maintains that qualities of the first and third kind are apprehended by us, as they actually exist in external bodies.‡ He considers that Extension, Divisibility, Size, Density, Figure, Incompressibility, and several other qualities, are all perceived by us in this way; *i.e.* as they really exist in external bodies.

Concerning Extension, he states that "we have not merely a notion, a conception, an imagination, a subjective representation of Extension, called up or suggested in some incomprehensible manner to the mind, on occasion of an extended object being

* Dissertations, p. 805. † Ibid.

‡ See Hamilton's Dissertations, Note D. Mill's Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 19.

presented to the sense; but that in the perception of such an object we really have, as by nature we believe we have, an immediate knowledge of that external object *as extended.*"*

Mr. Mill, in commenting on this teaching, observes: "There is nothing wonderful in Sir W. Hamilton's entertaining these opinions; they are held by perhaps a majority of metaphysicians. But it is surprising that, entertaining them, he should have believed himself, and been believed by others, to maintain the Relativity of all our knowledge. What he deems to be relative, in any sense of the term that is not insignificant, is only our knowledge of the Secondary Qualities of objects; Extension, and the other Primary Qualities, he positively asserts that we have an immediate intuition of, 'as they are in bodies,'—'as modes of a not-self;' in express contradistinction to being known merely as causes of certain impressions on our senses, or on our minds."† And Mr. Mill proceeds to ask, which of the two doctrines, that of Relativity or of Natural Realism, was really held by Hamilton.

A writer in the *Westminster Review* thinks that Hamilton may have really held both doctrines at different times. "Mr. Mill," he remarks, "is of opinion that one of the two must be taken 'in a non-natural sense,' and that Sir W. Hamilton either did not hold, or had ceased to hold, the doctrine

* Dissertations, p. 842. Quoted by Mr. Mill in his Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 18.

† Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 20.

of the full relativity of knowledge, the hypothesis of a flat contradiction being in his view inadmissible. But we think it at least equally possible that Sir W. Hamilton held both the two opinions in their natural sense, and enforced both of them *at different times* by argument, his attention never having been called to the contradiction between them. That such forgetfulness was quite possible, will appear clearly in many parts of the present article."*

Afterwards the Reviewer again observes: "What surprises us most in Sir W. Hamilton's inconsistencies is the amount of self-forgetfulness which they imply."† And he gives the following explanation of this forgetfulness: "It would appear that the controversial disposition was powerful with Sir W. Hamilton, and that a present impulse of that sort (as has been said respecting Bayle, Burke, and others) not only served to provoke new intellectual combinations in his mind, but also exercised a Lethæan influence in causing obliviscence of the old."‡

Mr. Stirling concurs with Mr. Mill in regarding the two doctrines in question as irreconcilable, and censures Hamilton as sometimes a Phenomenalist and sometimes a Presentationist.

Hamilton was aware that there is an appearance of discrepancy between his various statements, and he makes the following remarks for the purpose of explanation:

* Westminster Review, January 1866. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

"I have frequently asserted that in perception we are conscious of the external object immediately and in itself. This is the doctrine of Natural Realism. But in saying that a thing is known in itself, I do not mean that this object is known in its absolute existence, that is, out of relation to us. This is impossible, for our knowledge is only of the relative."*

Here the doctrine that our knowledge is only relative is explained as signifying that we do not know that which is out of relation to us. "Absolute existence" is treated as equivalent to "existence out of relation to us." But that which is out of relation to us is not an object of our belief, since whatever is an *object* to us is related to us. That which is out of relation to us is not a Noumenon, since a Noumenon, ex hypothesi, is an object of our νοῦς, and acts upon us, producing in conjunction with our faculties the Phenomenon. So that the doctrine of Relativity, thus explained, comes to nothing at all. It does not proclaim the incognisability of Noumena, of the real external coefficients which, in conjunction with our faculties, produce Phenomena; it does not proclaim the incognisability of things as they really exist, undistorted by sense or intellect; it merely proclaims the incognisability of a nonentity or zero, alike incogitable and incredible, and is thus quite insignificant, enouncing no limitation or imperfection of our faculties.

* Dissertations, p. 866, foot-note.

Such an explanation is entirely null, and instead of elucidating Hamilton's position, tends only to induce a belief that Hamilton did not clearly apprehend the meaning of his own statements; for it is quite evident that he propounds his doctrine of Relativity as one which enounces a serious limitation of our faculties, not as one which proclaims the incognisability of a zero.

The writer in the *Contemporary Review*, previously mentioned, who is a warm advocate of Hamilton, undertakes to explain clearly his doctrine, and to show that Mr. Mill and Mr. Stirling have wholly misunderstood it. He declares that Hamilton's doctrine, when properly interpreted, is throughout perfectly consistent. "In answer to Mr. Mill's question, which of Hamilton's two 'cardinal doctrines,' Relativity or Natural Realism, 'is to be taken in a non-natural sense?' we must say neither. The two doctrines are quite compatible with each other, and neither requires a non-natural interpretation to reconcile it to its companion."*

The source of Mr. Mill's error, according to the Reviewer, is this, that he has regarded "phenomena" as mere modes of mind, whereas "a phenomenon may be material as well as mental." "The thing *per se* may be only the unknown cause of what we directly know, but what we directly know is something more than our own sensations. In other words, the phenomenal effect is material as well as the cause."†

* Contemporary Review, February 1866. † Ibid.

Unquestionably, if we would try to reconcile Hamilton's statements, we must ascribe to him the view that Phenomena may be material as well as mental. Since, on the one hand, he repeatedly declares that we can know *only* Phenomena, and on the other, that we *can* know material objects external to the mind, we must ascribe to him the opinion that the external material objects which we cognise are Phenomena, unless we at once give up all hope of harmonising his statements.

It may be observed that there is nothing unusual in calling external material objects Phenomena. Sun, moon, trees, and the various physical objects and events are ordinarily called Phenomena. But it must further be observed, that if Hamilton regards material external bodies as Phenomena, while other philosophers mean by Phenomena modes of the mind or Ego, he has no right to quote those philosophers as supporting his doctrine, merely because they say with him that we can know only Phenomena. Kant may agree with him verbally in saying that we know only Phenomena; but if in Kant's language Phenomena are modes of the Ego, while in Hamilton's language this is not the case, then Hamilton's doctrine must not claim (as it sometimes does) the support of Kant's authority.*

* It is, however, quite possible that some expositors might attribute to Kant the view that extended phenomena are external and material. Others, however, might insist that this externality and materiality must be purely ideal; that otherwise we must

Let us suppose, then, that according to Hamilton material extended bodies cognised by us are Phenomena, and that we know extension and other qualities as they exist in these external bodies. So far his doctrine would present no peculiar difficulty; or rather so far it would be quite commonplace.

But difficulty arises when we have to take this doctrine in company with the doctrine of Relativity, taught by Hamilton with equal earnestness, which declares that every act of predication is an act of distortion, so that no quality is conceived or known by us as it exists "unconditioned,"—unmodified, or undistorted by the mind. And in consequence of this it is proclaimed that our science is but the reflection of a reality we cannot know; that man "Rerum ignarus imagine gaudet."

For clearly if we conceive extension and numerous other qualities as they exist in real external Nature, not altered or distorted by our minds, it is wholly incorrect to maintain that every act of thought is an altering or distorting act; and that in consequence of this we can have no knowledge of any quality as it exists "unconditioned," unchanged by our minds. Again: if the Extension conceived and known by us is Extension as it actually exists in undistorted Nature,

abandon most important parts of Kant's doctrine. Warm admirers of Kant have complained that his teaching in reference to this point is not uniform; that the matter inserted in the Second Edition of his Critique greatly marred the integrity of the Idealism propounded in the First.

then it is the very Extension known by God; and our knowledge of Extension, so far as it goes, must be correct and conformable with the divine knowledge. For it cannot be supposed that there are truths of real Nature of which we are cognisant and God is ignorant; if, therefore, there is any fact in real Nature (undistorted by our minds) which we know, that same fact must be known by God. Suppose, for instance, the sun, as it really exists, not changed or distorted by any action of our minds, really has that figure which Astronomers ascribe to it, then that truth must be known not only by Astronomers, but by God; and so far human knowledge will be a knowledge of real fact, and will be conformable with divine knowledge. Again: if the extension of natural things, not changed by our minds, is the same as the extension of which Euclid treats, then the truths demonstrated by Euclid will be truths common to the human and to the Divine Intelligence; common to all minds which know Extension as it is.

But if such were the state of the case, what could Hamilton mean by proclaiming that our knowledge is *merely relative;* and how could all his complaints and desponding utterances be justified? If he is not satisfied with knowing the truths which God knows, what can his exigencies be? If our knowledge is knowledge of real fact, and our truths the same as those known by God, with what grace or propriety could he disparage such knowledge as *merely* relative, as a very poor

and meagre affair, the reflection of a reality we cannot know, a nescience or ignorance, &c. &c.?

