

II.—THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF IDEALISM.

BY RALPH BARTON PERRY.

IDEALISM, in the sense in which that term is used in the present article, is a distinctively modern movement. It consists essentially in the assertion of the priority of spirit over matter. But it does not define spirit, and then proceed to show that everything may be explained by it, as materialists have undertaken to do with matter, force or energy. For its method is as peculiar as its doctrine. At this stage of the analysis it is impossible to say more than that its method is "epistemological," and that it is therefore best formulated in terms of those distinctions which arise when one reflects on *knowledge*. For idealism spirit is that which is denoted by the phrase "I know," or any more specific formula that is regarded as the equivalent of this, such as "I perceive," "I think," "I judge," or "I acknowledge"; and idealism asserts the priority of such a proposition as "I know *a*," over such propositions as "*a* exists," or "*a* is *b*"—asserts, in short, that *to be is to be known or known*.

Modern idealism, thus defined, may be clearly distinguished from ancient idealism or Platonism. Platonism is on the one hand the culmination of a tendency which manifested itself among all the pre-Socratics, a tendency of which the central motive was the assertion of the priority of systematic or well-grounded knowledge over opinion. Thus Parmenides distinguished between "the unshaken heart of persuasive truth" and "the opinions of mortals in which is no true belief at all". Heraclitus remarked that the truth differed from opinion in being one and universal. "Though wisdom is common, yet the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own"; just as "the waking have one and the same world, but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own".¹ And with Plato, too, philosophy is primarily a means of escape from the relativity and conflict of opinion. The philosopher is "he who has magnificence of mind and is the

¹ Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 184, 140.

spectator of all time and existence"; who "will not rest in the multiplicity of individuals which is an appearance only, but will go on—the keen edge will not be blunted, neither the force of his desire abate until he have attained the knowledge of the true nature of every essence by a kindred power in the soul". True knowledge is marked by the kind of object which it discovers or seeks, "the absolute, eternal and immutable," or "the things themselves," which, like the absolute square and the absolute diameter of mathematics, "can only be seen with the eye of the mind". And this insistence on the objectivity and permanence of truth, is united with the speculative interest in completeness of truth. The knowledge of the philosopher will be not only unqualified in point of certainty, but also unlimited in point of sufficiency and generality. Thus Plato represents also that philosophical tendency which has come latterly to be termed "absolutism".

It is true that in this summary of Plato no provision has yet been made for the moral element. Plato's absolute is defined as *the good*, and in the order of the sciences ethics is elevated even above mathematics. "The excellence or beauty or truth of every structure, animate or inanimate, and of every action of man, is relative to the use for which nature or the artist has intended them."¹ In other words, for Plato the teleological categories are fundamental. And this motive doubtless tended to contradict his absolutism, and to create a certain affinity between him and those very sophists who were his dearest foes. But the fact remains that so far as method was concerned ancient idealism was opposed, not to physical or mathematical science, but to the laxity of common sense. This is proved by Plato's high esteem for mathematics as a means of intellectual discipline, through which the philosopher might be emancipated from personal bias and the evanescent chaos of immediate experience, and brought to apprehend definite conceptions and fixed principles.

This rationalistic motive, critical, scientific and speculative, which dominated constructive philosophy among the ancients, found its most complete expression many centuries later in Spinoza. But in Spinoza it is so far freed from all connexion with teleology as to provoke a wholly different alignment of forces. In the famous Appendix to Part I. of the *Ethics* it is argued that an explanation of nature in terms of final causes is necessarily anthropomorphic. Man is virtually attempting to account for the absolute origin of things in terms of that

¹ Plato's *Republic*, Jowett's translation, 486, 490, 601.

value which they have for *him*. He assigns as reasons for the being of things those reasons which would have moved him to create them. And where he can find no such reason he simply imputes one to God's inscrutable wisdom. "Such a doctrine," says Spinoza, "might well have sufficed to conceal the truth from the human race for all eternity, if mathematics had not furnished another standard of verity in considering solely the essence and properties of figures without regard to their final causes."¹ It will be observed that Spinoza prizes mathematics not only for its exactness, but also for its dispassionateness, for that very character that led Plato to subordinate it to ethics. The philosopher of Spinoza is not the guardian of the State, representing the good of the whole rather than the good of any part, or even the lover of the absolute good, but the witness of those inexorable necessities which make no allowance for human ideals.

