

ARTICLE IV.

MODERN IDEALISM.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR AUGUSTUS H. STRONG, D. D., PRESIDENT OF THE
ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE method of thought which I purpose to consider regards ideas as the only objects of knowledge and denies the independent existence of the external world. It is the development of a principle found as far back as Locke. Locke derived all our knowledge from sensation. If any object to this account of Locke's system, and insist that he recognized reflection also as a source of knowledge, we reply that this reflection is with Locke only the mind's putting together of ideas derived from the senses or from its own operations about them.¹ The mind brings no knowledge with it, has no original power; it is merely the passive recipient and manipulator of ideas received from sensation, finding in its own operations no new material, but only the reflection of what originally came from sense. I do not mean that Locke is always consistent with himself; this he could not be, for, with all his effort to derive knowledge from the senses, there were objects, such as substance and cause, right and God, which persistently refused to be explained in this way. To Locke's statement "There is nothing in the intellect which was not beforehand in the sense," Leibnitz well replied: "Nothing but the intellect itself." But this reply recognized original powers of the mind, and the mind's cognition, upon occasion of sensation, of realities not perceived by sensation or derived from sensation. Locke's denial of such original powers and cognitions opened the way to the exclusive sensationalism of the French Condillac and Baron d'Holbach. So his system

¹ Essay, Book ii. chap. xii.

led to utilitarianism in morals and to scepticism in religion ; for how could the ideas of right or of God be derived from sense? and, if they did not come from sense, what right had they on this theory to exist at all?

Bishop Berkeley, alarmed at what he thought the necessarily materialistic implications of Locke's philosophy, attempted to save the idea of spirit by giving up the idea of matter ; or, to speak more accurately, by maintaining that we have no evidence that matter exists except in idea. The sensations which lead us to infer the existence of an outer world are themselves the direct objects of our knowledge—why postulate external matter as causing them? They may be caused directly by God, whose omnipresent intelligence and power are capable of producing uniform and consistent impressions in or upon the minds of his creatures. This thought, existence, or ideal existence, Berkeley would say, is the only existence of the outer world worth contending for. An existence like this being assumed, materialism is vanquished, for the cause of ideas is to be found not in matter but in spirit, not in a self-existent nature, but in a living God. No one who has read Berkeley's "Principles of Human Knowledge" can fail to admire the spirit and aim of its author. That his theory can be held side by side with the profoundest belief in special divine revelation is plain, not only from the fact that Berkeley so held it, regarding his view as a bulwark of religious faith, but from the fact that it was also the philosophy of Jonathan Edwards.

Hume, however, regarded Berkeley's application of the principle as only a partial one. Berkeley had said that externally we can be sure only of sensations—cannot, therefore, be sure that a world independent of our sensations exists at all. Hume carried the principle further, and held that internally also we cannot be sure of anything but phenomena. We do not know mental substance within, any more than we know material substance without. John Stuart Mill only follows Hume, when he makes sensations the only objects of knowledge ; defines matter as "a permanent possibility of sensa-

tion," and mind as "a series of feelings aware of itself." Thomas Huxley follows Hume, when he calls matter "only a name for the unknown cause of states of consciousness." Spencer, Bain, and Tyndall are also Humists. All these regard the material atom as a mere centre of force—the hypothetical cause of sensations. In their view, matter is a manifestation of force; while, to the old materialism, force is as a property of matter. Unlike these later thinkers, Berkeley held most strenuously to the existence of spirit—for of spirit he thought we had direct knowledge in ourselves. The supposition of an unperceivable material substance was inconsistent with common sense; but the recognition of a personal and self-determining ego was a part of our common sense.² Yet Berkeley in certain passages verges toward Humism, as, for example, where he says: "The very existence of ideas constitutes the soul. Mind is a congeries of perceptions. Take away perceptions, and you take away mind. Put the perceptions, and you put the mind."³ All we can say of Hume, therefore, is that he logically and consistently developed a principle which in germ, at least, is found in Berkeley himself. And the agnostic and materialistic idealism of the present day is lineally descended from Locke, through Berkeley. It defines matter and mind alike in terms of sensation, and regards both as opposite sides or manifestations of one underlying and unknowable force. So, as Sydney Smith says, "Bishop Berkeley destroyed the world in one volume octavo, and nothing remained after his time but mind, which experienced a similar fate from the hand of Mr. Hume in 1737."

It is easy to see how mischievous must be the effect of such a system as this. If matter be only a permanent possibility of sensations, then the body through which we experience sensations is itself nothing but a possibility of sensations. If the human spirit be only a series of sensations, then the divine Spirit also can be nothing more than a series of sensations. There

² Mansel, *Letters, Lectures, and Reviews*, p. 382.