There seems to be only one way of proceeding if we would not, at this point, abandon the attempt to reconcile Hamilton's statements. We must apparently hold that all qualities conceived by us, whether primary or secondary or any other, are conditioned, *i.e.* changed or distorted by our minds, and are not identical with qualities as they exist in external Nature, unchanged by our minds, and as they are known by God. Extension as conceived by us must be Extension formed or changed by our minds; not Extension as it exists in Nature, undistorted by our minds, and as it is known by God. The geometrical truths demonstrated by Euclid must not be regarded as true to the Divine Mind; in which case their truth may rightly be termed merely relative, and Hamilton's disparaging utterances may plead justification. The like must hold good of Duration, Mobility, Incompressibility, and generally of all qualities: none of these can be known by us as they exist unchanged by our minds, undistorted or unconditioned. And what has been said of mathematical science must be true of all other human sciences; none of these must be regarded as furnishing to us truths which are true in relation to God. And when Hamilton asserts that external material bodies are known by us as they are, or that certain qualities of these bodies are known by us as they are, we must for like reasons hold that these material bodies are merely

Phenomena, changed or distorted by our minds (conditioned), and that in cognising them we do not cognise real Nature, as it exists unchanged by our conceptions and categories (*i. e.* unconditioned). We must recognise that these material Phenomena may differ to an unknown extent from the Noumena or real things which concurred with our minds in producing them.

According to this view of the matter we should know primary and secondo-primary qualities as they exist in conditioned material bodies: but this knowledge would still be merely knowledge of the Conditioned, and would give us no knowledge of things as they really exist undistorted by our senses and predicating faculty, by our categories and conceptions, and as known by God.*

* We have seen that Hamilton makes very different statements concerning the knowledge of "things in themselves," declaring sometimes that we do know the "thing in itself," at other times that such knowledge is wholly beyond our reach. We may suppose that by the expression "thing in itself" he sometimes means the external bodily Phenomenon, as distinguished from our own mental modes; while sometimes he means by it the unconditioned reality, the Noumenon or unknown cause, which in conjunction with our faculties produces the conditioned cognisable Phenomenon.

Some writers have thought to explain the matter by saying that when Hamilton affirms the cognisability of "things in themselves," he is talking "cosmologically;" when he denies it, he is talking "ontologically." But this explanation would not avail us, unless we clearly understood the difference between talking cosmologically and talking ontologically. And this difference might be explained very variously, according to the philosophical doctrine of the expositor. Some people might think that to talk ontologically is to talk in conformity with real fact, while others might

We thus come to the following doctrine concerning the Perception and Cognition of material objects.

The Noumenon (the Unconditioned Reality) and our minds act conjointly. This joint action produces a Phenomenon, an object of thought and knowledge, which is material and extended. We cognise extension and various other qualities as they exist in this material Phenomenon; but this cognition of the qualities of the Phenomenon gives us no knowledge of the qualities of the Noumenon —of the Unconditioned Reality. The Phenomenon is extended, hard, of a certain figure, &c.; but the external agent or cause which, acting in conjunction with our minds, produced the Phenomenon, may not be hard or extended; may not be in Space or Time at all.

Similarly, because the Phenomenon is conditioned and cognised as material, we are not authorised to affirm that the Noumenon which co-operated in producing it is material. If we call this Noumenon material, we must understand thereby merely that it is of such a nature that, acting in conjunction with our faculties, it pro-

think that it is to talk nonsensically or chimerically, — about nothing at all.

If Hamilton sometimes talked cosmologically, and sometimes ontologically, he ought to have notified and explained the circumstance. To use two different modes of talking, neither of them explained, and to propound in these two modes statements which, so far as words go, are flatly contradictory, is not a procedure calculated to illuminate the dark places of philosophy.

duces a material Phenomenon. We must take care not to regard it as material in the same sense as the Phenomenon; *i. e.* we must take care not to ascribe to it extension, hardness, figure, mobility, existence in Time, &c. For if we do so, we throw over the doctrine of Relativity, claiming to conceive and cognise that which is unconditioned, undistorted by our Sense and Intellect.

In this way we obtain a doctrine which combines the two positions taught by Hamilton with equal emphasis, viz. 1. that we *do* know extension and other qualities as they exist in external bodies; and 2. that we can know *only* the Conditioned, *only* the Phenomenal; that we can know nothing of the actual reality, undistorted by the conditioning action of the Mind.

In examining more closely the doctrine to which we have been thus conducted, the following point is to be noticed, viz. that Hamilton distinguishes two objects in perception or cognition, one immediately cognised, present in our sensitive organism, and one external to our organism. Thus, when, in common parlance, we are said to see the sun, according to Hamilton the object immediately perceived is an affection of our retina, or rays of light in contact with our organism; while the sun at a distance of many millions of miles is perceived or cognised mediately, by means of the phenomenon in the retina or sensorium. Similarly, when, according to common parlance, we see a horse at a distance of 20 yards, here,

according to Hamilton, there are two objects of perception or cognition; one the object present in the sensorium, the other a horse at a distance of 20 yards.

Here, then, we have to ask, Does Hamilton regard the objects out of our organism, *e. g.* the sun in the heavens, or the horse at a distance of 20 yards, as Phenomena or as Noumena? as objects conditioned by our Minds, or as unconditioned things into which our Minds have put no elements?

If he regards them as Noumena, not distorted by our minds, then, according to his doctrine that we know only Phenomena, they cannot be objects of our thought or knowledge. We are not at liberty to affirm that they are extended, or that they have any cognisable property further than this,—that they co-operate with our minds in producing the phenomena cognised by us. It would not even be legitimate to affirm that they are at a distance from us, and to affirm what that distance is would be altogether wrong. But such a position would manifestly be opposed to Common Sense. Mankind in general firmly believe that objects out of their organism—horses, trees, stones, &c., are objects of thought and knowledge, are extended, and have other known properties. Astronomers believe that the sun at a distance of more than 90 millions of miles from the earth, is an object of knowledge, and can legitimately be treated of by Reason and Science. They believe

that it is extended, that it has a certain figure, known by them, that it exists in Time, moves in a certain way, &c. We cannot, therefore, ascribe to Hamilton the opinion that the objects in question, external to our organism, are Noumena, not Phenomena, without bringing his doctrine into conflict with that Common Sense, to whose authority he professes implicit deference.

Being thus compelled to ascribe to him the opinion that material bodies external to our organism are cognised by us, and that the bodies so cognised by us are Phenomena, let us consider his doctrine according to that hypothesis.

As we have seen, he teaches that all Phenomena, all objects of our thought and knowledge, are Conditioned, *i. e.* altered by the distorting action of our Sense and Intellect, and consequently differing from the undistorted reality to an unknown extent. Thus, then, external objects—bricks, stones, &c., a horse at a distance of 20 yards, the sun at a distance of more than 90,000,000 of miles—being Phenomena cognised by us, are conditioned by our minds. And it is impossible for us to know how much of these Phenomena is produced by the unknown external cause, and how much by our senses and intellects. Six parts of the sun may be produced by the Noumenon, three parts by our Senses, and three parts by our Intellects; or the proportions may be very different.

Our perception or cognition of the sun takes place as follows: a Noumenon, whose nature is

wholly unknown to us (for we have no knowledge of the Unconditioned), acts in conjunction with our minds or faculties. The result is that a material Phenomenon is produced, of a spheroidal form, more than 800,000 miles in diameter, and more than 90,000,000 miles distant from us; but we cannot say how far this Phenomenon resembles the unknown Noumenon which concurred with our Sense and Intellect in producing it. This Noumenon may not be spheroidal, may not be extended at all.

Here, however, we obtain a result by no means conformable with Common Sense. Ordinary people do not object to call the sun in the heavens, or a horse at 20 yards distance, a Phenomenon; meaning that it is an object which appears to them. But when they are told that these objects, being Phenomena, are conditioned by our minds, and that in consequence of this they differ to an unknown extent from the actual Reality, undistorted by our Sense and Intellect, they are not prepared to concur with this doctrine. The notion that our mind co-operates in making a horse at a distance of 20 yards, or a mountain at a distance of a mile, or the sun at a distance of more than 90,000,000 of miles, is one that never passed through their thoughts, and when propounded to them seems so strange as to be absurd. And when they are told that, owing to this conditioning action of our mind, the Phenomenon may be quite different from the Noumenon, or undis-

torted Reality ; when they are told that the phenomenal sun cognised by us as a round body of more than 800,000 miles diameter, is produced partly by our minds and partly by an unknown thing, which may not be in Space, or extended at all, they will not assent to this view of the matter. Or, again, if they are told that a horse cognised by them as running about in a field, is a Phenomenon, formed partly by their minds, and partly by a horse as it really is, an unknown Noumenon, which may have no head, body, or legs, and may not be in Space or Time at all, they will not recognise this as Common Sense.

We see, therefore, that Hamilton's doctrine is not ultimately benefited by supposing that the Phenomena to the cognition of which he restricts us are in some cases external and material. Whether we regard Phenomena as modes of mind, or as material, the difficulties attending his teaching are in either case equally great. It appears that we cannot consistently hold the two main doctrines taught by him. We must either give up the Reidian doctrine of Common Sense, or we must abandon the doctrine of the Conditioned, which regards thought as a distorting medium, and proclaims that on this account we can know nothing as it really exists, unaltered by our notions, categories, and conceptions, *i. e.* Unconditioned. It would seem that Dr. MacCosh is perfectly right in an opinion which he expresses on some occasions, that Hamilton took portions of

doctrine from Reid and from Kant, which cannot be amalgamated.