Thus in the rationalism of Spinoza the teleological principle, derived through Plato and Aristotle from the humanism of the Socratic age, and reinforced by the Scriptural account of the creation and of God's dealings with man, is replaced by the principle of *mechanism*. Science has now become identified in men's minds with the quantitative laws of motion. The Copernican revolution had further emphasised the meaning of the mechanical theory, and brought out its essentially de-anthropomorphic character, by removing the Earth from the centre of the stellar system, and reducing man's historical career to a peripheral and incidental feature of the cosmos. Man was now of small account in that world which he had once been led to believe was contrived for his especial comfort and salvation. If the religious attitude was to be maintained with such a philosophical background, only two possibilities seemed to remain. Either, as in the case of Spinoza himself, the religious consciousness must be reduced to the reason's approval of truth; or religion as a whole must be conceived with Hobbes as a secular institution, used to pacify disorderly men, and sharing the pettiness which under the mechanical philosophy attaches to all human affairs. But religion of the former type must be as rare as the spirit of renunciation and the capacity for intellectual mysticism; while religion of the latter type is a mere convention imposed by cynical enlightenment upon servile ignorance. Hence, not without reason, Spinoza and Hobbes were singled out and anathematised as the great prophets of irreligion.

¹ Elwes's translation, vol. ii., p. 77.

We are now prepared to understand the service which modern idealism offered to religious belief. True religion required to be defended, not, as in the days of Socrates and Plato, against the prejudices or blindness of unthinking men, *but against the claim of science to have alienated the world from man.* Faith and revelation had been left unsupported in their demand that the world should be subordinated to spirit. That nature which religion had conceived to be the handiwork of God, or the stage-setting of the moral drama, or at most merely the principle of negation in the spiritual life, threatened to swallow up both man and God. A new philosophy must redeem nature from mechanism and restore its spiritual centre. It must not be supposed that this was the conscious aim of the idealists and their forerunners, or that the tendency was not in large part due to purely theoretical motives. But it is this that accounts for the great human importance of idealism, for its stimulating power and widely diffused influence. Kant compared his theory of knowledge with the Copernican revolution in astronomy. He proposed to assume that "the objects must conform to our mode of cognition" rather than that "our knowledge must conform to the objects," just as Copernicus, "not being able to get on in the explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, as long as he assumed that all the stars turned round the spectator, tried, whether he could not succeed better, by assuming the spectator to be turning round, and the stars to be at rest".¹ But Kant did not point out the fact, nor has its importance ever been sufficiently recognised, that the Kantian revolution was virtually a *counter-revolution*, through which the spectator again became the centre of the system. Nor did this counter-revolution either begin or end with Kant. It is a movement of epochal proportions, supported by a wide diversity of thinkers, and dominating philosophy from the time of Berkeley down to the present day. Its central motive is the restoration of the supremacy of spirit. Its distinguishing characteristic as a philosophy of religion, is its subordination of nature to God by means of a preliminary reduction of nature to knowledge. God is declared to possess the world as man possesses his lesser microcosmic experience. That very mechanical cosmos which had served to belittle man, is now made to glorify him through being conceived as the fruit of intelligence. God, the discarded hypothesis of science, is enthroned again as the master-knower of whom science itself is only the imperfect instrument. Thus, while the burden of idealism is a religious

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, Max Müller's translation, p. 693.

interpretation of nature, its cardinal principle is a theory of knowledge. For the purposes of technical philosophy it consists in a single proposition, to the effect that knowledge is an originating or creative process. Its claims can be substantiated only provided it is true that *to know is to generate the reality known*. It must be proved that the being and nature of things are conditioned by their being known. In what follows the attempt will be made, amidst the confusing motives which attend the history of idealism, to keep this cardinal principle constantly in view, and to sift and test the evidence with which it has been supported. And first let us consider the manner in which Descartes and Locke, the forerunners of idealism, prepared the ground for Berkeley, its founder.