³ *Works*, Vol. iv. p. 438—quoted in Frazer's *Berkeley*, p. 72.

is no body to have the sensations; and no spirit, either human or divine, to produce them. Kant, in Germany, revolted from these sceptical conclusions, and sought to reclaim philosophy by an examination of the sources of human knowledge. He went back to Locke, and showed that all sense-perception involves elements not derived from sense, elements rather which are presupposed by sense. "Synthetic conceptions or judgments *a priori*"—space, time, cause, for example—are the conditions of all our intellectual operations. We cannot cognize the outer or the inner world, without finding these conceptions woven into the fabric of our knowledge. So far Kant did good service to science. He vindicated the intuitions and showed that without them no knowledge is possible. But he erred in not going far enough. He claimed for these intuitions only a subjective existence and validity—they are necessities of our thinking, but they cannot be shown to have objective existence or validity. They are regulative principles merely—whether space, time, cause, substance, God, exist outside of us, mere reason cannot determine. But we reply that when our primitive beliefs are found to be simply regulative they will cease to regulate. The forms of thought are also facts of nature. The mind does not, like the glass of the kaleidoscope,⁴ itself furnish the forms; it recognizes these as having an existence external to itself. Kant failed to see that in cognizing the qualities of objects the mind equally cognizes a substance to which the qualities belong; failed to see that the testimony of the reason to the existence of noumena is just as valid as the testimony of sense to the existence of phenomena. Substance is knowable to God and also to man; and in and with our knowing phenomena, substance is actually and equally known.

Just this failure of Kant led Fichte to reduce all knowledge to the knowledge of self; for, if our own ideas are the sole objects of knowledge, it is only by making the outer world a part of ourselves that we can rescue it from the category of

⁴ Bishop Temple, Bampton Lectures for 1884, p. 13.

the unknown. Schelling could find no medium between self and the world, or between self and God ; hence he assumed a direct intuition of both ; it was an intuition, however, which merged the ego in the Absolute, as Fichte had merged the Absolute in the ego ; there is identity between them. But, if identity, how can the One ever become the many? Here we have the impulse to the system of Hegel, in which subjective idealism becomes complete. Hegel explains the development of the One into the many by saying simply that the laws of thought require this development, and that thought and being are one. So, without giving any explanation of the origin of these laws, life becomes logic and logic becomes life. The Rational is the Real. All things are but forms of thought, and not only man and the world, but God himself, are made intelligible. If it were not for the fact of sin, and for personal wills that war against the rational and involve themselves in death, the scheme of Hegel would be very attractive. We need only set against it the lines of Wordsworth, which Frazer quotes :⁵—

Look up to heaven ! the industrious sun
 Already half his race hath run ;
 He cannot halt nor go astray,
 But our immortal spirits may.

Thus Hegel revives, and carries to its extremest conclusions, the idealistic principle whose development it was Kant's purpose to check. As Berkeley had declared that *things are only thoughts*, Hegel declared that *thinking thinks*. So there can be thinking without a thinker, thoughts that are not thought. It seems to us that in his system there are two fundamental errors, first, that of assuming a concept without any *mind* to form it ; and, secondly, that of assuming that a concept can work itself out into reality without any *will* to execute it. Thoughts take the place of things, both as to cause and effect—all resting on the prior assumption that identity *is* causality, *i. e.*, that the constituent elements of a thought are necessarily the cause of the thing which the thought rep-

⁵ Frazer's Berkeley, p. 205.

resents. Yet the system of Hegel has had a strong influence upon later philosophy. Its monistic basis gratifies the speculative intellect. Its easy reduction of the facts of the universe to logical order satisfies the aspiring spirit of man. We may even grant that its omniscient idealism has been a valuable counter-weight to the agnostic materialism of our day. Together with the evolutionary hypothesis of the origin of the world, it has found able advocates in Caird, Green, and Seth, in Great Britain, and in Harris, Bowne, and Royce, in America. Unfortunately it requires of its consistent defenders, though fortunately its defenders are generally not consistent, a rejection of the facts of history and of our moral nature. Sin is a necessity of finiteness and progress. Even Jesus, as he was man, must be a sinner. The sense of remorse and the belief in freedom are alike illusions. It can hold no view of God which regards him as a veritable moral personality, or as the author of a supernatural revelation. Conscience with its testimony to the voluntariness and the damnableness of sin, as it is the eternal witness against Pantheism, is also the eternal witness against the Idealism of Hegel. We may believe that the utter inability of Hegelianism to explain or even to recognize the ethical problems of the universe is the chief reason for the recent cry, "Back to Kant!" by which the younger thinkers are summoned to return to the feet of a master who at least recognized a moral law and a God who vindicates it.

As it is these younger thinkers whose position is matter of most present interest, I desire to retrace my steps for a moment, and to go back to England and to those who came after Hume. As Kant in Germany thought to set up a barrier to Hume's scepticism by pointing out the *a priori* elements in all knowledge, so Reid in England maintained against Hume the principles of the Philosophy of Common Sense. Reid, though with some inaccuracies of statement, held to the doctrine of Natural Realism, reducing perception to an act of immediate and intuitive cognition. The notion of representative ideas as the object of perception was excluded. The mind comes directly in contact with external things. How

it knows them we do not know, but we know as little how it can perceive itself. The knowledge of the external world is not made explicable, it is rather made inexplicable, by assuming that the direct object of perception is a representative idea, which we have no means of comparing with the object which it represents. Reid did not distinguish between original and acquired perceptions, and he sometimes made sensation the occasion of suggesting, rather than the condition of perceiving, extended externality; yet his services to Natural Realism were great, and philosophy will never cease to be his debtor.