In further examining Hamilton's doctrine, it would be proper to ask the following question: Is the material Phenomenon produced by the joint action of the Mind and the Noumenon permanent or transitory? Does it continue to exist after the joint action of the Mind and the Noumenon has ceased? or, does it cease to exist as soon as the Mind begins to cognise other objects and produce other Phenomena? Whatever answer be given to this question, great difficulties would be incurred unless the authority of Common Sense were summarily overruled.

Let us consider the doctrine in question, in reference to the cognition of minds and persons. According to common parlance, we know other persons and know their characters; but according to the doctrine under consideration, what we really know is a Phenomenon, created partly by the external thing and partly by our minds, and which, owing to the conditioning action of our minds, may differ from the external co-efficient, or cause, to an unknown extent. We cannot, therefore, know how far the nature or character of the real person, as he actually exists, resembles the nature of the phenomenal effect cognised by our minds.

This doctrine would have an important bearing on Theology. It is said in Theology that we can think of Christ in his human nature, and can have

a knowledge of him. But according to the doctrine in question, what we think of and know in this case is a Phenomenon created in a great measure by our own minds, and which, owing to their conditioning action, may differ to an unknown extent from the Noumenon Christ; from Christ as he actually is, undistorted by our Sense and Intellect.

Again; in Theology it is said that we can think of God and know him: the Psalms and the writings of Divines are full of statements to this effect. But according to the doctrine in question, what we think of and know in this case is a Phenomenon, created in a great measure by our minds, and conditioned by them. This Phenomenon differs greatly from the Divine Noumenon, from God as he actually is. God as he really is is Infinite, Non-Phenomenal, Unconditioned; while the Phenomenon cognised by us is Finite, Phenomenal, Conditioned; and it is impossible for us to know how far the Noumenon may be unlike the Phenomenon. Thus, though we are said to think of God and to know God, what we really think of and know is not God, but a finite Phenomenon, exceedingly different from him. Indeed, we are assured that this difference is so great, that it would be blasphemy to suppose that God as he really is is of the same nature as the Phenomenon conceived and cognised by us.

It is further to be observed that since according to the doctrine in question we know nothing

of Noumena, we are not authorised to affirm that all minds condition phenomena in the same manner; that the same Noumenon X, acting conjointly with A and acting conjointly with B, will produce in both cases the same phenomenal result. The Noumenon Christ acting on beings of a certain constitution may produce a Phenomenon, not only entirely unlike his own real nature, but also entirely unlike the Phenomena which he may produce when acting on beings constituted in a different way. And similarly, in the so-called cognition of God, the finite Phenomena cognised by different beings may not only be very unlike God, but may be very unlike one another. This being so, the Noumenon which acting on our minds produces a Phenomenon which excites in us a sentiment of moral approbation, acting on the minds of angels or of inhabitants of distant stars may produce a Phenomenon which excites in them a sentiment of moral disapprobation. The case will resemble that which occurs when different persons cognise the taste of chocolate, where the same Noumenon acting on subjects differently constituted, produces Phenomena pleasant to some and unpleasant to others. Each person will cognise accurately the Phenomenon conditioned and conceived by him: but all will be equally unable to derive from this cognition any knowledge of the nature of the Noumenon.

And as our so-called cognition of God is only the cognition of a finite Phenomenon, which may

be exceedingly different from God, we cannot know what the real moral nature of God is. The finite Phenomenon cognised by us may be conditioned as wise, good, just, &c., and may be cognised by us as having those qualities, but we cannot tell how far the Noumenon may have qualities resembling those which we thus conceive in the Phenomenon. Consequently, we cannot know the nature of the Divine Morality, and must recognise that its standard may be very different from that which regulates our human notions. And this being the case, we ought to recognise that different classes of beings may be regulated by very different moral standards, and that our standard cannot legitimately claim any absolute or universal validity. When, therefore, different beings, acted on by the same Noumenon, produce different Phenomena, some conditioning the phenomenon as morally good and others as morally bad, none of them will be entitled to say, my constitution or conditioning faculty is right, and that of the other subjects wrong.

If such be the real nature of the doctrine of the Conditioned, and such the results involved in it, then it would be quite natural that all who embrace that doctrine should pour forth their lamentations in unison with Hamilton, proclaiming that we must despair of philosophy, that our so-called science is very poor and worthless, that all our efforts to know end in doubt and failure, and have for their consummation the Knowledge of Nothing.

The question arises, Did Hamilton really hold the doctrine which thus asserts the Relativity of Moral Truth? If it had been pointed out to him that it follows as a consequence from the principles which he has laid down, would he have accepted and approved it? From some of his statements we might infer that he would have disapproved and rejected the doctrine in question. For instance, he tells us that "intelligence reveals prescriptive principles of action, *absolute and universal*, in the Law of Duty;"* and again, that "intelligence recognises" "the *unconditional* law of duty, and an *absolute* obligation to fulfil it." Here he appears to embrace the doctrine of Kant, so strongly blamed by Mr. Mansel as a fount of bitter waters: he appears to assign to the principles of Morality an absolute and universal, not a merely relative character.

As, however, these utterances are incidental, and are nowhere amplified or systematised, it might be held by some interpreters that they are not to be construed strictly: that Hamilton merely means by them to affirm the existence of a moral standard valid in relation to men living on earth at the present time, and does not intend to assert the validity of this standard in relation to all moral beings, to possible inhabitants of remote stars, to angels, or to God. The expositors who take such a view might plead in support of it, that Hamilton has so repeatedly and so explicitly affirmed the

* Lectures, vol. i. p. 29.

mere relativity of *all* our knowledge, that we cannot suppose him to have attributed to truths of the moral Reason an absolute universal validity. Again, they might point out that one great article of his Philosophy is that we know nothing free from distortion: in which case Moral Truths and Principles cognised by us must be altered and distorted by our minds, and cannot be identical with Truths as they are known pure and undistorted by God. And they might urge that if Hamilton, after teaching such doctrines, proceeds to affirm that we can know Moral Principles of an eternal and immutable character, valid in relation to all spiritual Beings, and conformable with the real principles of Divine Goodness, he would be quite as obnoxious as Kant to the strictures of Mr. Mansel, as trying to send forth from the same fountain sweet and bitter waters, and as building again the things which he had destroyed, thereby making himself a transgressor. Further, they might point out that if Hamilton does ascribe to Moral Principles, cognised by our Reason, an absolute or universal validity, his doctrine would not take away from philosophers the right to criticise statements of professed revelations concerning the moral attributes and conduct of God: in which case it would be no obstacle to the Vulgar Rationalism.

Under such circumstances the authority of Hamilton, like that of Butler, cannot be invoked with much effect, either by the Kantian, who maintains the absolute validity of moral principles,

or by the Protagorean, who denies this. It is possible that in reference to this question Hamilton's combative disposition might have induced him to defend two different theses, according to the manner in which the subject might have come before him. Suppose that Brown, or some French philosopher, had taught that our moral principles are merely relative; that principles concerning right and wrong which are true on earth might be false in Orion; that the conduct and character which excite the sentiment of approbation in a rational man might excite disapprobation in angels and in God; or *vice versâ*. Not improbably, Hamilton would have violently denounced such a doctrine as pernicious and detestable, as obliging us to regard our nature as a lie, and our Creator as perfidious.

But suppose again, that a rationalist or philosopher had assailed some of the Calvinistic dogmas, of which Hamilton is asserted to have been a staunch adherent:—suppose, for instance, a philosopher had impugned the teaching of Calvin concerning Predestination or Vicarious Punishment, objecting that these doctrines ascribed to God a moral character inconsistent with the rational idea of Goodness; and suppose that a champion of the Calvinistic doctrine had endeavoured to rebut these objections, by urging that moral truths and principles are relative, not absolute; that the Divine standard of Morality may be very different from the human; that thought is only of the con-

ditioned and finite, and cannot profitably be exercised about God, who is unconditioned and infinite; that its true business is to generalise phenomena into laws, and not to busy itself with theological speculations;—it is by no means impossible that Hamilton would have approved this reasoning, and praised it as a sound and valuable application of the grand doctrine of Relativity. And it is possible that his polemical disposition might have led him to adopt both these different views at different times, causing him to forget during his advocacy of the one what he had urged as champion of the other.

APPENDIX A.

ON KANT'S IDEALISM.

In the foregoing chapters concerning the teaching of Kant I have made no reference to the Commentary on his Critique by Dr. Kuno Fischer, which has recently been translated, with additional disquisitions, by Mr. Mahaffy. I was not aware of the existence of this work till after the preceding chapters were sent to the press. Since that was done I have seen the work in question, and finding in it interesting matter relating to subjects which I had previously noticed, I add here remarks having reference to some points of importance.