The strategy of idealism depends on the adoption of a certain initial standpoint. The world must be viewed under the form of knowledge. Although the precise significance of the fact cannot yet be made clear, it is a fact that everything that can be mentioned, such as the sun, gold, or Napoleon I., can be classed as an element of knowledge, or *idea*. This generalisation does, it is true, require a qualification, the importance of which will shortly appear. Elements of knowledge, or ideas, imply a knower, which is not itself an idea, but which confers the character of idea on what it possesses. With this amendment, we may say that it is possible to regard the world of all mentionable things, even the Copernican plurality of worlds with their inflexible mechanical necessities, as comprehended under the knower¹ and his ideas.

Descartes adopted this standpoint only provisionally, but the difficulty he met in extricating himself from it demonstrated its dialectical possibilities. When you record the knower and his ideas, or all knowers and their ideas, what is there left to account for? Descartes, of course, thought that there were at least two things still to account for, namely, God and nature. If asked whether these too were not ideas, he would have replied, not *merely* ideas—for they exist also in their own right.² Nevertheless, from the Cartesian standpoint God and nature are *primarily* ideas, that being the most certain thing about them. That there are such ideas is indubitable; that they are more than ideas remains somehow to be proved from what is known of them

¹ It would be untimely to inquire, *what knower?* This is indeed a crucial question, but it must be reserved. For the present let the term signify *the kind of thing* called knower.

² They exist not only "objectively," i.e., as content, but also "formally" or actually.

as ideas. The existence of God must be argued from the idea of God, and the existence of nature from the idea of nature.

The characteristic difference between Descartes and Locke lies in the fact that the former seeks to establish existence (as something other than the knower and his ideas) first in the case of God, while the latter seeks to establish it first in the case of nature. Let us consider the procedure of Descartes. He believes that he escapes from the circle of the knower and his ideas, through the peculiar character of the idea of God. He here relies on the traditional "ontological" proof, according to which the idea of an infinite and perfect being implies the existence of its own object. The idea of God was supposed to possess so high a degree of meaning or objectivity as to require a being of like degree to account for it.¹ Once the existence of God was established, and the circle broken, Descartes thought it safe to infer that other "clear and distinct" ideas, such as the ideas of nature, were also representative of existence.

Let us turn to the case of Locke. Nominally, he follows Descartes, and proves God before he proves nature. But logically he follows just the reverse order. Albeit with a certain becoming hesitation, he sets aside the ontological proof of God, and prefers those proofs that carried more weight with Englishmen and deists of the eighteenth century.² God's existence is proved from the necessity of an eternal and intelligent first cause. The problem of existence must, then, be first solved with reference to nature. And here Locke's distrust of intellectualism leads him to define a new criterion. The ideas, he asserted, that are most significant of existence, are not those that are most clear and distinct, or most full of meaning, but those which are directly imprinted on the mind by an external cause. Existence is to be inferred, not from the import of ideas, but from the circumstances of their origin. It is not a question of proving the trustworthiness or representative validity of illuminating ideas, but of proving the extra-mental source of vivid

¹ Descartes did, it is true, modify the ontological proof; but the fact is negligible for our present purposes.

² "How far the idea of a most perfect being, which a man may frame in his mind, does or does not prove the existence of a God, I will not here examine. . . . But yet, I think, this I may say, that it is an ill way of establishing this truth, and silencing atheists, to lay the whole stress of so important a point as this upon that sole foundation. . . . For I judge it as certain and clear a truth as can anywhere be delivered, that the invisible things of God are seen from the creation of the world."—Locke's *Essay, Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. iv., ch. x., § 7

and forceful ideas that are beyond the mind's control. The conspicuous and evident case of such ideas, is sensation.¹

Owing to this difference of procedure between Descartes and Locke there came to prevail two notions of the relation between existing nature and the idea of nature. According to the Cartesian procedure existent nature is essentially that which *corresponds* to the idea of nature, that in which the idea of nature is fulfilled. According to the empirical procedure of Locke, on the other hand, existent nature is essentially the *cause* of the idea of nature. In the first case existent nature must resemble the idea, and the real difficulty is to distinguish it therefrom. In the second case existent nature need not resemble the idea, and the real difficulty is to give it any real character or meaning at all. We are now prepared to understand the form which idealism first assumed, in the writings of Berkeley.