Sir William Hamilton sought to remedy the defects of Reid, and to reduce the doctrine of common sense to a consistent system. He showed the absurdity of the scheme of representative perception, which declares the external world to be real, while yet it makes ideas to be the only objects of which we are conscious. Either we must "abolish any immediate, ideal, subjective object, representing;—or we must abolish any mediate, real, objective object, represented."⁶ And yet even Hamilton was not self-consistent. Our knowledge of an external object is made up, he says, of three factors, of which, if the total be represented by the number twelve, the object may be said to furnish six, the body three, and the mind three. Here an ideal element is admitted which may so vitiate the result as to render it impossible to say that we correctly apprehend the object at all. The secondary qualities of matter, such as color, sound, and smell, he grants to be "not objects of perception at all, being only the unknown causes of subjective affection in the percipient, and therefore incapable of being immediately perceived."⁷ Even the primary qualities of matter in external objects we do not apprehend directly, but only through "the consciousness that our locomotive energy is resisted, and not resisted by aught in the organism itself. For in the consciousness of

⁶ Dissertations on Reid, Note C, pp. 816, 817.

⁷ Porter, *Human Intellect*, p. 237.

being thus resisted is involved, as a correlative, the consciousness of a resisting something." Porter also remarks that Hamilton does not explain how, in the necessity of finding for this effect an extra-organic cause, this "correlative," "resisting something" must be shown to be also *extended*. "The agent, the *ego*, as a percipient and actor, is not extended; why may not the extra-organic agent and *non-ego* be non-extended, or why must it be extended?"⁸

(¶) If we add now to this statement of Hamilton's doctrine the fact that in his view "sensation proper has no object but a subject-object," in other words, an affection of the animated organism, we shall see that his Natural Realism limits itself to a knowledge of primary qualities in our own organism. If we go further and consider his concessions to idealism, we shall be able to narrow down the controversy still more. In that remarkable table of systematic schemes of external perception which he has appended to his edition of the Works of Reid,⁹ he has defined idealists as those who view the object of consciousness in perception as ideal, that is, as a phenomenon in or of mind. As denying that this ideal object has any external prototype, they may be styled Absolute Idealists. The chief merit of Hamilton's classification, however, is to be found in his subdivision of Absolute Idealists into two subordinate classes, according as the Idea is, or is not, considered a modification of the percipient mind. We have then the two schemes of Egoistical and Non-egoistical Idealism. The former is, in general, the scheme of the German thinkers; the latter the scheme of the English thinkers, notably of Berkeley. Of the former we have already said all that is needful; with regard to the latter we wish to point out a fact that is not so generally understood, namely, that this form of Idealism regards the Idea not as a mode of the human mind. While it is not a *mode* of the mind, it may yet be *in* the mind—infused into it by God; or it may *not* be in the perceiving mind itself, but in the divine Intelligence, to which

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 185.

⁹ Note C, page 817.

the perceiving mind is intimately present, and in which the perceiving mind views it. Lotze, of all the Germans, seems to hold to this latter form of Idealism. The world to him is a series of phenomena, without value in itself, and having value only as its *meaning* is valuable; and the mind of man is "like a spectator who comprehends the æsthetic significance of that which takes place on the stage of a theatre, and would gain nothing essential if he were to see, besides, the machinery by means of which the changes are effected on the stage."¹⁰

Bishop Berkeley in his earlier writings seemed to regard all knowledge as conversant with the affections of the percipient mind. He hardly distinguished between the idea as an object and the idea as an act. The first statements seem, therefore, to be statements of subjective idealism. "Sense-percepts differ from the ideas of the imagination only in degree, not in kind; and both belong to the individual mind."¹¹ But in later years Berkeley saw what some of his followers have not seen, namely, that things are not mere possible sensations—these would afford no explanation of the permanent existence of real objects. He came, therefore, to regard external things as caused in a regular order by the divine will, and independently of our individual experience. When we look at external things, we look at ideal existences in the divine mind—archetypes—of which sense-experience may be said to be the recognition and realization in our intelligence. So Berkeley's later statements are statements of objective, as distinguished from subjective idealism. The world without has the best guarantee for its reality and permanence in that it is the constant expression of an Omnipresent and Eternal Mind. The non-ego, in fact, is God, manifesting his intelligence and his will. As we live, move, and have our being in God physically, so we live, move, and have our being in God mentally. Even self-consciousness has its basis in God's ideas of us; and memory is only the reading of our past, in God's record-book. The existence of

¹⁰ Lotze, *Outlines of Metaphysics* (Ladd), p. 152.

¹¹ Adamson on Berkeley, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

the inner as well as the outer world in God, while it is an ideal existence, is yet the most secure and permanent that can possibly be conceived.

Here then we have an objective idealism which is free from some of the objections to which the common German Idealism is exposed. It is interesting to note how gently Sir William Hamilton treated it. In a footnote to the last-mentioned of his Dissertations he says:—

The general approximation of thorough-going Realism and thorough-going Idealism here given may, at first sight, be startling. On reflection, however, their radical affinity will prove well-grounded. Both build upon the same fundamental fact—that the extended object immediately perceived is identical with the extended object actually existing;—for the truth of this fact, both can appeal to the common sense of mankind; and to the common sense of mankind Berkeley did appeal, not less confidently, and perhaps more logically, than Reid. Natural Realism and Absolute Idealism are the only systems worthy of a philosopher; for, as they alone have any foundation in consciousness, so they alone have any consistency in themselves.