I notice that Mr. Mahaffy signalises very clearly the difference between Kant's doctrine concerning transcendental illusion and that ascribed to him by Sir W. Hamilton; and after having explained this, he asks, not unnaturally, "Was there ever a more flagrant falsification of a philosopher's opinions?"*

* Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary, Introduction, p. lxiv.

Both Dr. Fischer and Mr. Mahaffy express opinions of much interest concerning Kant's Idealism; and the question whether he taught a uniform doctrine on this subject. Dr. Fischer agrees with Schopenhauer in thinking that he did not do so; that in the First Edition of the *Critique* he taught a pure Idealism, in a clear and unambiguous manner, while in his Second Edition he marred and contradicted this. Mr. Mahaffy disputes this view of the case, holding that there was no such change; that both editions teach consistently the same doctrine.

In examining Hamilton's teaching we saw that very different opinions may be entertained concerning the nature of Phenomena. Thus it may be held that all Phenomena are modes of the Ego; or it may be held that some Phenomena are external material things, not modes of the Ego. In order to understand the real meaning of Kant's doctrine, it is essential that we should know what view he holds concerning the nature of Phenomena. Unless we know this, we cannot understand the nature of Noumena (Dinge an sich selbst). And as the distinction between Phenomena and Noumena lies at the very root of Kant's philosophy, uncertainty on the above points casts doubt and obscurity over the whole of his doctrine.

One of the portions of matter introduced into Kant's Second Edition, which is regarded by Schopenhauer and Dr. Fischer as incompatible with the decided Idealism of the First, is the so-

called Refutation of Idealism. In this Kant undertakes to prove "the existence of external objects in space" — "das Daseyn der Gegenstände im Raum ausser mir." And he calls these objects in Space "Dinge" and "wirkliche Dinge."* So that, having previously contended that objects in Space are merely Phenomena, not things in themselves (Dinge an sich selbst), he now contends that these objects are Things, real things, and really external. Here, therefore, his doctrine seems to assume a Realistic form, similar to the Realism of Hamilton; which combines the two positions: 1. that we can know only Phenomena; and 2. that some Phenomena are real external things, differing from the Ego and its modes.

Dr. Fischer wholly refuses to regard Phenomena in this realistic light; maintaining that Phenomena in all cases are nothing but modes of the Ego, representations within us; and that if we deny this, and regard them as real external things, not modes of the Ego, we spoil the whole of Kant's doctrine.

Dr. Fischer's opinions being of much interest, I quote some of his statements. He says:

"The objects of knowledge are: either things without us, real things (*res*), or merely representations within us (*ideæ*). Let us call the first view Realism, the second Idealism; and let us put to Kant the question: What objects, according to his system, are cognoscible? Which are the only

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft, ed. Hartenstein, p. 211 et seq.

possible objects of our cognition, *res* or *ideæ?* He has already determined all knowledge to be experience, because its only objects are *phenomena.* But the phenomena are felt by our perception, represented by our intuition, connected by our imagination, made objective by our understanding and its concepts. There is in phenomena nothing which is not subjective. They are nothing but our *representations*, and can be nothing else. It is perfectly inconceivable how a thing existing apart from our power of representation—a *thing per se*—could come with all its properties into our faculty of representation, and ever become a representation. But, if there be no representation of a thing, how can there be a knowledge of it? It follows from this, that the only possible objects of knowledge can never be anything but our representations. This is the very basis of the Critick of the Pure Reason, and its original form is perfectly in accordance with this spirit. In this sense, it is *thoroughly idealistic.* The whole problem of cognition lies on this safe basis. If the objects of all possible cognition are merely phenomena—that is, representations in us—and altogether subjective, how is a cognition of them possible, which must yet be universal and necessary? How is an objective experience of them possible? This is the question of the Critick. *This* question makes the investigation both novel and difficult. Berkeley knew that all our objects were only representations; but had no suspicion how from

such objects any cognition should ever come ; so his doctrine lapsed into the scepticism of Hume. We must not, then, identify Kant with Berkeley, as Garven did, in his well-known criticism. Kant, indeed, agreed with Berkeley in this, that he too allowed no objects of knowledge but *representations ;* but he differed from Berkeley in this, that he discovered the *universal* and *necessary* representations, which are not themselves objects, but produce objects—the necessary forms of representation both of the understanding and the sensibility; and in this very discovery consists the Critick of the Pure Reason.

"To make the distinction between himself and Berkeley plain, Kant might have laid much more stress on the critical character of his investigations, but should never have weakened their idealism. This was the mistaken line which he took in his Second Edition. Here he wrote, as an appendix to the 'Postulates of Empirical Thinking,' that 'Refutation of Idealism' which was directed immediately against Berkeley. And his whole demonstration comes to this, that it is only the existence of things without us which first renders possible the perception of ourselves. As if, in the true spirit of the Critick, things without us could be anything else than things in space—as if space could be anything else than our representation—as if things without us could be anything but our spatial representations! This is no refutation of Berkeley, but merely a flat denial of Idealism, by

which Kant abandoned his own teaching in the most inconceivable manner."*

Again :

"All objects of possible experience are phenomena. All phenomena are nothing but representations (vorstellungen) within us. . . . This is *the strictly idealistic teaching* of the critical philosophy, which does not admit of the smallest modification without shaking to its foundation and destroying the very same critical philosophy."†

"We have repeatedly pointed out the fact that the Critick of the Pure Reason, in its original form, carries out that doctrine accurately and consistently, but in its succeeding editions weakens this idealistic doctrine, blunts (as it were) its edge, gets rid of its unambiguous and positive expression, which removes any possible doubt. Nay, further, in certain passages it favours remarkably the opposite view, which it introduces in certain places, like a spurious interpolation. The succeeding Edition of the Critick, as compared with the first, differs from it partly in omissions, partly in additions, both referring to the idealistic doctrine —the former to conceal it, the latter to let its contradictory have its say. Such an addition was the 'Refutation of Idealism,' which Kant in the Second Edition of the Critick adds to the postulates of empirical thinking. Such omissions are to be found in the deduction of the Categories, and in the doc-

* Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary, p. 131.

† Ibid. p. 172.

trine of the distinction between phenomena and noumena. But in no part of the First Edition was the language of idealism so plain, unambiguous, and palpable, as it was here in the refutation of rational psychology. These decisive passages were suppressed in the following Editions, and only lately brought to light again by Schopenhauer's 'Critick of the Kantian Philosophy.' There can be no doubt that Kant weakened the strict idealism of his doctrine, not because he doubted it, nor because he wanted courage to maintain so daring a theory, but merely because he wished to make his teaching, to a certain extent, popular and exoteric. Common (or exoteric, or dogmatical) sense was satisfied to accept the Kantian philosophy with this little admission, that phenomena were also something beyond our mere faculty of representation—not much, but just something to be set down for our satisfaction as a mere unknown X."*

In numerous passages of the First Edition Kant expresses a view concerning the nature of Phenomena precisely agreeing with that expressed in the above passages by Dr. Fischer. He declares himself to embrace the doctrine of transcendental Idealism, according to which Matter is nothing but "Erscheinung, die von unserer Sinnlichkeit abgetrennt nichts ist:"—"a Phenomenon, which apart from our sensibility is nothing." He proceeds to say that, according to this doctrine, Matter

* Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary, p. 173.

is a kind of Vorstellungen, representations, which are called external, not as referring to real non-Egos, but merely because they refer perceptions to Space, which Space, however, really "*is in us.*"* And again he says: "Nun sind aber äussere Gegenstände (die Körper) blos Erscheinungen, mithin auch nichts anderes, als eine Art meiner Vorstellungen," *i. e.* "external objects (bodies) are *merely* Phenomena, consequently only a sort of my representations." And yet again he says, in a passage which seems to be perfectly explicit: "in unserm System diese äusseren Dinge, die Materie nämlich, in allen ihren Gestalten und Veränderungen, nichts als blosse Erscheinungen, d. i. Vorstellungen in uns sind;" *i. e.* "in our system these external things, that is to say, Matter in all its forms and changes, are nothing but mere phenomena, *i. e.* representations within us." And there are many other passages of a similar kind.

The passages above quoted occur in the critique of the fourth paralogism of Transcendental Psychology, which appeared in the First Edition of the *Kritik*, but was suppressed in the Second.†

* "So ist sie bei ihm nur eine Art Vorstellungen (Anschauung), welche äusserlich heissen, nicht als ob sie auf an sich selbst äussere Gegenstände bezögen, sondern weil sie Wahrnehmungen auf den Raum beziehen, in welchem Alles ausser einander, er selbst der Raum aber in uns ist." *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, ibid. p. 646.

† Kritik der Reinen Vernunft, ibid. pp. 644-652. A translation of this critique is given by Mr. Mahaffy, along with translations of other passages similarly suppressed in the Second Edition.

They show that Kant's language, in his First Edition, concerning the nature of Phenomena, fully agreed with that employed by Dr. Kuno Fischer; asserting that Phenomena are not real things external to me (ausser mir), but that they are representations (vorstellungen) within me (in mir). But Schopenhauer and Dr. Fischer complain that in the Second Edition the language is changed; that passages such as those previously quoted, declaring that Phenomena are Vorstellungen in mir, are suppressed, while Kant actually undertakes to demonstrate that objects in Space, Phenomena, are wirkliche Dinge ausser mir.