Berkeley, like Descartes and Locke, begins with the assumption of the knower and his ideas, and feels the difficulty of establishing the existence of anything else. But Berkeley parts company with his predecessors, and with common sense, in concluding that the difficulty is insuperable, and the attempt to overcome it gratuitous. He asserts, in short, that all existence may adequately be comprehended under the knower and his ideas; and in this assertion modern idealism first sees the light.² With Berkeley, as with Locke, the question primarily concerns nature. Is there an existent nature over and above the idea of nature? The answer may be formulated as a dilemma. If, as Descartes would have it, existent nature agrees with the ideas of nature, then what is the difference; but if, as Locke suggests, existent nature does not agree with the ideas of nature, then what is it, and how can it be proved? Furthermore, why must a thing be other than idea in order to exist? In the case of nature, Berkeley asserts, it would appear that *esse est percipi*.

Berkeley's argument is too well known to require detailed restatement, but it is highly important to discover just what it proves. That Berkeley believed that he had established idealism is beyond question; his whole religious philosophy depended on a reduction of nature to spirit. But it is certainly true of much of Berkeley's argument, that while it serves to

¹ Cf., *op. cit.*, bk. iv., ch. xi., § 1. "No particular man can know the existence of any other being, but only when, by actually operating upon him, it makes itself perceived by him."

² Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* was published in 1710. Malebranche, Norris and Collier should be credited with original contributions to this doctrine, but Berkeley gave it its prominence and classic form.

refute Descartes and Locke, it nevertheless does not establish idealism. There is a halting-place short of that theory, where the issue is altered, and where new alternatives arise and diverge. Consistently with our purpose of disentangling the cardinal principle of idealism, and of isolating the evidence offered in support of it, we must therefore separate Berkeley the idealist from another Berkeley with whom realists as well as idealists are to-day in substantial agreement.

The greater part of Berkeley's argument in the well-known *Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous* is a disproof of the traditional dualism between idea and existence. This position, which Berkeley justly attributes to Descartes and Locke, is thus summarised by Hylas: "To speak the truth, Philonous, I think there are two kinds of objects:—the one perceived immediately, which are likewise called *ideas*; the other are real things or external objects, perceived by the mediation of ideas, which are their images and representations. Now, I own ideas do not exist without the mind; but the latter sort of objects do."¹ In attacking this position Berkeley first shows that whatever answers to the name of a natural object, such, for example, as "tulip," is perceived immediately, and hence is idea. Its colour is seen, its shape and size both seen and felt, its odour smelt, and so with every quality or element that is attributed to it. What, then, is the "real" or "external" tulip "without the mind"? And what ground is there for affirming it? There are, Berkeley believes, only two conceivable alternatives, both of which are untenable. In the first place, one may contend, after the manner of Descartes, that an idea, if it be clear and distinct, is a trustworthy likeness of something that exists "without the mind". But how can a thing that is in its substance or essence non-mental be like a thing that is essentially mental? Surely a copy which must necessarily miss the essence of the thing copied is no copy at all. Does it mean anything to speak of absolutely invisible colour, or inaudible sound? In general, does it mean anything to speak of an object that is like ideas in all particular qualities and attributes, and yet possesses a fundamentally and radically different nature? By means of these and similar considerations, Berkeley shows that a non-mental world which corresponds with the mental world but never coincides with it, is both arbitrary and meaningless. And is it not also gratuitous? This raises the question in the form in which it presents itself to Locke.

¹ Fraser's edition, vol. i., p. 414.

For, in the second place, it may be contended that certain ideas, sensations, namely, have an extra-mental cause. They are forced upon the mind, and are not of its own making. In this Berkeley is empiricist enough to agree with Locke. But what is the cause? If it be conceived as matter, then it reduces itself to an unknown substratum, because everything that is known of matter is, as we have seen, contained within ideas. And why should a cause, to which none of the properties of matter can be attributed, be regarded as material at all? Since here it is not required that the extra-mental reality shall be like the ideas, but only that it shall be their cause, why should it not be conceived after the analogy of the only cause of ideas with which we are directly acquainted, namely will or spirit? In this case, matter or physical nature would simply coincide with perceptions caused by God. There would be no matter behind appearance, no duplication of known matter through the assumption of a likeness or prototype behind it, and no discrediting of knowledge through the assumption of an unknown and unknowable essence.