And in his reply to the Berkeleian, T. Collyns Simon, Hamilton expressly says:¹²—

If Berkeley held that the Deity caused one permanent material universe (be it supposed apart or not apart from his own essence), which universe, on coming into relation with our minds through the medium of our bodily organism, is in certain of its correlative sides or phases, so to speak, external to our organism, objectively or really perceived (the primary qualities), or determines in us certain subjective affections of which we are conscious (the secondary qualities); in that case I must acknowledge Berkeley's theory to be virtually one of natural realism, the differences being only verbal. But again, if Berkeley held that the Deity caused no permanent material universe to exist and to act uniformly as one, but does himself either infuse into our several minds the phenomena (ideas) perceived and affective, or determines our several minds to elicit within consciousness such apprehended qualities or felt affections, in that case I can recognize in Berkeley's theory only a scheme of theistic idealism,—in fact, only a scheme of perpetual and universal miracle, against which the law of parcimony is conclusive, if the divine interposition be not proved necessary to render possible the facts.

Hamilton here seems to grant that Absolute Idealism, if it be non-egoistical, and if it regard the ideal object as not in the mind itself, is virtually the same with Natural Realism. Whether this was the philosophy of Berkeley may be matter

¹² Veitch, Memoir of Sir William Hamilton, p. 346.

of question; but it is at any rate along this line that our younger thinkers in philosophy are working. A world of ideas, indistinguishable by us from external realities, constituting in fact the *only* external realities, is open to our minds by virtue of our living, moving, and having our being, in God. In our investigations of nature as well as in our examination of our own consciousness, we are only, as Kepler said, "thinking God's thoughts after him," or rather perceiving the ideal realities of God's being. Such a conception is not necessarily merely logical, like Hegel's: God may be heart, as well as mind; may be conscience and will, as well as intellect. But creation, on this view, is an ideal process; the world, before finite intelligences existed, had only an ideal existence in God's mind, even as it now exists only in the minds of God and of his creatures.

There is a reason for this increasing prevalence of Idealism. Science has resolved the sensible universe into various modes of motion. Smell, sound, color, equally with pleasure and pain, are subjective sensations. The causes of them are not like in nature to the effects—they are only vibrations of some external medium—

What sees is Mind, what hears is Mind;
The ear and eye are deaf and blind.

What is true of the so-called secondary qualities of matter is equally true of the primary. Even extension and impenetrability can be conceived of only in relation to some sentient being which experiences resistance to its locomotive energy or which resists some locomotive energy from without. In fine, "matter can be defined only in terms of sensation; yet without mind sensation is impossible." Hence the idealist concludes that all that we know of matter is ideal. Certain sensations in ourselves comprise the whole of our knowledge. The causes of these sensations are unknown. Vibrations, motions, molecules, atoms, aye, even force itself, are but names for the unknown causes of our subjective states. Here is the refutation of materialism; for matter can have no meaning except in connection with percipient mind. Materialism

can never explain the nature of atoms ; they can be conceived of neither as indivisible nor as infinitely divisible. Even the materialistic conception of law involves the idea of mind as ordering the arrangements of the universe. The cause of our sensations does not need to be material—it may be spiritual instead. What we call the world outside of us may be the constant product of a divine activity working upon our own minds ; better still, it may be a constant ideal divine presentation *to* our minds.

There are many considerations once urged against Idealism which we must pronounce invalid against this new form of idealistic doctrine. It has been said that ideas, as *given*, presuppose an objective reality as cause. The new Idealism accepts the dictum, but declares the world of ideas, as neither in the mind nor a modification of the mind, to be just such an objective reality. In other words, objective idealism declines any longer to be treated as subjective idealism ; it regards ideas as something distinct from the cognition of them ; it may even hold that these ideas are themselves extended, and that they have all the qualities which we now attribute to the material and external object. May not God suggest ideas *to* me, which are not *in* me nor *of* me ? Do we not, by words, suggest such ideas to one another ? It may seem strange to hear of ideas which are not of the mind ; but the idealist would regard such ideas as actually constituting the objective reality which we perceive. Of such a sort he would regard even the extended matter which we see. It is an ideal object, existing only for intelligence, and as inseparable from intelligence as the pleasure or pain we feel in viewing it. The apple, for example, exists for mind and only for mind ; yet it has an objective existence to the mind, and is not a mere mode of the mind. The best illustration of the theory, however, is derived from the mind's relation to abstract truth. This truth exists by virtue of the minds that perceive it ; yet it is neither in nor of the human mind alone. While it is objective to man, it is subjective to God. So, it may be argued, does the universe exist. God's ideas con-

stitute its reality, its permanence, its stability. It is as little the product of the finite individual mind, as is the law of gravitation, or the existence of space, or the truth that right is obligatory. And yet it exists only in intelligence, and for intelligence; for, whether man is or is not, all things subsist eternally in God.

Here is the theory which claims, equally with natural realism, that objects are perceived directly. The objection has frequently been made to the theory of representative perception, that either in spite of the idea objects remain unknown, or by means of it they become known, in which case there must be a comparison of ideas with their objects—a comparison which can have no meaning or value except upon the hypothesis that the objects are known already. But the theory we are considering is a theory of presentative, and not of representative, Idealism. In this theory the ideas are themselves the objects, and the only objects; as such they are perceived directly, and there can be no talk about comparing them with any reality beyond. Over against this simplest form of Idealism we desire to put the simplest form of Natural Realism, in order that we may compare the merits of the two. This simplest form of Natural Realism holds only that we know something in space and time, something distinguishable from God as well as from ourselves, something which has permanent power to produce sensations in us, something which continues to exist whether we perceive it or not. In short, Natural Realism holds to the existence of a somewhat intermediate between God and the soul, even though this somewhat be nothing more than force. God and the soul are not the only entities. The world exists not only ideally but also substantially, and this substantial world exists in the form of extended externality.

The first consideration which suggests itself in comparing these two opposing views is that Objective Idealism rests upon the exceedingly precarious assumption that the mind is capable of knowing only *ideas*, while Natural Realism has in its favor the universal belief of mankind that we know *things*.

as well. Certainly the presumption is that the universal belief of mankind is a correct one; and this belief is not to be surrendered until it be shown self-contradictory. To say that things *are* ideas, is to common sense a yet greater absurdity. Men in general make a perfectly clear distinction between thoughts and external objects, and they cannot be persuaded to confound the one with the other. They may be persuaded to accept a thousand vagaries with regard to the ultimate constitution of matter; they may believe in ultimate atoms and vortex-rings; even the fourth dimension of space may come to seem credible to them; but to dissolve the external world into a dream, even though that dream be a permanent one and the very image of reality, is beyond the utmost stretch of their credulity.

Idealism is inconsistent with itself. It is compelled to admit that in knowing ideas the mind knows self. We cannot know ideas except by projecting them as it were from the mind.¹³ Thus we cannot know the non-ego, even in the shape of ideas, without also knowing the ego that has the ideas. Self-consciousness then is a witness to the existence of a permanent somewhat underneath all ideas, and which all ideas presuppose. But this permanent somewhat which manifests itself in mental phenomena and is the subject of them, which in fact is known in and by the same concrete act in which we know our ideas, cannot possibly be conceived in any other way than as an indivisible, identical entity. It cannot itself be an idea, or a combination of ideas, for the very first idea presupposes it. It cannot be a mere succession of feelings, for the mind never knows itself as a succession of feelings—if it could do so, it would know itself as that which was not I. It cannot be simply a relation, for relation is inconceivable unless there are things or ideas to be related, and these things or ideas must go before the relation, whereas self is known not as the product of ideas but as producing ideas. So Idealism is forced to grant the existence of some-

¹³ J. Clark Murray, *Hand-Book of Psychology*, p. 279.

thing before ideas, and more than ideas, namely, the self. But this permanent somewhat which we call self is just such an entity as we designate by substance; and the concession of the existence of mental substance logically carries with it the concession that material substance may exist also.

Idealism of the objective sort tries in vain to maintain the purely ideal character of the external world, and at the same time to declare that the object perceived is different from the act of perception. But if the object perceived be different from the act of perception—in other words, if objective idealism be not resolved into subjective idealism, if non-egoistic idealism be not resolved into egoistic idealism—then the existence of the object cannot be dependent upon the percipient act, its *esse* cannot be *percipi*. Its intellectual existence, if we may so speak, is contingent upon the existence of a perceiving intellect. But this is only to say that it cannot be known without knowledge, cannot be apprehended without mind, cannot fulfil its purpose without being perceived, either by God or man. The error of the theory is in confounding intellectual existence, or the existence of the object as known, with its real existence. As Professor Knight has said: “That the object perceived has a relation of intellectual dependence on the percipient subject is obvious, so far as his cognition extends; but if the object perceived be different from the act of perception, it cannot be in any sense dependent on it, or on a similar act, for its existence.” And so we agree with Veitch, when he says that Hamilton granted too much to Berkeley, in saying that a Non-egoistical Idealism is hardly distinguishable from Natural Realism.¹⁴

Idealism gives no proper account of the distinction between the non-ego in the shape of ideas and the non-ego in the shape of our bodily organism; in other words, it ignores the difference between body and the idea of body. Nothing can be plainer to the common mind than that it knows something outside of itself and different from itself, something extended, something in space, something which causes ideas but which

¹⁴Veitch's Hamilton, p. 178.

is not itself ideas. The mind not only distinguishes itself from the body it inhabits, but it distinguishes its ideas of body from the body of which it forms ideas. It ascribes to the body externality and extension. These properties cannot be conceived as belonging to ideas. The idea of body and the actual body are no less distinct than are the idea of a house and the actual house. Body is apprehended as something permanent and independent of our perception of it; but, more than this, it is apprehended as existing over against the perceiving mind, as capable of measurement by the mind, as having spatial relations in a way that the mind has not. This belief in the existence of a real in distinction from a merely ideal body, a body that is extended and external to the mind, is the most primary and important fact of sense-perception. Idealism, by failing to explain this belief, fails at the most critical point of all. It attempts to confound outness with distance, whereas distance is only a peculiar degree of outness, and itself presupposes outness. And, as Veitch has well shown, the externality of the object of sense is no more unintelligible than is the externality of one mind to another mind, or to God.¹⁶ Here we are persuaded that Natural Realism has a stronghold from which no speculative Idealism can ever dislodge it. Reduce the problem to its simplest terms if you will—put on the one side an objective idealism of divine ideas independent of our causation and perceived as something permanent and separate from our perceiving minds—put on the other side a natural realism, holding that we perceive an actually extended object in space, at least in our own organism, whose existence, as real, we distinguish from any possible ideal existence—and we must decide that the latter represents the facts of our experience, while the former contradicts them.

Idealism finds in self the ground of unity for mental phenomena. It should find in material substance the ground of unity for material phenomena. Not that this knowledge of mental or material substance, as the case may be, is reached

Ibid., pp. 186-188.

in either case by any process of inference or argument. It is the inevitable and universal judgment of the reason, in connection with self-consciousness, on the one hand, and of sense-perception on the other. When we recognize thoughts, we recognize the self as thinking; when we perceive qualities of matter, we perceive that they belong to something which they qualify. The qualities and the substance qualified are known in the same concrete act; though we ascribe to sense the cognition of quality, to reason the cognition of substance. Without this cognition of substance the impressions of sense could have no unity and could give us no knowledge of things. Sensation brings us in contact only with points. These points would be heterogeneous and disconnected if they were not recognized by some power as related to each other. Our knowledge of an object is not a knowledge of these points, but rather of a whole which these points manifest; these points can be related to each other, and fused into a whole, only by the recognition of a somewhat to which they belong and of which they are phenomena. The soul's judgment that there is a material substance, in which material qualities inhere and which gives these qualities their ground of unity, is just as inevitable an act of reason as that other judgment which accompanies the thoughts within and finds for them a ground of unity in the cognition of a mental substance which we call the conscious self.

Idealism confounds the conditions of external knowledge with the objects of knowledge. What is the object of knowledge in sense-perception? This theory replies: "The object of sense-perception is sensations or ideas;" and it propounds the dilemma: "Either the object is unknown and the mind knows only ideas, or ideas are known and there is no need of assuming the existence of any other object whatever." But the same rule should work equally well, or ill, when applied to the world within. We should then be compelled to say: "Either the ego is unknown and the mind knows only ideas, or the ideas are known and there is no need of assuming the existence of any ego at all." The ma-

majority of idealists will not say this. Berkeley would have denied it, for he strenuously held to the existence of spirit and to our consciousness of its existence. But it was by an inconsistency in his logic that he so held, and Hume remorselessly exposed this inconsistency. In self-consciousness we have the key to the problem. Mysterious as it might speculatively seem that mind should know self in knowing its own thoughts, it is still a fact that mind does thus know self; and to say that the thoughts are the only objects of knowledge is to confound objects of knowledge with conditions of knowledge. So, in the external world, we cannot know matter except through sensations and ideas; but to make sensations and ideas the only objects of knowledge is here also to confound objects of knowledge with conditions of knowledge. In sense-perception, my ideas and sensations are mere conditions of knowledge. In and through them I cognize that which is beyond, that which produces in me the ideas and sensations, namely, external objects, at least in my own organism, objects which by analysis I see to include both substance and quality. I see the moon in like manner through the telescope; the telescope is the means or condition of my seeing the moon. I may, it is true, turn my attention exclusively to the telescope and make that the object of my thought; yet he would talk very absurdly who should say that *either* the moon is unknown and I know only the telescope, *or* the telescope is known and there is no need of assuming the existence of any moon beyond it. The truth is that I cognize the moon through the telescope; if I choose I can think of both telescope and moon together; but the absurdest of all things is to say that, in looking through the telescope, I see the telescope only and not the moon. So Idealism confounds the conditions of knowledge with the objects of knowledge. That through ideas and sensations we have knowledge of things, is one of the most indubitable facts of consciousness.

The Idealist cannot be consistent without denying the existence of any other intelligent being besides himself. He

claims that the mind can know only ideas. What we call the external world is only a succession or combination of ideas, and hence no *material* substance can be known. But what we call our fellow-beings—are not they also only successions or combinations of ideas in which by the same rule no *mental* substance can be known? Self-consciousness compels the Idealist to recognize a self which is the permanent basis and habitat of his own ideas; but why should he recognize the existence of other people? If material things are nothing but ideas, then our fellow-men are nothing but ideas. If my neighbor's body exists only in idea, then his soul must also exist only in idea. The mere fact that the highway robber, when he attacks me, seems to be a conscious personality, must not blind me to the fact that he, like the club which he carries, is but a series or combination of ideas. I shall be a very inconsistent Idealist if I regard that series of ideas as responsible or guilty; for responsibility and guilt imply something more than a series or combination of ideas—they imply a subject, a mind, a permanent self, endowed with conscience and free will. In short, we must become solipsists, believers only in our own existence. But we cannot stop even here. The solipsist cannot long believe even in the existence of himself, if by "himself" he means a permanent, identical, substantial soul. And as a matter of fact the new Psychology in Germany—the psychology of Wundt and Fechner, describes itself as "psychology without a soul."

The new Idealism seeks to avoid the solipsistic conclusion by taking refuge in the consciousness of God, and by making that the guarantee for the objective existence of our fellow-men. It is a vain resource. The same rule which deprives us of all guarantee for the existence of our fellow-men deprives us also of all guarantee for the existence of God. If we know only ideas, in the case of our fellow-men, we can know only ideas in the case of God. And if God is only a series or combination of ideas, what possible meaning is there in the phrase "consciousness of God," the utterance of which seems such a relief to the idealist? A consciousness, with no being

to *be* conscious; consciousness without a self; universal thinking without a thinker—ah, it is our old Hegelian acquaintance:—"thinking thinks!" Notice how completely this philosophy merges the affectional and the volitional elements of the divine Being in the merely intellectual, and then transmutes even that into the vague phrase "universal consciousness." It is the God without personality or moral character, without love or will, which the purely speculative intellect ever seeks to substitute for the living God, the God of holiness who denounces and punishes sin, the God of love who redeems from sin by his own atoning sacrifice. Did I say that this theory gave us a non-moral God—a stone in place of bread? It does not even give us this—a consistent idealism can give us no God at all, it can give us only the *idea* of him. If we know only ideas, we can have no more guarantee that God or man objectively exists than we can have for the objective existence of matter.

Idealism is monistic in its whole conception of the universe. It claims to be a "one-substance" theory, although it should in consistency call itself a "no-substance" theory instead. It repudiates the doctrine of two substances, matter and mind, because it cannot understand how mind should ever in that case be able to know matter. Materialism declares that mind knows matter because mind is matter; Idealism declares that mind knows matter because matter is mind. The one is just as much an arbitrary assumption as is the other. Both are *argumenta ad ignorantiam*. Because we cannot explain *how* we know that which is other than ourselves, shall we deny that we *do* know things and beings other than ourselves? It is not essential to knowledge that there be identity or even similarity of nature between the knower and the known. God can know what sin is—aye, *only* God can fully know the nature of evil. It is just as much a problem how we can know ourselves, as it is how we can know the external world. "The primitive dualism of consciousness" is just as inexplicable as the primitive dualism of substance. "The mental act in which self is known implies, like every other mental

act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If then the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives? or, if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of?" But this very consciousness of personality, this very cognition of self of which Herbert Spencer speaks, in the words I have quoted, he declares in the next sentence to be "a fact beyond all others the most certain,"¹⁶ and in spite of his subsequent attempts to explain it away, we may take his testimony as to the universal fact of its existence. But if man knows a non-ego in his own thoughts, he may know a non-ego in other beings or in the world outside of him; and our inability to explain the mode of this knowledge should not for a moment shake our confidence in the fact.

Idealism is compelled to recognize an action of the *will* upon matter,—why should it not with equal readiness recognize an action of the *intellect* upon matter? If I can *move* something outside myself, why can I not *know* something outside myself? It seems absurd to suppose that I *produce effects* only upon an ideal world when I exert my powers of volition,—why is it not equally absurd to suppose that I *know* only an ideal world when I exert my powers of sense-perception? I come in contact with real things and real beings when I use my will,—what right have I to say that I come in contact only with ideas when I use my mind? And when we rise to the consideration of God's relation to the world, what right have we to say that God's power exhausts itself in mere thinking, or that God is capable of no creation but the creation of ideas? Man can make a thing whose existence continues after his own act upon it has ceased,—cannot God do the same? Man can give his thoughts objective shapes—Phidias and Praxiteles put their ideas into form and make them live forever,—cannot God give substantive expression to his thoughts also? Must God be shut up to an eternal process of thinking, without the power to create substances other than himself which shall in their various degrees

¹⁶ First Principles, p. 65.

reflect his wisdom and his love? Berkeley believes that God is himself a spirit, and that he creates finite spirits of a different substance from himself. Why cannot he who has thus in finite spirits disjoined from himself a certain portion of spiritual force and given to it a relative independency,—why cannot he also and just as easily in material substance disjoin from himself a certain portion of physical force and give to it a relative independency?

I have thus far treated Modern Idealism from a philosophical point of view, and I have endeavored to show that even from this point of view it possesses no advantages over the doctrine of Natural Realism. But we are bound to look further, and to judge the new system by its probable influence upon Christian faith. Is it consistent with the things “which have been fully established among us,” the accepted teachings of Scripture? I do not now ask whether noted Christian thinkers here and there have or have not held to the idealistic scheme. Here I have to do, not with the actual results, but with the logical tendencies of the system, while at the same time it may be well remembered that in the long run these logical tendencies make themselves practically felt. The first of these tendencies which I notice in the new philosophy is the tendency to merge all things in God. Dr. Krauth¹⁷ very properly calls it the weakness of idealism that it finds unity not in the harmony of the things that differ, but in the absorption of the one into the other. Instead of tracing all things to one source, it prefers the shorter and easier method of asserting that all things are but forms of one substance. The conception of a God who *is* all, seems to it preferable to that of a God who *creates* all. In this, the doctrine runs directly counter to the Scripture teaching that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and so removes the barrier which God himself set up against a pantheistic confounding of himself with his works. But further than this, idealism destroys all distinction between the possible and the actual. A possible universe, as already in God’s thoughts, is already

¹⁷ Berkeley’s Principles of Knowledge, Krauth’s Prolegomena, p. 130.

an actual universe ; and, *vice versa*, an actual universe, as only in God's thoughts, is nothing more than a possible universe. The whole geologic and astronomic history of the universe before man came upon the planet was only a thought-history, —events, aside from God's thought of them, there were none. Such as they were, they always were ; and the universe is as eternal in the past as is God's thought of it, for God's thought *is* the universe. And since the future universe exists only in God's thought it is existent now as much as it will ever be. Preservation is only continuous creation ; continuous creation is nothing but God's thinking ; and God's thinking is from eternity to eternity. Second causes do not exist, for as things are but the ideas of God, all changes in these things are but the direct effects of a divine efficiency. All causal connections between different objects of the universe are at an end. No such things as physical forces exist. Nature becomes a mere phantom, and God is the only cause of all physical events. Science becomes at once, not the study of nature, but the study of God.

I have said that Idealism destroys all distinction between the possible and the actual ; I must go further, and say that it destroys all distinction between truth and error. It holds that ideas alone are the objects of knowledge ; the world without and the world within are alike ideas ; these ideas constitute the world ; and the existence of these ideas is due directly to the causative intelligence of God. But if ideas *are* the reality, how can man have false ideas ? Is it not beyond dispute that we have ideas which do not correspond to the objective truth ? Are *these* realities also ? and is God the author of them ? Men have selfish, sensual, murderous thoughts ; they hate and malign God ; they slander and destroy his creatures. Are these lying ideas and representations eternal truths and realities also ? Have we not here the **proof** that the divine ideas must differ from sense-ideas in us, and that our ideas are not the realities but only individual interpretations of reality, born of our wilfulness and moral perversion ? Berkeley seems at times aware that there is a difficulty

in identifying our ideas with the divine archetypes ; but the fear of recognizing in these divine archetypes a new sort of "things in themselves" seems to have prevented him from making further explanations. Is it not plain that no explanation is possible that identifies the idea with the object ? Does not this abolish the distinction between truth and error, and make both our right and our wrong the direct product of the divine will ?

Why should not Idealism go further and declare that God is the only cause in the realm of spirit as well as in the realm of matter ? If Idealism be not logically self-contradictory it must do this. If my body, so far as it is objective to me, may be a mere idea of God, then my soul, so far as it is objective to me, may be a mere idea of God also. All my ideas are ideas of God, and God causes them. What becomes of my personal identity ? What is to prevent Jonathan Edwards, as he does, from basing identity upon the arbitrary decree of God, and from declaring that God, merely by so decreeing, makes Adam's posterity one with their first father and responsible for his sin ? What is to prevent the necessitarian from declaring that, since all motives are ideas, and all ideas are due to direct divine causation, the soul has no permanent existence of its own and no freedom that can furnish the slightest basis for responsibility ? What we call the moral law is nothing but the presentation of a sublime divine idea ; and what we call sin is nothing but the presentation of another divine idea which is given us simply to contrast with, and to emphasize, the first. Both evil and good are purely ideal. Not our wills but our thoughts are to be purged, and that by imparting to us both the good thoughts and the evil thoughts that are in the mind of God. The freedom to choose the good and to refuse the evil—this does not exist, for this would imply the existence of a substance separate from that of God. God is equally the source of evil and of good—the morally pure and the morally impure are both alike to him. What we have usually regarded as the greatest of blasphemies is only simple fact, for God is not only the author, but the sole

author, of sin ; he is not only the sum and source of all good, he is also the sum and source of all evil.

All this is to deny the testimony of conscience, and to strike at the roots of all morality. It is easy to see how the whole Christian doctrine of redemption goes by the board, when once sin is regarded as a natural necessity, and ideas are held to be the only real objects of knowledge. It is no longer necessary to believe in an external revelation of God's will. Internal revelation, Christian consciousness, the direct presentation to our minds of new ideas from God, takes the place of outward Scripture, or assumes coördinate importance and authority with it. It is no longer necessary to make a clear distinction between ideal characterization and real history. Jesus Christ, with his resurrection from the dead, his atoning death and ascension to the Father, can now be conceived of after an ideal fashion. These things never were, as they are pictured to be—but that makes little difference—the object is attained—namely, the fostering of an idea in our minds. Historical testimony becomes of little account when it contradicts a preconceived theory—the idea is better than the fact—for the fact itself is only an idea. And if it be suggested that to the man who thus turns God's facts into mere ideas, by denying the record that God gives of his Son, there will come the sure and certain punishment of his "unbelief, the reply is easy, that since punishment can come only in idea, and ideas, so far as we know, end with this life, there is little to fear, for since this life is but a dream, immortality is something still less substantial—even the dream of that dream. With the evidence of personal identity the evidence of personal immortality is lost also.

So the Idealism of the present day tends to Solipsism which is mere self-deification on the one hand, or to Pantheism which is the abolition of all moral distinctions on the other. It is the natural recoil from materialism, and yet it contains in itself germs of as great evil as did that foe with which the last generation so stoutly fought. It is the drift of our current philosophy, and the antagonist with which Christianity has

to cope, and which Christianity will surely conquer, in the few decades to come. Sir William Hamilton opposed Idealism simply because he believed that it contradicted our consciousness and so destroyed the foundation of all knowledge and of all faith. And yet I know of no process of mere argument which to an idealistic sceptic will demonstrate that material substance exists. I can tell him that in his very perception of quality he intuitively cognizes substance; but he may deny it. I can tell him that his ideas of the external world require a cause; but he may refer me to God as their cause. I may say, with Aristotle, that "things are not born of concepts," but he may reply that to him this is the most intelligible explanation of the universe. When I come to the results of his doctrines in ethics I may have greater hope of convincing him; but even here I can make little progress, if he has blunted his conscience and schooled himself into a belief in determinism. Practically I know of no better remedy for his disease than the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is remarkable how the submission of the will to him as a divine Teacher, Saviour, and Lord, results in a renewal and recreation of the will—how the man who previously regarded himself as a victim of necessity, a mere waif swept upon the current, when once he has received the Saviour into his heart, finds that he is now a free man, and becomes conscious of his substantial manhood. For the first time he knows that he has a soul. And as at the Reformation those who had become sceptical of the existence of objective truth and righteousness, aye, even of the existence of God himself, when they once found by believing in Christ that they had God sure, proceeded to the discovery and recognition of objective realities outside of them and opened the way to the progress of modern science; so now, in the individual heart, again and again, the reception of Christ, giving the first sense of reality within, leads the soul outward to the recognition of a real world and of a real morality outside of it. So Christ is the way and the truth and the life, and he whom the Son makes free becomes free indeed.¹⁸