It is, however, important to observe that while Kant asserts extended Phenomena to be real external Things, and undertakes, in his Refutation of Idealism, to prove this point, he nevertheless intimates to us that this reality and externality are *empirical*. He tells us that the Phenomena are *empirically* real, and *transcendentally* ideal. This distinction is hinted in the Refutation of Idealism, though it is kept there somewhat in the background; but it is very clearly stated in the critique of the fourth paralogism previously mentioned; as in the following passages: "Der transcendentale Idealist kann hingegen ein empirischer Realist, mithin, wie man ihn nennt, ein Dualist seyn."* And again: "Also ist der transcendentale Idealist ein empirischer Realist, und gesteht der Materie, als Erscheinung, eine Wirklichkeit zu, die nicht

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft, ibid. p. 646.

geschlossen werden darf, sondern unmittelbar wahrgenommen wird."* And at the same time we are told: "Wir können mit Recht behaupten, dass nur dasjenige was in uns selbst ist, unmittelbar wahrgenommen werden könne, und dass meine eigene Existenz allein der Gegenstand einer blossen Wahrnehmung seyn könne."†

Thus these passages declare that the transcendental Idealist regards Matter as a Phenomenon *within us:* since it is a Phenomenon *immediately perceived* (unmittelbar wahrgenommen), and since only that which is within us can be perceived *immediately.* And we are told very unmistakably that transcendental Idealism is considered by Kant to be the correct doctrine; as for instance in the following statement: "Für diesen transcendentalen Idealism haben wir uns nun schon im Anfange erklärt."‡

The distinction thus made is, I believe, never retracted in the Second Edition: but in various parts of that edition the *reality* and *externality* of matter (or of extended phenomena) are insisted upon, without its being distinctly pointed out that this reality and externality are merely *empirical*, not *transcendental.* Thus, as it seems to me, it may fairly be maintained that both Editions teach the same doctrine, viz. that extended phenomena are *empirically* external, while *transcendentally* they

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Ibid. p. 647.
† Ibid. Ibid. p. 644.
‡ Ibid. Ibid. p. 646.

are *internal*, blosse Vorstellungen *in mir*. But, as it seems to me, it may with reason be asserted, that this doctrine is more clearly taught in the First Edition: that in the Second Edition, the reality and externality of extended phenomena are insisted on, without attention being called to the circumstance, that all the while they are *transcendentally* blosse Vorstellungen *in mir*.

Thus, then, it appears that we cannot understand the very foundation of Kant's doctrine, unless we understand what, according to his view, is the true nature of Experience; and what is the difference between empirical and transcendental. This question is connected with the previous one concerning the nature of Phenomena, as unless we understand the difference between Phenomena and Noumena, we cannot rightly understand that between empirical and transcendental.* It would be necessary to know whether according to Kant's view we have any experience of real external things, or whether all objects of experience, even those which seem to us most completely different from ourselves, are really and truly modes of ourselves—vorstellungen in mir. Again, it would be necessary to know whether experience is created by two factors, an Ego, and an external Noume-

* For Kant explains the words "transcendental" and "empirical" by means of the words "Ding an sich selbst" and "Erscheinung" (Phenomenon). A conception, he tells us, is used *transcendentally*, when it is applied to "Dinge an sich selbst;" *empirically*, when it is applied to Erscheinungen, *i. e.* to Phenomena.

non, or whether it is produced by the Ego alone. Until these points were settled, we could not understand the difference between the empirical and the transcendental.

Again: it is to be noticed, that though Kant ascribes Reality to extended Phenomena, and undertakes to prove that they are real, he does not appear to think that they have the same sort of Reality as Noumena, or Things *per se*. As we have seen, in the passages previously quoted, he speaks of bodies as *blosse* Erscheinungen, *mere* Phenomena. And in explaining the "transcendental" and "empirical" use of conceptions, he tells us: "der transcendentale Gebrauch eines Begriffs ist dieser: dass er auf Dinge überhaupt und an sich selbst, der empirische aber, wenn er blos auf Erscheinungen, d. i. Gegenstände einer möglichen Erfahrung, bezogen wird."* And he goes on to say that "*nur* der letztere," *i. e. only* the empirical use of the conception is possible. And language of this kind is repeatedly used by him, indicating that according to his view it is a limitation and imperfection of our faculties that we can know *only* Phenomena, and cannot know Noumena, or Dinge an sich selbst.

Thus, then, it appears that according to his doctrine Phenomena and Noumena (Dinge an sich selbst) may both in a certain sense be spoken of

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Von dem Grunde der Unterscheidung aller Gegenstände überhaupt in Phaenomena und Noumena. Ibid. p. 226.

as Real: but that Noumena are real in a higher and more eminent sense than Phenomena. In order, therefore, that we may properly understand his philosophy, it is necessary that we should understand his view concerning the nature of Reality, and the two different sorts of Reality: what is that sort of Reality which he predicates of Phenomena, and what is that higher and more eminent sort of Reality which belongs to Noumena, or Dinge an sich selbst. And further, it behoves us to understand what is the true nature of Ideality from a transcendental point of view, so that we may not misapprehend him when he tells us that extended Phenomena, though empirically *real*, are transcendentally *ideal*. We can at once see that an examination of these points would be attended with a good deal of difficulty. But when further we remember that, according to a main article of Kant's doctrine, neither the category of Reality nor that of Ideality can be legitimately applied to Noumena, so that whether we assert them to be real or ideal, we in either case speak improperly, our sense of the difficulties of the task before us becomes intensified.

In like manner, and for like reason, we could not apply assertorically to Noumena the categories of externality or of non-Egoity. Whether we might assert them to be external or internal, to be modes of myself, or different from myself, in all these cases the assertions would be illegitimate; indeed, as we are frequently told by Kant,

would be wholly unmeaning, devoid of all Bedeutung or Sinn.

The differences of opinion above pointed out among Kant's commentators, and the difficulties attending their discussion, of which we have had a glimpse, illustrate in a striking manner the difficulty and obscurity which attach to the fundamental questions of Metaphysics. Kant was a thinker of extraordinary power and profundity; he occupied many years in thinking out his doctrine concerning knowledge; and he has evidently endeavoured to explain it to the best of his power.* The whole of his doctrine is based on the distinction between Phenomena and Things *per se* or Noumena: this distinction, as Schopenhauer tells us, is the vital point of his philosophy: if we do not clearly understand this, we cannot clearly understand any part of his system. And yet we find that his most conscientious students and admirers, after devoting great time and labour to the study of his works, cannot agree among them-

* It has been thought indeed, as we have seen, by some of his warmest admirers, that this was not the case as regards his Refutation of Idealism, and the other qualifications of his Idealistic doctrine made in his Second Edition; that in this part of his teaching he sought to win adherents and smooth over opposition, by concealing the real nature of his principles. But this view of the matter is very questionable: the apparent vacillation and inconsistency of his language may be easily accounted for by the difficulties attending a really earnest attempt on his part thoroughly to understand and elucidate his doctrine concerning knowledge; difficulties which, as we have sufficiently seen, might be found by him very great.

selves as to the real nature of Phenomena; nor consequently as to the real nature of Things *per se*, and the distinction between the two. And further, we have seen that the difficulties attending this question are so great, that possibly there never will be a full agreement among his commentators upon this point; one so fundamental, that until it is clearly understood, obscurity attaches to the whole of his doctrine.

Mr. Mahaffy observes that some persons have strangely misunderstood the purport of Kant's "Refutation of Idealism," regarding it as an attempt to demonstrate the existence of Noumena; a view which he thinks can only have arisen from want of attention. Evidently this interpretation is connected with the source of difficulty previously mentioned, viz. that Kant's ablest expositors have not satisfactorily ascertained what he understands by a Thing in itself (Ding an sich selbst) or Noumenon; and in what he considers it to differ from a Phenomenon. As we have seen, some of his expositors think that a real external thing, really different from modes of the Ego, is a Noumenon; so that when Kant undertakes to demonstrate that objects in Space are really external, and are not modes of the Ego, he appears to them to be demonstrating that objects in Space are Noumena, and thus to be spoiling and upsetting his own doctrine. And, indeed, they may point out that Kant's language countenances such a view; for he blames the Idealism of Berkeley,

as regarding "den Raum, mit allen den Dingen, welchen er als unabtrennliche Bedingung anhängt, für Etwas, das *an sich selbst* unmöglich sey."* Here, therefore, he appears to intimate that Space may have an existence "an sich selbst," and that extended things may be "Dinge an sich selbst;" and that if we deny this, we fall into the Idealism of Berkeley, and commit error. When he uses such language, it cannot surprise us that he should have been regarded as impugning his own previous doctrine, and teaching that extended objects may be "Dinge an sich selbst," or Noumena.

In addition to these considerations, there was probably another tending to produce the view in question, viz. the consideration of the task which it was incumbent on Kant to perform, if he was really to refute the scepticism dreaded as a natural consequence of his doctrine. Let us awhile examine this point.