Now without doubt Berkeley meant to assert that whatever is content of ideas, such as matter in the above sense, is *necessarily* or *essentially* ideal; its *esse* is *percipi*. But this does not follow from the argument as thus far outlined. For it is entirely possible that the real tulip should be as Berkeley argues, identical element for element with the idea of tulip, and yet not require to be perceived in order to be. The principle involved is a very common one, and never disputed in its more familiar applications. Thus when a citizen of the United States becomes President, the citizen and President are identical. There is no "presidential" entity substituted for the citizen, no correspondence or representation. The simple fact is that a citizen, without forfeiting his citizenship, may assume the status of President. But no one would think of contending that therefore being President is a condition of citizenship, or that citizens are essentially presidential, or that there can be no citizens that are not presidents. Similarly, tulips may be known, and when known called "ideas of tulips". There is, as Berkeley justly contends, no substitution or representation, no duplication or mystification. The tulip simply assumes a certain status, definable by the special relationship *percipi*, and involving no forfeiture of its nature or identity. But this does not at all imply that whatever assumes the status of idea *must* be idea in order to be at all, or that there are no things that are not ideas. The confusion doubtless arose from a convention to the effect that mind and nature are different "substances,"

or different domains, lying wholly outside of one another, and therefore mutually exclusive in their content.¹ It would follow from such a supposition that whatever belongs to mind or to nature, belongs to it absolutely and irrevocably. But once this supposition is abandoned, there is nothing whatsoever to prevent a thing's belonging *both* to nature and to mind; in which case it is impossible to argue that because a thing belongs to mind it therefore owes its existence to the fact.

Now the doctrine which results from the rejection of the dualism between idea and existence, but which stops short of idealism, deserves independent recognition, and a name that shall distinguish it. It is accepted by contemporary thinkers of opposing schools and can therefore be eliminated from most present-day controversy. Among German writers it has been referred to as the "immanence" theory, because it asserts that known reality enters itself into mind. But this term possesses the very ambiguity we are seeking to avoid, since it is often taken to mean that reality *must* lie within mind, which, as we have just seen, is a very different matter. It has also been referred to as the "immediate" theory of knowledge, because it asserts that reality is known directly and not through the intervention or mediation of a second and purely mental thing. But this term will scarcely serve, owing to the fact that "immediate" is commonly held to mean sensuous, affective, or non-intellectual consciousness, and thus raises a wholly different and irrelevant issue. It would seem to be necessary, therefore, to obtain a new expression which shall distinguish the doctrine precisely. The phrase "epistemological monism" has the virtue of suggesting that the doctrine in question is essentially a doctrine about knowledge, and not about being or existence, and also of suggesting that the doctrine arose historically as a refutation of dualism. Epistemological monism means that when things are known, they are identical, element for element, with the idea, or content of the knowing state. According to this view, instead of there being a fundamental dual division of the world into ideas and things, there is only the class of things; ideas being the sub-class of those things that happen to be known. That which is commonly called the "object" of knowledge is, according to this view, either the idea, or the whole thing of which the idea is a part. Thus when one perceives the tulip, the idea of the tulip and the

¹ Descartes is mainly responsible for the prominence of this notion in modern philosophy; but it probably arose originally from the emphasis given to "the inner life" by introspective Christianity.

real tulip coincide element for element; they are one in colour, shape, size, distance, etc. Or, if one so desires, one may reserve the name of "real tulip" for the whole of the tulip, as distinguished from whatever portion of it is actually embraced within the idea. But in this doctrine nothing whatsoever is asserted or implied of the tulip except as respects this particular question. Whether it be essential or accidental to the tulip that it should be perceived, and thus become an idea—whether all tulips are ideas, is a wholly different question which must be decided on different grounds. And it is an answer to this second question which constitutes the cardinal principle of idealism. We may now turn to that principle as it is formulated and defended in the philosophy of Berkeley.

Berkeley only infrequently isolates his idealistic argument, but the passages in which he does so are of the greatest historical importance. In the Dialogue to which we have already referred, we read:—

"That the colours are really in the tulip which I see is manifest. Neither can it be denied that this tulip may exist independent of your mind or mine, but, *that any immediate objects of the senses—that is, any idea, or combination of ideas—should exist in an unthinking substance, or exterior to all minds, is in itself an evident contradiction.*"¹

Now we shall understand Berkeley's meaning if we can apprehend this "evident contradiction". "The tulip which I see" is idea; and it belongs to the essential character of ideas that they should be in mind; hence it is contradictory to assert that "the tulip which I see" is exterior to mind. If all redundancy and equivocation is eliminated this amounts to the assertion that a tulip *when* seen, or *defined as* seen is not a tulip unseen. But what Berkeley sought to establish was virtually the proposition that *the tulip which I see can never be unseen*; and this does not follow. For it is not contradictory to assert that the tulip which I see to-day was unseen yesterday, or that the tulip which I see could have existed without my seeing it. Berkeley's error lies in his inferring that because the tulip is seen, therefore whatever is true of the tulip *qua* seen, is true of the tulip. It would be as reasonable to argue that because no President can be less than thirty-five years of age, and because George Washington was President, that therefore George Washington could not have been less than thirty-five years of age. He could not, it is true, have been younger than that *when* President, nor could Berkeley's tulip have been unseen *when* seen. But

¹ Fraser's edition, vol. i., p. 406. (The italics are mine.)

the tulip is not on that account under any necessity of being seen. It will be observed that this error reduces in the last analysis to the fallacy of *petitio principii*, and as such it is a persistent factor in idealism.¹ In order that things may be proved to be essentially spiritual, they are conceived at the outset under that form, as ideas, objects of knowledge, or experiences. It is not here denied that things do as a matter of fact exist under such forms; but only that to substitute these forms for the things themselves, is to beg the question. For the very question at issue is whether things exist essentially or only accidentally under these forms, and whether, therefore, such a substitution is or is not legitimate. The Columbia River was named for Columbus; but it does not follow that "the man the Columbia River was named for" may forthwith be substituted for "Columbus" in historical discourse, for the characterisation is not sufficiently significant or definitive of the object referred to. Similarly, Columbus is "the man I am now thinking of"; but to treat him as such in all subsequent discourse would be to assume that his being thought of by me is the most important thing about him, which is, of course, contrary to the facts. Idealism must prove that to classify things as ideas, objects of knowledge, or experiences, is the most fundamental disposition that can be made of them; therefore, to classify them thus at the outset, or to prefer this classification to the many other possible ones, is simply to assume the very thesis under discussion.

The argument assumes a different form in the following passage taken from the *Principles of Human Knowledge* :—

"But, say you, surely there is nothing easier than for me to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet, and nobody by to perceive them. I answer, you may so, there is no difficulty in it. But what is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your mind certain ideas which you call *books* and *trees*, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them? But do not you yourself perceive or think of them all the while? This therefore is nothing to the purpose: it only shows you

¹ I hope shortly to have an opportunity of illustrating this fallacy from the history of Kantian idealism. So far as I know, no idealistic writer is free from it. A single example will suffice here. "We must start, in other words, from the whole of experience as such. . . . Now we take experience as a whole when we look upon the subject-mind, in which alone experience exists, as the centre to which all forms of experience refer and round which they gather" (Baillie's *Idealistic Construction of Experience*, p. 106).

have the power of imagining, or forming ideas in your mind ; but it does not show that you can conceive it possible the objects of your thought may exist without the mind." ¹

In other words, one cannot conceive things to exist apart from consciousness, because to conceive is *eo ipso* to bring within consciousness. It is to this argument that Berkeley appeals in the last resort, and it is so fundamental and crucial as to deserve to be regarded as the idealistic argument *par excellence*.²

The argument calls attention to a situation that undoubtedly exists, and that is probably the most important original discovery that philosophy has made. *No thinker to whom one may appeal is able to mention a thing that is not idea, for the obvious and simple reason that in mentioning it he makes it an idea.* What this situation proves is a question that has never been examined with sufficient care. So far, it means only that no thinker can eliminate himself from the context of his knowledge without ceasing to know. No one can report on the nature of things without being on hand himself. It follows that whatever thing he reports does as a matter of fact stand in relation to him, as his idea, object of knowledge, or experience. In order to avoid making inferences unawares, it is necessary to have a name for this situation just as it stands. It will be convenient to call it *the ego-centric predicament*.

But what does it prove, and how does it serve the purpose of idealism? It contains, evidently, the proposition that every mentioned thing is an idea. But this is virtually a redundant proposition to the effect that every mentioned thing is mentioned, or that every idea, object of knowledge, or experience, is an idea, object of knowledge, or experience. And a redundant proposition is no proposition at all. The assertion that an idea is an idea, conveys no knowledge even about ideas. But what the idealist requires is a proposition to the effect that *everything is an idea*, or that *only ideas exist*. And to derive this proposition directly from the redundancy just formulated, is simply to profit by the confusion of mind which commonly attends a redundancy.

It may be argued, however, that the ego-centric predicament is equivalent to an inductive proof of the proposition that all things are ideas. Every observed case of a thing is a case of a thing observed. Neglecting the redundancy,

¹ Fraser's edition, vol. i., p. 269.

² I have already formulated and criticised this argument in an article entitled "The Ego-centric Predicament," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Sc. Methods*, vol. vii., No. 1.

which is sufficient of itself to vitiate the assertion, we remark that the induction proceeds entirely by the method of agreement. The ego-centric predicament itself forbids the use of the method of difference. It is impossible to observe cases of unobserved things, even if there be any. In other words, there is a reason connected with the conditions of observation why only agreements should be observed. But where this is the case the method of agreement is worthless; and the use of it is a fallacy. Thus, I cannot conclude that English is the only intelligible form of speech simply because whomsoever I understand speaks English. On the contrary, my peculiar situation, as one acquainted only with a single language, is sufficient to discredit my results. And similarly, the peculiar circumstance that in observing I am compelled to supply the very element whose real ubiquity or necessity I am attempting to discover, must itself be discounted or corrected if I am to draw a true conclusion. In so far as my conclusion is due to the circumstance itself, it is fallacious.

A study of the later development of idealism will disclose the fact that the ego-centric predicament is mainly, if not entirely, relied on for the proof of the cardinal principle of idealism.¹ And the fallacies to which the use of this predica-

¹ As I hope later to return to this topic, I shall here refer only to two contemporary writers, to whom the application is obvious, and who are apparently satisfied with the argument as Berkeley left it.

"The truth is that Berkeley gave the *coup de grace* to all forms of materialism, when he proved, or led the way to the proof, that matter (so-called physical reality) is a compound of qualities, and that every quality turns out to be an elemental form of consciousness, or way of being conscious." "The material thing then, as directly known, is proved by appeal to the consciousness of every observer to be a fact within consciousness, not independent of it" (Calkins, *Persistent Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 400, 123).

"Find any piece of existence, take up anything that any one could possibly call a fact, . . . and then judge if it does not consist in sentient experience. . . . When the experiment is made strictly, I can myself conceive of nothing else than the experienced. Anything, in no sense felt or perceived, becomes to me quite unmeaning. And as I cannot try to think of it without realising either that I am not thinking at all, or that I am thinking of it against my will as being experienced, I am driven to the conclusion that for me experience is the same as reality. . . . You cannot find fact unless in unity with sentence" (Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 145, 146).

I have italicised these quotations in order to bring out the application. I shall not undertake to determine which of the errors above named, confusion, redundancy, or false agreement, predominates. I am not sure that the idealist is not guilty of an original compound fallacy, the fallacy of many fallacies! I may be permitted to observe in this connexion that idealists have to an astonishing degree neglected the proofs of their cardinal principle. Mr. Bradley devotes about two pages to what is the most important and almost the only positive contention that the book contains.

ment gives rise, redundancy, confusion, and false agreement. are, together with the form of the *petitio principii* described above, the characteristic defects of the idealistic argument. It is doubtless true that idealism has had a long and eventful history since Berkeley; and there are many who would maintain that idealism did not begin its history until after Berkeley. But to any one who refuses to permit the issue to be confused, it must be apparent that the theory with which Berkeley startled the world in 1710, is essentially the same as that which dominated the thought of the Nineteenth Century in the form given it by Fichte and Hegel. It is essentially the same, in that the agreement is far more important than the difference. The two theories agree in asserting that consciousness is the universal condition of being, or that *to be is to be either knower or known*; they differ in what they conceive to be the fundamental properties of consciousness and the nature of truth. But it is the principle in which they agree from which both theories derive their philosophy of religion, and to which both have owed their popular influence. And this principle obtains both its simplest statement, and its original arguments in the writings of Berkeley.