The real objection entertained by many persons to Kant's doctrine is, that it paves the way to Egoism; *i. e.* to the hypothesis that I myself, by my own solitary action, have created the whole universe, sun, moon, earth, stars, and all the personages who, as I conceive, people life and history: —my father and mother, my friends and contemporaries, French and English, Greeks and Persians, Jews and Romans, Cesar, Alexander, Cromwell, Moses, Christ. According to this view, Life might

* Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Widerlegung des Idealismus. Ibid. pp. 211-214.

be regarded as a consistent dream, entirely the product of my own mind or faculties. By some action of these, of which I am not conscious, I produce objects, which I project, objectify, constitute into a non-Ego, and thus people the universe with objects, and make my own drama of Life, as I do in a dream. Such is the view asserted with enthusiasm by the Baccalaureus in Faust, supposed to be heated with the fumes of Fichtean philosophy.

> " Die Welt sie war nicht eh' ich sie erschuf;
> Die Sonne führt' ich aus dem Meer herauf;
> Mit mir begann der Mond des Wechsels Lauf;
> Auf meinen Wink, in jener ersten Nacht,
> Entfaltete sich aller Sterne Pracht."

It is easy to see how Kant's doctrine is supposed to conduct to this view. For Kant is understood to teach that Space and Time are nothing but forms or subjective conditions of sensibility; that by the employment of its forms and categories the mind creates objects quite different from the Noumenon, or " Ding an sich selbst;" so that Phenomena have extension, duration, unity, plurality, activity, and a great number of qualities which do not exist in the Noumenon. This being so, it is natural to ask, why may not we consider the Phenomenon, the object of thought and knowledge, to be *entirely* produced by the mind or Ego? why should we bring in an unknown X—a Noumenon, a non-Ego, as a co-efficient helping to produce the Phe-

nomenon? If the Mind can do so much, why may it not do all? If it can create Space and Time, and clothe the phenomenon with Extension, Duration, Unity, Plurality, Relation, &c., why may it not clothe it with the categories of Existence, non-Egoity, and Reality? In this case objects produced entirely by the Mind would be cognised by us as really existent things different from ourselves. Though purely our own creations, they would by a differentiating action of the Mind be projected, objectified, and made into real non-Egos. Then might we glorify ourselves with the Baccalaureus as having brought into being Sun, Moon, Earth, Stars, Cesar, Alexander, Hannibal, Christ, and generally the whole world and all its contents. This, in fact, was the consummation at which Fichte arrived, in developing Kant's principles, as understood by him; and he thought it impossible to extricate himself from it, except by calling to his aid Faith, as a Deus ex machinâ.

Indeed, the language employed by Kant in his First Edition might be thought in many places to teach the doctrine of Egoism not merely by implication, but directly and explicitly. Let us listen to Mr. Mahaffy's statements on this point. He says: "It is the mind, then, and the mind only, which makes *objects;* for the objects mean not only mere representations, but an order and unity among them, and the unity necessary. Now, nature in Kant's book means this regular order in phenomena —this classifying of all our sensations under cer-

tain heads, and bringing them together under various unities. Hence the pure Understanding makes *objects*, and so makes nature. This is the language of the First Edition."*

And Dr. Kuno Fischer says:

"The *first* edition of the Critick proceeds in a thoroughly critical spirit, resolving the object altogether into our phenomenon or representation, and showing the faculties which form it. For even the raw material of which the object consists, the sensuous data of sensation, being mere modifications of our sensibility, are *nothing without us*, or independent of our perceiving consciousness. The form as well of intuition as of experience is altogether our product. Kant here expresses it most explicitly, that phenomena or sensuous representations are not objects beyond our power of representation; that the object of cognition does not exist out of cognition; that all phenomena are objects *within us*, and as such determinations of ourselves."†

We can readily understand that a philosophy using language of this kind would seem to many persons to be either actual Egoism, or something so near it, that it could hardly fail to lead to it by the natural course of development.

Now when Des Cartes is giving free play to his doubting faculty, with the view of ultimately com-

* Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary. Introduction, p. xliv.

† Ibid. p. 78.

bating the doubts raised, he considers as possible a sceptical Egoism of the kind above described. The doubter, in entertaining this scepticism, or in putting it before his mind, reasons as follows: I have observed that in dreams I regard as real, and as different from myself, objects which in the waking state I believe to have been created by my own mind. May it not then be, that the objects which in the waking state I regard as real things, different from myself, are really, in like manner, creations of my own mind? May not the different personages who give an interest to my waking life be of the same nature as those who give an interest to my dreams; whom, though created by my own faculties, I project and objectify, conversing with them as if they were different from myself, regarding some of them as friends, and some as enemies; fearing or disliking some, and loving others? This is the scepticism propounded as possible by Des Cartes, which it behoves Kant, if he is to meet the difficulties of objectors, to combat and refute. Let us examine whether he has really done this.

It may be observed in the first place that Scepticism of the kind above explained is not refuted by alleging that Life in the waking state is much more consistent than the life or drama of dreams; for dreams vary greatly in this respect, some of them being free from extravagance, and quite simulating the consistency of real life. Nor can it be refuted by alleging that the impressions or phenomena which we experience in the waking

state are much more vivid than those which we experience in dreams, since the phenomena in dreams and the emotions occasioned by them are frequently very vivid and intense. It is well known that persons frequently suffer greatly from the terror caused by frightful dreams. Abercrombie mentions the case of a man who carried on a consistent dream from night to night, and was much more interested in this dream than in the events of his waking state; so that when one of the personages of his dream died, he died of grief. Here there was no lack either of consistency or of vivacity in the impressions; yet, nevertheless, these are regarded as the phenomena of a mere dream. Whatever may be the truth of this and similar accounts, it is clear that their truth is quite conceivable; and this suffices to show that the reality which we ascribe to the events of our waking state, while we refuse to ascribe it to those of our dreams, does not consist in regularity of order, nor in vivacity of impression. Nor again, can this reality be accounted for by pointing out that the phenomena do not appear to depend upon our will; for the phenomena or events of a dream do not appear to the dreamer to depend upon his will. Indeed, the events of the dream frequently take a course exceedingly unpleasant to the dreamer, which, if they lay under the control of his will, could hardly be the case.

Further, it is to be observed that an Egoistic doctrine of the kind proclaimed by the Baccalau-

reus, is not controverted by asserting that the Phenomena produced and cognised are real, and different from the Ego which produces them. The Baccalaureus would probably have entered with alacrity into this view of the case ; the notion that he created a *real* Sun, a *real* Moon, *real* Stars, &c., would have seemed to him to enhance the dignity of his creative powers, and to afford to him food for self-glorification. It is, indeed, pretty evident that when in his conversation with Mephistopheles he imagines himself to be conversing with Faust, an aged bookworm, dried up by laborious study, he regards his interlocutor as a non-Ego ; since he ridicules him as stupid and worthless, and uses language, as Mephistopheles observes, of a very rude kind, such as he certainly would not have applied to himself. And in like manner he derides the whole tribe of Philistines, whose bonds he has burst asunder. Though, therefore, he regards these as creations of his own, he nevertheless looks upon them as non-Egos. Apparently he considers himself to have a power of projecting out of himself, and making into non-Egos, Sun and Moon, Germans and French, Illuminati and Philistines, &c. The point, therefore, of his doctrine does not lie in denying the existence of external objects, or of a non-Ego, but in maintaining that the non-Ego is entirely his own creation ; that he himself, without any co-operation of external things, has made Sun, Moon, animals, men, and the whole world.

Again: it is to be observed that the Scepticism in question is not refuted, nor even touched, by proving that our perception or cognition of phenomena or of events is experience (erfahrung)—not imagination or phantasy. For the question immediately recurs, What is the nature of Experience? By what is it caused or produced? Is it produced by two factors or co-efficients, an Ego and a non-Ego, or is it produced by the Mind or Ego alone? The Egoist asserts that it is produced solely by the Ego; that there is no external X or Noumenon which concurs with the Ego in producing it. Manifestly, if this view is taken, we do not in the least touch Egoism by asserting that our cognition of Phenomena or of events is *Experience.*

When, like Des Cartes, we give the rein to our doubting faculty, the form of Scepticism above explained suggests itself to the mind; and if Kant is to clear away the difficulties propounded by Des Cartes, and to do battle by argument on behalf of Common Sense, this is the form of doubt with which it behoves him to grapple. But if we examine his reasonings, we shall find that he does not do so. Exception may be taken at the outset to the mode in which he states the "problematical idealism" of Des Cartes; *i. e.* the scepticism which Des Cartes suggests as possible, and wishes to overthrow. According to him, this admits as unquestionable only one empirical assertion, viz. the assertion "I am." This is by no means the case.

The scepticism in question recognises as certain such statements as the following: "I doubt," "I fear," "I hope," "I grieve," "I rejoice," &c. It also admits as certain such statements as these: "I think of something which I call the sun, or which I call the moon;" "I think of objects which I regard as persons different from myself, loving some and disliking others." But admitting all this, it says, perhaps all the phenomena which I perceive and think about are produced entirely by myself—are as much my own creations as the *dramatis personæ* of my dreams.

Having stated the Cartesian scepticism in the above manner, Kant endeavours to refute it by reasoning. For this purpose he endeavours to prove that objects in Space are real (wirklich) and external (ausser mir). But, as we have seen, this does not touch the real knot. The Baccalaureus would willingly assert that Sun, Moon, Stars, Faust, Mephistopheles, Philistines, &c., were real external non-Egos; but, nevertheless, he would contend that these real external objects were created entirely by himself, without the co-operation of any external cause, or co-efficient.

Further, it is to be observed, that though Kant professedly demonstrates the extended phenomena to be real and external, it is admitted by him that this reality and externality are merely *empirical*. This being the case, he does not hurt the Egoist, for the most thorough-going Egoist would be quite willing to grant that the phenomena of the uni-

verse were *empirically* real and external, if he might nevertheless assert that in a higher transcendental sense they were ideal and internal.

Indeed, if we examine Kant's reasonings, we shall find that they do not oblige the sceptic to ascribe to extended phenomena any externality other than that which he might ascribe to the extended phenomena of a consistent dream.

Again, Kant labours to prove that our cognition of extended phenomena is "Erfahrung," Experience, not "Einbildung," Imagination; directing his reasoning principally to the demonstration of this point. But, as we have seen, the establishment of this point would not affect the Egoist, who is perfectly ready to assert that his cognition of extended phenomena is *experience*, but maintains that experience is created solely by himself—by an occult action of his Ego—so that the objects which empirically are non-Egos, transcendentally are his own creations objectified.

What is really needed for the refutation of the Egoist is to show that phenomena and experience are not produced solely by the Ego, whether acting consciously or unconsciously;—that a non-Ego has some share in their production. And Kant does not make the slightest attempt to prove this point. To do it, would be in fact to prove the existence of Noumena: for a non-Ego, which concurs with the subject or Ego in producing Phenomena, is a Noumenon, if there is any such thing as a Noumenon at all. Evidently

therefore, if Kant is to confute Egoism, and to silence, without the aid of Faith, the scepticism which assails the mind in the state of Cartesian doubt, it behoves him to demonstrate the existence of Noumena. But manifestly he cannot do this, unless he makes some assertorical application of categories to Noumena: the very procedure which over and over again he condemns as illegitimate.

Mr. Mahaffy appears to think that Kant did not intend to dispute the position of the Egoist, who asserts that phenomena and experience are produced solely by the Ego. According to his view, if I rightly understand it, Kant neither affirmed nor denied the Egoistic doctrine: considering that there was no evidence either for or against it, he refused to dogmatise, like other philosophers, but left the question open.* Agree-

* I gather this as Mr. Mahaffy's view from passages such as the following. "Most philosophers dogmatize and assert a non-Ego as the cause of such sensations. Kant, seeing that there was no evidence whatsoever on either side, quietly says that the question remains here undetermined. His solution of the problem of the Ego and non-Ego is a problematical pluralism, which may not impossibly be a real monism, but upon which we can never hope for the smallest additional evidence ..... Thus Kant was neither an absolute idealist, nor a realist; he was a critic. His system being empirical, ... he never meant absolutely to deny any world beyond the subject, but only to determine what belonged to the subject and what to the object. Nor did he deny that the subject, by some occult and to us inconceivable action, might produce what is called the object; but this question he leaves undetermined." *Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary.* Introduction, pp. xliv. xlv.

ably to this view of the matter, Kant's principles would point to the following Egoistic doctrine, which they would allow us to entertain. I (quà Noumenon) am the whole Universe, τὸ ἓν καὶ πᾶν, the Absolute. In virtue of a certain mysterious property, I differentiate myself, — I fall asunder into Subject and Object: thus producing the phenomenal Ego and the phenomenal non-Ego. In this way I make into empirical non-Egos, endowed with empirical reality the various physical objects — sun, moon, stars, mountains, &c. — and also the various personages who empirically people the stage of my life, my opponents as well as my friends. In the same manner I endow with empirical reality the personages of past history —Cesar, Alexander, Hannibal, Moses, David. In the same way I make Christ, and endow him with empirical externality and reality. In like manner I make the devil, whom many of the personages created by me believe to exist, and fear. When I act as a Philistine, I make him; when I act as an Illuminato, I, if I choose, destroy him.

"Wenn ich nicht will, so darf kein Teufel seyn."

In a similar manner I make God, whom many of the personages created by me believe to exist, and worship; and if I find it useful to regulate myself according to a Moral-Theologie, I may do the same: regarding him as a governor of the Universe, superior to myself, and giving to this

non-Ego a regulative reality. But though empirically these various objects are real external things, transcendentally they are objects made by my own treatment of my own vorstellungen, and are internal, *in mir;* transcendentally I am that I am, τὸ ἓν καὶ πᾶν, the Absolute.*

It may well be doubted whether Kant really regarded an Egoistic doctrine of this sort as permissible: for on many occasions he represents himself as endeavouring to combat scepticism; such, for instance, as the scepticism of Hume; and he gives us to understand that the doctrine of knowledge expounded in his work accomplishes this end in a satisfactory manner. He tells us that only by the principles of his Critique "can we cut away the roots of Materialism, Fatalism, Atheism, of freethinking Unbelief, of Fanaticism, and Superstition—causes of mischief to the general public: moreover also those of Idealism and Scepticism, which are more dangerous to the schools, and cannot easily find access to the public." And he declares that, considering these beneficial consequences, governments ought to befriend the critical doctrine which he has expounded, rather than that of the schools.† Looking at such state-

* Such a view resembles that expressed in the Oupnek'hat, quoted by Schopenhauer. "Hæ omnes creaturæ in totum ego sum, et præter me aliud ens non est."

† "Er bleibt immer ausschliesslich Depositär einer dem Publicum, ohne dessen Wissen, nützlichen Wissenschaft, nämlich der Kritik der Vernunft. . . . . Durch diese kann allein dem Materialismus, Fatalismus, Atheismus, dem freigeisterischen

ments, we may naturally suppose that Kant would not have approved Egoistic monism; and from other statements we might infer that he did not feel satisfied with the method which Fichte adopted in order to get rid of it; viz. that of calling in brusquely the aid of Faith. In reference to such a method of proceeding he says: "Even if we looked on Idealism as practically harmless (whereas, in truth, it is far from being so), still it would be a disgrace to philosophy and to human Reason that we should be obliged to assume the existence of external things . . . . . solely on the authority of belief: and when any body might choose to call it in question, should not be able to oppose to him a satisfactory demonstration."* From such language we might natu-

Unglauben, der Schwärmerei und Aberglauben, die allgemein schädlich werden können, zuletzt auch dem Idealismus und Skepticismus, die mehr den Schulen gefährlich sind und schwerlich ins Publicum übergehen können, selbst die Wurzel abgeschnitten werden. Wenn Regierungen sich ja mit Angelegenheiten der Gelehrten zu befassen gut finden, so würde es ihrer weisen Vorsorge für Wissenschaften sowohl als Menschen weit gemässer sein, die Freiheit einer solchen Kritik zu begünstigen, wodurch die Vernunftbearbeitungen allein auf einen festen Fuss gebracht werden können, als den lächerlichen Despotismus der Schulen zu unterstützen, welche über öffentliche Gefahr ein lautes Geschrei erheben, wenn man ihre Spinneweben zerreisst, von denen doch das Publicum niemals Notiz genommen hat und deren Verlust es also auch nie fühlen kann." *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.* Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe, ibid. p. 29.

* "Der Idealismus mag in Ansehung der wesentlichen Zwecke der Metaphysik für noch so unschuldig gehalten werden, (das er in der That nicht ist,) so bleibt es immer ein Skandal der Philosophie und allgemeinen Menschenvernunft, das Dasein der Dinge ausser

rally infer that he would have considered it a reproach to his system, if it could not get rid of the Egoistic doctrine without calling in the aid of Faith; and that he wished his refutation of Idealism to be regarded as a discharge of the task which it thus behoved reason and philosophy to perform.

Certainly, whatever doubt may exist as to Kant's view, there can be none as to that of the ordinary public, for the tranquillising of whose scruples the "Refutation of Idealism" is generally supposed to have been written. Unquestionably, they would not regard the Egoistic doctrine as permissible; and if Kant had explained to them that he did so regard it, instead of conceding to him that he had vanquished scepticism, as he claims to have done, they would think that he had capped previous forms of scepticism by one of a peculiarly portentous kind. They would not at all esteem the Moral-Theologie, if once it were explained that the God discoursed of in this might be a mere creation of Kant's faculties. Nor, under the circumstances supposed, would they in the slightest degree value the so-called "Refutation of Idealism." If Kant had explained to them that the reality and externality spoken of in this were merely phenomenal, and that it was not in-

uns, (von denen wir doch den ganzen Stoff zu Erkenntnissen selbst für unseren inneren Sinn her haben,) blos auf Glauben annehmen zu müssen, und, wenn es Jemand einfällt es zu bezweifeln, ihm keinen genugthuenden Beweis entgegen stellen zu können." Ibid. Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe, ibid. p. 32.

tended to refute transcendental Idealism, or transcendental Egoism, such as above explained, they would unanimously say: "In that case your Refutation is quite useless, so far as we are concerned, and does not remove in the slightest degree the objections which we entertain against your doctrine."

APPENDIX B.

ON THE TEACHING OF BUTLER.

Butler's doctrine has been a subject of comment in a recent article in the *Saturday Review*, in which the writer expresses a good deal of dissatisfaction with it. And this sentiment appears to be shared by a numerous party connected with Oxford, who no longer regard Butler's reasonings as conclusive or triumphant. This feeling has found utterance in many ways. Thus Mr. Goldwin Smith speaks of the *Analogy* as a greatly overrated work; while Mr. Maurice expresses an opinion that "the religion of hoops and ruffles" exercised a depressing influence on Butler's powers, and marred the value of his labours.

The writer of the article in the *Saturday Review* complains that Butler, instead of defending the doctrine of Vicarious Punishment as usually taught, has substituted another doctrine in its place. According to the doctrine usually taught, there is a real transfer of penalty from one person A, to another person B. An offence having been committed by A, the penalty due to that offence is

inflicted on B, A being thereby relieved from the penalty; and it is declared that this transfer of penalty satisfies the claims of Law or Justice, which requires that guilty acts should be punished, but does not require that the punishment should be inflicted on the guilty agent in propriâ personâ. This is the principle of *vicarious* punishment properly so called; that which, as we are assured, is recognised by the Chinese, and extensively used in their administration of justice.

Butler undertakes to show that Vicarious Punishment, though objected to by philosophers as irrational and unjust, is actually found to be largely employed in the observed course of Nature. To make out this, he shows (as it is exceedingly easy to do) that in the observed course of Nature, the wrong-doing of one man frequently entails evil consequences to other persons; but he does not in the slightest degree make out that the sufferings endured by these persons are a *substitute* for the penalty due to the wrong-doer—that they relieve him from any part of the punishment which his offences deserve.

Again, Butler devotes a good deal of labour to show that in the ordinary course of Nature the sufferings of one person may produce consequences very beneficial to other persons. Rationalists do not in the least deny this. They fully admit that in the ordinary course of Nature the sufferings of self-sacrificing persons produce beneficial results to other persons: that the sufferings of heroes,

saints, and martyrs, frequently produce results which benefit a large portion of mankind; and that the death and sufferings of Christ did this in an eminent degree. But while freely admitting this, they do not admit that in such cases there is a transfer of penalty from the guilty to the innocent, whereby the requirements of justice, human or divine, are satisfied, and the guilty relieved from the penalties which their conduct deserves.

In order to show that the cases insisted on by Butler are not really cases of *vicarious* punishment, the Reviewer instances the example of the drunkard, observing: "The debauched father transmits a scrofulous constitution to his innocent son; but he pays the penalties of his own debauchery in his own person equally whether he has a son or not. His son's sufferings put him in no better position than he would be in if his son did not suffer: they usually put him in a worse position."

Indeed it is evident that if there are two drunkards, one of whom, having no family, damages only himself, while the other causes ruin to a large family of children, the reproaches of conscience and the blame of mankind would, cæteris paribus, fall more severely on the latter than on the former. Whereas if the case were one of vicarious punishment, properly so called, provided the latter drunkard caused an amount of suffering to his children, equal to that which the former one caused to himself, the claims of justice would be discharged, and the drunkard

might equitably be relieved from all personal suffering. Advocates of the doctrine of Vicarious Punishment, such as the Chinese, might perhaps be willing to entertain this view of the case, but unquestionably Rationalists would not do so.

Among the most obvious cases in which the evil qualities of one man produce suffering to others, is that of bad governors, compendiously described in the proverb, "Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi." At first sight this looks like an enunciation of the principle of Vicarious Punishment. But Rationalists do not believe that the sufferings of the "Achivi" have for their effect to relieve the "reges" from the penalties which they deserve. Suppose there are two Caligulas or Neros, equally evil in their intrinsic nature, one of whom is placed in a position where he can do little harm to his fellows, while the other ascends a throne, and causes a great amount of suffering. Rationalists do not believe that the latter will be punished by the Divine Justice less than the former. And holding such a view, they do not regard the suffering caused by the despot as a case of *vicarious* punishment, *i.e.* as a punishment which is endured by some person *vice* the person by whom it was merited.

Nor, again, do Rationalists believe that in such cases the innocence of the sufferers would avail to produce the effect in question, viz. that of relieving the guilty person who caused the suffering from the penalty deserved by him. For instance,

they do not think that the comparative innocence of the children tortured and put to death by Gilles de Laval, the Maréchal de Retz, was a circumstance tending to lessen the penalties allotted to him by the Divine Justice. Even if the children murdered by him had been recently baptised, and had committed no post-baptismal sin, they do not think that this circumstance would have operated in his favour, as causing transfer of penalty from him to his victims, and removing or mitigating the punishment which he himself would receive.

Let us take another instance. Two murders are committed: in the one case no person is convicted and no punishment inflicted; in the other, an innocent person is erroneously believed to have committed the murder, is sentenced as guilty, and hung. Rationalists do not believe that the perpetrator of the first murder will be punished in the next world more severely than that of the second, because nobody has been hung on account of his deed. Consequently, the suffering inflicted on the innocent person who is hung is not regarded by them as a *vicarious* or *substitutive* punishment, *i. e.* as taking effect *in lieu* of that deserved by the murderer—as satisfying the claims of justice, or the majesty of law — as relieving the murderer from any of the penalty due to his crime.

Entertaining such views, Rationalists do not regard Butler as making out any case from observation or experience in favour of the doctrine which they condemn. He shows that in the observed

course of nature, the acts of men produce far-reaching consequences, affecting many persons, whether for good or evil—a fact which they do not dream of denying; but he does not hereby succeed in establishing the doctrine of Vicarious Punishment, which affirms that the penalty of guilt is transferable, that the demands of Justice may be satisfied by inflicting it on an innocent substitute, and *not* inflicting it on the guilty person.

Indeed, instead of attempting to make out this point, Butler, as we have previously seen, advances a principle which utterly forbids us to entertain the doctrine in question: asserting that God is bound to treat every one on the whole according to his personal deserts. If we admit this principle, we cannot accept the doctrine of Vicarious or Substitutive Punishment, so generally taught as orthodox, the gist of which lies in denying the principle thus asserted by Butler: in maintaining that God treats a certain favoured class, viz. orthodox believers, vastly better than they deserve, inflicting the penalties of their guilt on Christ, and thus satisfying the demands of the Law. Moreover, if we accept the principle enounced by Butler, we must regard the everlasting bliss enjoyed by that portion of mankind who are saved, not as a free gift wholly undeserved by them, but as a just reward, appropriate to their personal goodness and merits. Thus Butler's principles strike at the very root of the whole doctrine concerning the Scheme of Redemption and Salvation so largely taught as

orthodox, with all its accompanying doctrines concerning Expiation, Substitutive Punishment, Free Grace, Predestination, and Election. Under such circumstances, it is scarcely possible to deny the opinion of those who allege that whatever may be the intrinsic or philosophical merits of the scheme contemplated by Butler, it has not that of being in conformity with the old doctrine—that commonly called orthodox.

Had Butler clearly explained his own peculiar view, and brought into prominent notice the important principles in which he concurs with the Rationalists, it is probable that, instead of being generally regarded as a pillar of orthodoxy, he would have been very generally censured, as Rationalising, Pelagianising, unsound. But his most important principles are enounced quite cursorily, their necessary consequences are not pointed out, and the outlines of the general scheme suggested are not filled up. In a large portion of his work he has the air of reasoning in favour of the ordinary orthodox theology, and as there is a good deal of obscurity in his style, most readers fail to perceive that all the while the principles stated by him are quite in opposition to this. In much of his reasoning he appears to proceed on the principles advocated by Mr. Mansel, according to which Moral Truth is merely relative, and Reason is not competent to sit in judgment on statements concerning the moral nature and attributes of God. So strong is this appearance, that Mr. Mansel,

without any hesitation or misgiving, claims him as advocating the Theory taught in his Bampton Lectures, concerning the Divine Morality; understanding him as seeking to establish this by an appeal to the observed course of Nature.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that Butler's work, which long enjoyed such high authority, should fail to satisfy inquiring minds of the present day, when philosophical speculation is more active. Nor can we wonder that persons who greatly admire his moral and intellectual qualities should regard his achievement with disappointment, and should deem that but for the fetters of some unfavourable influences he would have produced a far more homogeneous and powerful result.

THE END.

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NOTE, p. 70.

I find that the reference to the Scotch Confession, which I had attributed to Hamilton, is not apparently made by Hamilton, but by his Editor, who is quoting Dugald Stewart. It appears also that the Confession quoted is not the Confession more properly called Scotch, but the Westminster Confession. The remarks made by Hamilton in the text concerning the Calvinistic teaching seem to show that Hamilton concurred with Dugald Stewart and the Scotch Church in approving the doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession.