THE PHILOSOPHY OF ROSMINI.

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IN arranging this evening's paper I have thought it well to devote as much space as possible to simple exposition. In this country, at least, Rosmini is a comparatively unknown writer and before proceeding to comment upon his system it is necessary to explain at some length what that system is.

In the first part of my paper, therefore, I have attempted to place before you as nearly as possible in Rosmini's own words what I conceive to be the substance of his teaching.

"The fact," he says, "which I propose to explain is that of the existence in us of ideas or cognitions."

"To indicate as briefly as possible where its difficulty lies, I reason as follows:—

"In order that we may make a judgment, our mind must be already in possession of some universal.

"For instance, when I say, 'this sheet of paper is white,' or 'this is a wise man,' my affirmation supposes in me the knowledge of the universals called whiteness and wisdom; for otherwise I could not attribute the predicates to these particular subjects rather than to others.

"It would take a long time to demonstrate by induction that this applies invariably to all judgments; but it could always be done with strict logical accuracy. We may therefore lay it down as an incontrovertible truth, that a judgment is nothing but an intellectual operation by which we join a given predicate with a given subject.

"Such being the operation called judgment, we can see that it implies, first of all, the knowledge of a predicate distinct from the subject, and that without this knowledge the judgment would be impossible. Now, a predicate distinct from the subject is always a universal; for so long as it is not actually united with this or that particular subject, it is capable of being united with many, indeed with an infinite number of possible subjects; which is precisely what we mean by the term universal as applied to ideas.

"But if no judgment can be made without our being already cognisant of some universal, the question arises: how do we come by the knowledge of universals?"—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. i, sec. 42.)

"A very little reflection will suffice to show that there are only two ways in which this knowledge could be acquired—that is, either

through *abstraction* exercised on a particular idea, or through a *judgment*.

"*Abstraction* may draw the universal from a particular idea by doing three things:—

"(1) Dividing that idea into the two elements of which it is composed, *i.e.*, (a) the *common*, and (b) the *proper* ;

"(2) Leaving aside the *proper* ; and

"(3) Fixing the attention on the *common* alone, which is precisely the universal about which we are here inquiring.

"Now, we must recollect that the particular idea is in us antecedently to these three intellectual operations, else they could not be performed on it, and that their object, therefore, is, not to cause the *common* to exist in our mind, but simply to *observe* it in such a manner that it may be seen by its pure self alone.

"But it could not be thus observed unless it were already contained in that particular idea.

"Therefore *abstraction* cannot account for the formation of universals, as certain philosophical schools have erroneously supposed. It can only serve for the purpose of disengaging them from heterogeneous elements, and placing them before our attention in a perfectly isolated state."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. i, sec. 43.)

"It only remains to say, therefore, that universals are formed by means of a *judgment*.

"But we have already seen, that every judgment presupposes in us the knowledge of some universal. In fact, a judgment is nothing but an act by which we apply a universal to a given subject, or, in other words, assign this subject to a class of things determined by that universal.

"If, then, we cannot begin to judge except by making use of a universal, it is manifestly impossible to explain the *formation* of all universals by means of *judgments*. We must needs assume that antecedently to all our judgments we know some universal which renders possible to us the making of judgments, and, through them, the formation of other universals."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. i, sec. 44.)

Now the most primitive of all judgments is that which predicates existence, which says such a thing as—

"The word *existence*, taken without any adjuncts, indicates only an idea. A particular being (*ens*) is not said to have existence for us, until the concept of it has been formed in our mind. Hence, prior to our conceiving a corporeal being, this being exists, but we have not any knowledge thereof, and consequently no word by which to express it.

"When this corporeal being acts on our senses—supposing that

our intellectual faculty does not operate at all, and that we have sensations only—the same corporeal being, though acting on our sensitivity, would begin to have a relation with us. We, on being thus affected by it, might perhaps utter a cry, which would not, however, be a *word*, expressive at once of our affection and its cause. It would not be the sign of a *judgment*; nor indicate a being as it is in itself. It would simply be an *instinctive effect* of the modification or feeling caused in us by that agent. So far, then, there would be no intellectual perception of a *being*.

“The only example I could adduce of this would be the inarticulate cries uttered by animals, or those interjections of pleasure or of pain which, without designating *thought*, as words do, are nevertheless instinctively produced by the feelings experienced by the animal. All the articulate sounds which I could quote—as, for instance, the words *being, body, soul, &c.*,—express concepts already formed in the mind, and are quite another thing.

“In the state of which I speak, therefore, we should not have perceived the *existence* of the being: we should only have felt the passion which the being has produced in us by its action.

“But let us now assume that our faculty of judgment (the reason) is also set in motion, and that the agent of which till now we had only a passive sense-perception, is known by us in itself, or made an object of intellectual perception. I ask, what is it that takes place within us in this new operation?

“Simply an interior comparison between the particular passion received by our senses, or, to speak more accurately, the *term* of that passion—the thing *felt*—and the idea of existence. Through this comparison we find that the thing felt and the *existence* of an agent different from ourselves are intimately related, and so we say to ourselves, ‘That of which I feel the action in me *exists*’ (in a given degree and mode determined for me by the nature of that action). Thus the judgment perceptive of that corporeal being is closed. Through this judgment we consider that being as belonging to the immense class of existent things, and therefore see it under a universal aspect, as *existing* in itself, independently of us, of our passion, and of all other beings whatsoever.

“From this analysis we can see that the intellectual perception is nothing but ‘the vision of the relation between a thing felt (term of sense-perception) and notional or ideal existence.’

“The *Intellect*, defined as the faculty of the intuition of existence or being in general, is limited to this intuition, has no idea save this most universal one.

“The *Reason*, defined as the faculty which applies the universal idea to the ‘sensibles’ outside of us, is nothing but the power we

have of seeing the relation between what is supplied to us by the senses, and the *existence* of which the intellect has intuition.

"Hence in each intellectual perception of a corporeal being there are necessarily three elements—

"(1) A universal seen by the *intellect* (ideal existence);

"(2) The effect produced by the particular being acting on the *sense*;

"(3) The vision of the relation between the said agent and the universal idea (*act of reason*, perception).

"Failing any one of these three elements, the intellectual perception, and therefore the concept or idea, of a corporeal being would be impossible to us.

"Given, then, that our senses have been affected by the action of a particular body, or, speaking improperly, of 'the particular existence' of that body, we should not by this alone, have the concept or idea, but only the sense-perception of it. A particular being or (improperly) a particular existence, is not, therefore, knowable through itself, *i.e.*, is not an idea; it is merely a sensible element, though necessary for the concrete idea or intellectual perception, which as I have said, is simply 'the vision of the relation between a particular thing acting on the senses, or (improperly) the particular existence of that thing, and the universal called *existence*.'

"The outcome of all this is—

"(1) That there are not two ideas of existence, the one particular and the other universal, but there is one only—that of existence in general.

"(2) That there are many perceptions and concepts of *existent beings*, and they consist, to say it once more, in the vision of the relation between the particulars affecting our senses and the idea of existence."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. i, sec. 358.)

"Our difficulty being thus cleared up by a more detailed analysis of the way in which things come to be *understood* by us, it will be easy to see in what sense the name of *synthesis* or union can be legitimately applied to an act which is wholly spiritual—I mean the act by which we cognise or intellectually conceive a corporeal being.

"This act consists in our 'seeing the relation between the particular agent as perceived by the senses, and the universal idea of existence.'

"Therefore we do not by it place this idea in the particular being as though the idea became a component part thereof; no, we simply conceive (in virtue of the *unity* of our intimate self) the relation which that being has with the existence of which we have the notion or idea.

"Evidently, to perceive a relation is not to confound or mix up

into one thing the two terms of that relation. This would be a material union, similar to that of two liquids poured into the same vessel, or of two eatables made up into one dish. In the vision of a relation, on the contrary, the two terms are kept distinct; their union consists simply in this, that the intelligent spirit, by looking simultaneously at both and comparing one with the other, finds them related together, and affirms accordingly. That relation is a purely mental entity, which causes no disturbance or alteration in the terms themselves. It only serves as a light to direct our intellectual act; or rather, the seeing of it constitutes the act itself, *i.e.*, the intellectual perception, which is at once a cognition and a concept."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. i, sec. 359.)

"When I say to myself that there exists any particular real being or entity, I should not understand my own meaning if I did not know what entity was. Therefore the *notion of being or entity* in general must be in my mind before I can pronounce any of those judgments whereby I affirm the existence of any particular real entity."—(*Philosophical System*, sec. 15.)

"This consideration shows me that it is one thing to know what being in general is, and another to know that there is a particular real being. To know that there exists a particular real being, I must make an affirmation; while to know simply what being is I require no such *affirmation* but another act of the mind, which I shall call *intuition*. These two modes of knowing are clearly and fundamentally different, and are so related that intuition must precede affirmation. Human cognitions, therefore, are divisible into the two great classes, those arising from affirmation and those arising from intuition."—(*Philosophical System*, sec. 16.)

"Let us now examine the difference between *particular real being* and *being in general*. So long as I know only what being is, I do not know that there exists any particular or real being, and yet I understand what being is. The phrase 'to understand what being is, expressed in philosophical language, means to understand the *essence of being*.'"—(*Philosophical System*, sec. 18.)

"But if, after knowing the essence of being, I affirm to myself, that is, know that a particular real being exists, what do I know more than before? Before answering this question I must meditate on the affirmative act whereby I arrive at this new cognition: I must scrutinise the nature and grounds of it. Why then do I affirm that a being exists? What causes me to do so? What is this existence? It is clear that in many cases, if not in all, what induces me to make the affirmation is a *feeling*. For example, that which causes me to affirm the existence of external bodies is the sensations which they produce in me. I am induced to affirm the existence of my own body

by the peculiar feelings which I have of it. Lastly, I am led by an inner sense or feeling to affirm that I myself exist. In all these cases what makes me affirm that a particular real being exists is feeling. Hence, in the given cases, every affirmation, every judgment whereby I affirm that a particular real being exists, may be reduced to this form: there is a feeling, therefore there exists a being.”—(*Philosophical System*, sec. 19.)

“I start from a most obvious fact, the study of which, nevertheless, forms the whole of the theory I am about to expound.

“The fact is, that we think of *being* in a general way. However we may explain it, the fact itself cannot be called into question.

“To think of being in a general way is nothing but to think of that quality which is common to all things, without minding any of their other qualities, whether generic, specific, or proper. I can, if I wish, give my attention to one element of a thing rather than to another; now when I give my attention exclusively to that quality which is *common* to all things, namely, to *being*, it is then said that I think of *being in general*.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 398.)

“Having established the existence of the idea of being and learned by its nature, let us see how it comes to be in our mind, or in other words, what is its origin.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 413.)

“The idea of being does not come from corporeal sensations.

“Thoroughly to grasp the truth of this proposition, it is necessary to consider the characteristics proper to the idea of being, and which are far removed from all that corporeal sensation can give us.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 414.)

“When we think of a being, whether particularised or not, we consider that being *in itself*.

“Into such consideration there does not enter any relation whatever which that being has with us, or with anything else: the consideration is absolute.

“This way of perceiving things as they are in themselves, entirely apart from anything to which they might be related, is common to all that is conceivable by our mind. By this perception we look at them, so to speak, impartially, with those degrees of entity which they possess.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, 415.)

“Now, I say, that none of our sensations can give us an *objective* perception such as here described. *Objectivity* belongs exclusively to the *intellectual* perception.

“In truth, our sensations are nothing but so many modifications or passions of our composite nature.

“All, therefore, that our sensations cause us to feel can only be a relation which external things (.) have with us—a power they possess of modifying us. But the *suppositum* of this power

could never be perceived by us as it is in itself, if we had nothing but sensations to draw from: for existence considered in itself does not fall under our senses.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 416.)

“*The idea of being does not come from the feeling of our own existence.*

“If the *idea of being*, and by consequence any other idea, cannot come from external sensations, it follows that neither can it come from the *feeling* of our own existence; since this feeling is nothing else but a permanent internal sensation, endowed with certain peculiar qualities; and hence it is of such a nature that the same reasoning by which I have hitherto proved that the *idea of being* cannot come from corporeal sensations, is equally applicable to it.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 438.)

“*The idea of being cannot come from Locke's Reflection.*

“By Locke's Reflection I mean that faculty by which our mind can fix its attention on the external sensations, or on the internal feeling—that is to say, either on the whole or on any part of the sensation or the external feeling, without, however, adding anything to them, and hence without forming to itself any new object.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 444.)

“What I have said above proves to evidence that the idea of being does not come from Reflection as understood by Locke.

“For I have demonstrated (1) that the idea of being is in no way contained in our external sensations; (2) that it is not contained in the feeling we have of ourselves; (3) that Locke's Reflection is a faculty which observes and discovers what there is in the sensations, or in the internal feeling, without adding anything to either.

“From these three propositions it follows that, since Locke's Reflection cannot find in these two things what they do not contain, it cannot find the idea of being in them.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 447.)

“*The idea of being does not begin to exist in our own mind with the act of PERCEPTION.*

“It will be remembered that we have found the intellectual perception to consist of three parts, viz.: (1) Sensation . . . ; (2) the *idea of existence in general* . . . ; (3) the *relation* affirmed by us between the sensation and the idea of existence, or the judgment whereby we attribute the existence known in the idea (the predicate) to the force acting in the sensations—which attributing is the link which joins these two things together into a being, and in it lies precisely the act of the intellectual perception of bodies.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 454.)

“If we now enquire whether the said parts are of their own

nature contemporaneous, or successive, we shall discover that their order, both as to nature and time, must be the following:—

First, the *idea of existence*; next, the *sensation* (including the *corporeal sensitive perception*); thirdly, the *judgment*, which joins the two together, and thus generates the perception of the existence of bodies.

“In fact, that a judgment cannot be closed unless its two terms (predicate and subject) go before it, seems self-evident.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 455.)

“*The idea of being is innate in us.*”

“This proposition is a consequence of the preceding ones; for—

(1) If the idea of being is so necessary that it enters essentially into the formation of all our ideas, so that we cannot think except by making use of it;

“(2) If the idea is not contained in sensations;

“(3) If it cannot be drawn from sensations, external or internal, through reflection;

“(4) If it is not created in us by God in the act of intellectual perception;

“(5) Lastly, it would be absurd to say that it emanates from ourselves.

“It remains that it is innate in us; in other words, that possible being is present to and contemplated by us from the very first moment of our existence, although we do not advert to it until much later.”—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 467.)

We have now discovered the fundamental and characteristic feature of Rosmini's philosophy—the doctrine that we have an *intuition of the idea of being*, and that that idea is an essential element in all our other conceptions and ideas. We have now to follow him in his attempts to show how, by means of this primary intuition, we obtain the ideas or cognitions of ourselves, of our bodies, and of the external world of things. These are questions of Psychology.

As a preliminary, he asks what is the method of Psychology. In reply he says:—

“This must plainly be one of observation. The facts must be clearly presented, their parts distinguished, comparisons instituted between them, and, finally, conclusions drawn from them. In all this the eye of the mind must keep itself constantly fixed on the naked fact in order to see it clearly, and without allowing the imagination, during the process of observation, to add, obscure, or subtract anything. In this way it will afterwards be able to bear testimony with the utmost fidelity, precision and sagacity, and to produce a

description corresponding in every respect to the truth of the thing."
—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 28.)

After this explanation he proceeds to deal with the concept of the Ego—

"We cannot do otherwise," he affirms, "that set out with the concept of the soul which we have; and hence we must, first of all, strive to see whether the soul, as conceived by us, be indeed the soul as it is in itself, apart from our conception—apart from all that our mind may have added in the process of conceiving it."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 60.)

"Now I cannot doubt that I myself, who feel, who think, who speak, am the soul. The soul, therefore, as I present it, is that being which I mean to express when I use the monosyllable I."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 61.)

"This is what cannot be discovered except by the analysis of the concept which the word I expresses."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 62.)

"He who says I, meaning what he says, performs an interior act, whereby he pronounces his own soul. The monosyllable I, therefore, is the vocal sound pronounced by an intellective soul, or, more properly, by an intellective subject, to designate an act of its own, when it turns its attention inwards upon itself and perceives itself."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 63.)

"Fixing our attention at this point, we see:

"(1) That the soul which pronounces itself by saying I is a real soul. The I, therefore, does not express a pure idea; does not express merely the *concept* of the soul, but expresses the *perception* of it. It adds to that which the word *soul* expresses (idea or essence of the soul) the perceived reality."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 64.)

"That the I is not the perception of any soul indifferently, but of my own soul. The word I, therefore, adds to the general concept of the soul the relation of the soul to itself, a relation of identity. It, therefore, contains a second element, distinct from the concept of the soul; it is a soul which perceives itself."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 65.)

"That the soul does not turn back upon itself, or perceive itself unless it is excited and attracted by some new and particular feeling arising in it, either active or passive. The reason of this is that the mere substantial feeling of the soul, being natural and uniform, is not capable of arousing the attention of the soul itself. This attention is a new and particular act, and hence requires, for its sufficient cause, a new and particular stimulus. The soul, therefore, which says I, does not pronounce itself as it is in its primitive state, but as already in a state of activity superinduced upon it."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 66.)

"Moreover, that if, in saying I, the soul expresses itself as acting; if it says, 'That which does this—for instance, wills—is I,' this expression includes a fourth element, since it may be translated and resolved into this: That which wills is the same principle which perceives itself, and consequently says I. The I, therefore, includes another reflection, and therein a relation of identity, whereby he who speaks and pronounces I, means that he perceives himself as acting, as a being identical with that which acts."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec 67.)

"The pure notion of the soul can be derived from the *Ego* only by divesting the *Ego* of all the elements contained in it foreign to that notion."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, p. 44.)

"In the first place, when the soul says 'I act,' it affirms itself as acting. In what manner does it affirm this? In thought, because to affirm is to *think*.

"But since the soul, in this operation, thinks itself, to affirm itself as operating is to turn a *reflection* of the soul back upon itself.

"If the soul did not make this reflection, if it did not think itself, it would not know itself, which is the same thing as saying that it would not have any consciousness of itself.

"Now, is consciousness of itself essential to the soul? In order to find this out, we must see whether the reflection of its thought upon itself is essential to it."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 71.)

"Fichte began with this proposition, which contains the error indicated, 'The *Ego* posits itself.' The proposition is manifestly absurd, because it assumes that the *Ego* operates before it exists. Now, certainly no being can posit—that is, create—itself. He ought to have said, 'The soul posits the *Ego*,' because this would signify, 'The soul affirms itself,' and in so doing changes itself into an *Ego*, the *Ego* being the soul as affirmed by itself. Thus the *Ego* is distinguished from the soul, the *Ego* being the soul invested with that reflection whereby it affirms itself. Now, there is nothing strange in the soul's producing this reflection, but it is passing strange that the soul should be the *Ego*—that is, the reflected soul—before it has made the reflection in question."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 73.)

"It only remains to be explained how the soul can perceive itself."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 74.)

"In order to do this, we must have recourse to the theory of intellectual perception which we have expounded in the *Ideology* and elsewhere. This theory describes perception as an act of the subject, which, intuiting the essence of being, sees this being realised in feeling. No one can observe that there is being in feeling, unless he first knows what being is; that is, unless he intuites the essence of it. But granting that the subject has this intuition of being, it is no

longer difficult to understand how it should see or recognise being wherever it is, under any form, and hence also under the form of feeling, which is one of the three forms under which being is. This being granted, we can understand how the subject, man, intellectually perceives himself, admitting that the *self* is only a substance-feeling. Just as he perceives any other feeling, so he perceives that feeling which he denominates *himself*. There remains the difficulty, how he knows that the feeling which he perceives in this instance is himself; that is, how he knows the identity between the *self* perceiving and the self perceived. It is plain that if, in order to know this, he had to make a comparison between the two, it would be impossible in any way to explain our perception of ourselves. It must, therefore, be denied that man knows this identity through a comparison between a perceiving self and a perceived self. Once more, therefore, how is he to know it? He must know it immediately in the very perception of self. In what way? In this way:—If he sees the essence of being in his own feeling, so that he judges this feeling to be a being; in this perception, as in all others, it is the feeling that determines that the percept is one being rather than another. For this end the feeling must be perceived as it is; it is not altered by the act of perception. It is, therefore, from the variety of feelings that we know the variety of beings. It follows that the nature of feeling must possess the characteristic mark enabling us to distinguish the feeling of ourselves from all other feelings, from feelings that are not of ourselves. Now what must this characteristic mark be? To repeat what has been already said, it must be a *something* immediately perceived in the feeling itself. Now this something which is in our feeling of ourselves, and which forms a part of that feeling—which distinguishes it from all other feelings, is exactly that which is incommunicable in the feeling, that on account of which it is called, ‘feeling of ourselves,’ and if we must express it by a general and abstract term, we might properly enough call it *selfness*.”—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 75.)

That we really do possess such a characteristic or fundamental feeling seems, according to Rosmini, to be obvious from the following considerations.

“I find that I have in my present state a large number of feelings, such as those which come from my body. I have the memory of other sensations which I formerly had; besides, I possess many cognitions and think many thoughts. But I find that all my sensations, past or present, and all my thoughts have something which distinguishes them from one another. In fact, if two sensations or two thoughts had not something to distinguish them, they would not be two, but one. On the other hand, I see it is always I who think, who perceive, and who do all these things—this I, myself—and that,

if I were not always the same, I should never be able to compare two sensations or two thoughts and discover their diversity. This I, therefore, is not the sensations and thoughts, because these are divers and the I is one. On the contrary, the I is the subject which possesses the sensations and thoughts. Hence the I, considered in its own nature, is independent of the sensations and thoughts, since these are accidental, and continually vary, without ever being able to cause the I to vary. If, therefore, I begin with my mind to remove any particular thought or sensation of mine, I observe plainly that I do not thereby destroy the I. I feel that the I remains. If then the I remains after I have removed any particular sensation or thought, it is clear that, even if I took away from myself, one by one, all my accidental sensations and thoughts, I should not thereby have taken away the I, the essence of which has suffered from being divested of its accidental feelings and thoughts. The I, therefore, remains, even when deprived of all acquired modifications. In this way I am finally able to form an idea of the feeling which expresses itself in the word I, in all its purity and primitiveness."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 97.)

"The soul, therefore, is expressed by the monosyllable I; but in order to know its primitive and essential state, we must bear in mind that this monosyllable expresses, besides the concept of the essence of the soul, diverse relations in which the mind itself involves it through the operations which it performs upon it.

"Hence, having removed the veils of such relations, we have found at the bottom of the *Ego* a feeling anterior to the consciousness—a feeling which constitutes the pure substance of the soul. We must now meditate upon this feeling, prove its existence, and describe its nature."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 81.)

Rosmini next treats of the qualities of the soul. I will not ask you to follow me through his account of the unity, the immateriality, and the immortality of the soul, but I may perhaps be permitted to place before you a few passages bearing on the simplicity of the soul, interesting, not only in themselves, but also as showing the use Rosmini made of ancient writers, and still further as showing the teachers of antiquity in a more favourable light than that in which it is unhappily now the fashion to view them.

"If the parts of a substance are not united and held together by a simple principle, it becomes an absurd substance, because that is absurd which cannot be thought, and in a body the first parts are not found existing in themselves, since in every part assignable there is still a smaller part outside of all the others, and there remains no extended part that is wholly in the whole of itself. There remain, therefore, only simple points existing in themselves. But such points are not a body, nor are they parts of an extended body.

Consequently, they cannot form a continuous, however much they may be multiplied. Even an infinite sum of beings, each having an extension equal to zero, can give no result but an extension = 0. Hence the extended does not exist, or if it does, it does so only in a simple principle which holds it together." — (*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 443.)

"This was the irrefragable argument of the Platonists of Alexandria.

"It was stated by Nemesios in these terms: 'In opposition to all those who maintain that the soul is a body, we need only adduce the arguments of Ammonios, the master of Plotinos, the Pythagorean.' They are these: 'Bodies naturally change, and are completely dissipated, being divisible *ad infinitum*. Hence, if there remains in them nothing that is immutable, they at least require something to contain and connect them, as it were, to restrain and retain them; and this we call the *soul*. Hence, if the soul is a body of any kind, however thin, we shall still have to ask: What is it that holds it together? For we have shown that every body requires something to hold it together, and so on *ad infinitum*, till we arrive at something which is altogether without body.' "—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 444.)

"An illustrious Father of the Church, also an Italian, Paulinus of Aquileia, who wrote in the eighth century, writes to the same effect. 'The soul,' he says, 'in a wonderful manner governs the whole continuous mass of the body, which otherwise would disperse and divide, and diffusing itself through the whole, animates and vivifies it, and, like a central point, indivisibly preserves its own dignity, and does not dissolve into foreign qualities. Being incorporeal, it corporeally disposes everything by means of the body, and the substance of the flesh, being corporeal, performs corporeal actions by means of an incorporeal creature, *i.e.*, the soul.' "—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 449.)

"An author of the sixth century writes: 'Do you admit that the whole soul diffuses itself through each member, or that there is more of it in one member and less in another? I believe that it is all in each member of the body, because, although it is circumscribed, I do not believe that it is composed of parts in any way, since it remains entire even when the body is deprived of some of its members.' So says Joannes Maxentius."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, sec. 453.)

"St. Gregory Thaumaturgos, in his *Disputation on the Soul*, which is still extant, lays it down as a principle that 'the soul knows itself immediately from its own peculiar actions' (*eam ex propriis actionibus cognitam habemus*). The peculiar action of the soul is, that it gives life to the body. He, therefore, undertakes to examine how this takes place. He shows that, if it were united to the body as one solid

adheres to another, it could not animate the whole of it, but only the points of contact; if it were mingled with the body as one fluid is with another, it would divide into parts, and would no longer be that one identical soul which at once animates all the parts of the animal body. It follows, therefore, that it must all in all the parts of the body, and so remaining one, give life to all."—(*Psychology*, vol. i, p. 242, note.)

The above considerations will enable us to see the meaning of the formula of the ancients which we find repeated by St. Thomas, viz., that "The soul is in the body, not as contained, but as containing: 'Anima enim est in corpore ut continens, et non ut contenta.'"—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 720.)

We must now turn to Rosmini's account of the origin of our idea of our own bodies, and of the other bodies around us. He begins by defining body as "a proximate cause of our sensations," and "a subject of the sensible qualities," and proceeds as follows:—

"Our sensations suppose a cause distinct from ourselves.

"Our external sensations are facts in respect of which we are passive.

"Passive facts are actions which take place in us, but of which we are not the cause.

"But, by the principle of causation, the actions which take place in us, but of which we are not the cause, suppose a cause distinct from ourselves.

"Therefore our sensations suppose a cause distinct from ourselves, which was the thing to be demonstrated.

"Our sensations, then, suppose a cause distinct from ourselves.

"But we have seen that a cause is always a substance.

"Therefore the cause of our sensations is a substance."

(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, secs. 674, 675.)

It will be seen that the doctrine of causation lies at the basis of Rosmini's teaching on these points.

According to Rosmini each one of us perceives his body in two ways, viz. :—

"(1) Like all external bodies, by the sight, the touch, in short, the five sensories. When I perceive my body as acting on my sensorial organs, I do not then perceive it, in so far as it is itself sensitive (mark this . . . for it is a point of great importance), but I only perceive it as I do any external body falling under my senses, and producing sensations in them.

"(2) We perceive our body through that *fundamental* and universal feeling whereby we feel the existence of life in us, and through the modifications which the same feeling receives from adventitious and particular sensations.

"These two ways of perceiving our sensitive body may be appropriately designated by the terms *subjective* and *extra subjective*.

"By being perceived in the first way, *i.e.*, through the fundamental feeling which springs from life, our body is felt as forming one thing with us, so that in virtue of its individual union with our spirit, it becomes part of the sentient subject. Hence one may say with truth, that we *feel it as co-sentient*.

"When, on the other hand, we perceive our body in the second way, that is, as we perceive the external bodies which act on our sensitive organs, then like all of them, it is outside the sentient subject, and quite another thing from our sensitive powers. We do not feel it any longer in so far as it is co-sentient, but only in its external data, *i.e.*, in so far as it has the aptitude to make an impression on our sensitivity."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 701.)

"Given that we are in a sound normal state of health, the fundamental feeling which springs from life is a *pleasurable* feeling.

"It extends equally and softly through all the sensitive parts of our body; but there does not appear to be in it anything different from itself. Hence, if we could conceive a person who had never in his life experienced any particular sensations, but had always been left with the fundamental feeling alone, it would certainly be impossible for him to form that image or representation of his own body—of its form, its size, &c.—which is furnished by the sight and the other external senses."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, sec. 725.)

"The author, in a conversation, gave one of the translators of this work (*The Origin of Ideas*) to understand that he could, when in the prime of life, while his health was perfect, observe distinctly and without much difficulty his corporeal fundamental feeling. By it he felt his body wholly divested of those attributes which fall under the external senses, in fact, felt it lost in space. And so the translators believe, would the subjective body be felt by any one who could successfully perform the experiment."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. ii, page 281, note.)

There is not time to dwell in detail on Rosmini's account of the way in which we reach our ideas of external bodies.

Stated briefly, it is this:—

We know of the existence of bodies through feelings, by the application of the doctrine of causation, and by means of the intuition of being.

We know of the existence of our own bodies through the fundamental feeling.

We know of the existence of external bodies by modifications of the fundamental feeling, (*i.e.*, through ordinary sensations) which, since they do not owe their existence to us, presuppose some cause

other than ourselves. From these sensations, therefore, by means of the doctrine of causation and of the idea of being, we reach the concept of external bodies.

To this I need only add that Rosmini regards the fundamental feeling as being known to us as diffused through a certain extension: in his own words, it has extension as its mode, hence the modifications of that feeling, which we call sensation, being modifications of that which has extension as its mode, also, in their own degree, have extension as their mode, and, thus, become witnesses to the existence not only of external bodies, but also of extended external bodies.

I. Philosophically Rosmini must, I think, be regarded as belonging to the same school of thought as the great teachers of the Middle Ages. It is a modified scholasticism that he teaches, and Aristotle and St. Thomas are two of his great authorities. He is, however, essentially an independent thinker, and his attitude towards Aristotle differs widely from that of the great doctor of the mediæval schools.

I am well aware that to call a man a Scholastic, is almost equivalent in these days to pronouncing his condemnation. Yet why it should be so is hardly apparent. Many of the problems to which the Scholastics addressed themselves are, it is true, of little concern to us now, their very language has almost become unintelligible, and at times they seem to have dragged philosophical disputation far over the verge of absurdity; but, when every deduction has been made, it still remains true that in the works of the great teachers of the 12th and 13th centuries there is a body of sane and serious thought well worth our attention. It may be said that their methods were speculative, and that now we have turned from empty speculation to the positive methods of science. Their methods were undoubtedly speculative, but is not the whole of philosophy, even the famous synthetic philosophy, speculation? As to positive science, the temptation to interpolate a few observations is great, but I will simply say this—that I am disposed to think that if the logical methods frequently employed in the name of positive science could be submitted to one of those despised schoolmen, let us say to the great master of Conceptualism, William of Occam, he would be able to throw a very strange light on many a phrase and practice which now passes current. Then it should be noted that the ultimate problems with which philosophy is concerned lie wholly beyond the reach of science. This can teach us *facts*, but philosophy asks for *explanations*. Now, there is one class of known facts to which no very great addition has been made, I mean the purely psychological, and I would ask why should not the schoolmen, being as well acquainted with the facts as ourselves and as well able to reason about them, be able, in this department of human thought and enquiry at least, to tell us something

worth listening to? On the question of the association of ideas the moderns can tell us little that was not known to St. Thomas Aquinas, and certainly the great doctor of the schools would not, except perhaps under the pressure of some theological dogma, permit himself to play so loosely with a philosophical principle as many modern adventurers in the realms of ethics do with this principle of association.

Then, again, I very much doubt whether we have by any means exhausted the full significance of much of William of Occam's teaching. If it were more generally understood our philosophical speculations might become more modest, but I am not certain that the cause of truth would not benefit.

Certain it is, that, if the explanations of the Schoolmen do not always appear satisfactory, their definitions frequently show a clearness of perception of the real difficulties of particular problems which we may look for in vain in the works of many modern writers, and I think if I had to choose between one of the great masters of mediæval thought and, let us say, one of our neo-Darwinians, I should be fain to follow the elder teacher.

It must be remembered, however, that Scholasticism is not merely an historical system of thought, it is a potent factor in the intellectual word of to-day and as it is taught at Stonyhurst is a robust system of common sense thought not lightly to be depreciated. Moreover, it possesses all the characters of a living system, for it gives rise to more or less vigorous offshoots. With one of these—the philosophy of Rosmini—we are concerned to-night, and as another I may mention the system of Balmes embodied in his *Fundamental Philosophy*.

II. Another point to which I would call attention is the essentially rationalistic character of his system.

It appears clearly in his treatment of the object and scope of philosophy.

"Philosophy," he says, "is the science of ultimate grounds."

And "*ultimate grounds* are the answers which satisfy the last *why's* put by the human mind to itself."

He agrees that the object of philosophy is to give *quiet*, but it is a scientific and intellectual quiet that he seeks: he expressly states that spiritual assurance or persuasion is not sufficient, is not, in itself, ultimate. Here he stands in marked contrast with Cardinal Newman, the final result of whose teaching on these points seems to be that the inner certitude or conviction is the ultimate fact beyond which we cannot go, and that reasoning, at least about matters of fact, can only lead us to conclusions of greater or less probability. I must confess that I find myself more in sympathy with the English

Cardinal than with the Italian philosopher. I am content to accept as ultimate the immediate testimony of consciousness as to the world of men and things around me. I may not be able to understand *how* I know—I certainly could give no explanation of the fact of knowledge, and could produce no logical justification for trusting it—but most certainly I *know*, and to that knowledge, on the strength of the inner certitude which it brings with it, which is perhaps intrinsic to it, I am content to trust. I am well aware that this leaves unanswered and untouched the whole body of questions with which speculative philosophy concerns itself, but what of that? Is not philosophy concerned with the explanation rather than with the establishment of facts. Facts are its starting place, and they remain, standing in their own strength, revealed in their own light, whatever may be the conclusions at which philosophy arrives concerning them in its quest for explanations.

Take, for instance, the much debated question of the existence of an external world of things.

What reason have we for attributing to the objects of external perception any existence more permanent than that of the psychical states through which they are revealed? Do not the long-protracted controversies between the empirical and non-empirical schools of philosophy bear witness to the inconclusiveness of all attempts to discover or establish an extrinsic justification for this primitive datum of consciousness. The weary round of metaphysical argument upon this point is not entered upon for the purpose of producing or destroying the conviction that such a more permanent existence really belongs to the objects of the "outer sense," of *that* every one is convinced, be he philosopher or labourer, learned or ignorant. If any exceptions seem to exist in the ranks of sane men, we are justified in regarding them as apparent, rather than real, or, at most, as curious examples of the power of individuals to silence the voice of nature in the interests of a preconceived theory. No, not to produce or destroy the conviction, is the discussion undertaken, but simply to determine, if possible, the manner in which it is reached, to construct a hypothetical explanation of that which stands far beyond the limits of the controversy as an unchallenged fact.

My own personal belief is that in the last resort explanation will be found to be impossible; of the facts we may be certain, but the reasons for those facts will be for ever hidden from us. I should therefore reverse the order of Rosmini, and say that the first and essential thing is not intellectual proof, but spiritual persuasion—what Newman calls certitude. This is quite accessible to us, for, as I have said, it is intrinsic in all our knowledge, but as for intellectual quiet—those who start in search of it are on a vainer quest than those

who in the older days left the hall of Arthur to search for the Holy Grail.

Like them, they

"follow wandering fires
Lost in the quagmire."

The same rationalism, or as we should, perhaps, rather call it, intellectualism, is seen in Rosmini's treatment of certainty.

You will permit me to place before you the chief passages in which Rosmini treats of this.

"*Certainty* is a firm and reasonable persuasion in conformity with truth."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. iii, sec. 1,044.)

"*Truth* therefore, in man, is not the same thing as *certainty*."

"I may have in my mind an opinion true in itself, and yet may doubt its truth: in this case I have not certainty."

"Hence the mere fact of a thing being true in itself is not enough to render it also true to us. In order that it may be true to us, we must have a motive producing in us a *firm persuasion*, and producing it *reasonably*: that is, we must have a *reason* which logically necessitates in us the conviction that our opinion or belief is true and indubitable."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. iii, sec. 1,045.)

"*Certainty*, therefore, is the result of three elements:—(1) *truth* in the object; (2) *firm persuasion* in the subject; (3) a motive or *reason* producing that persuasion."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. iii, sec. 1,047.)

"Anything to which we give or refuse our assent may be expressed in a proposition; and a proposition present to our mind may be called a *cognition*, so far forth as we know what it means. I shall therefore use the term *proposition*, not as expressing any one particular form of our conceptions, but as expressing in general anything to which our persuasion may refer, even though it were a simple idea, since even an idea can, as I have said, be expressed by a proposition."

"So much being premised, I say that what causes *persuasion* in us or takes it away, is the assent or dissent we give to a proposition."

"Now assent in order to produce a persuasion entitled to the name of *certainty*, must be prompted by a *reason*, and not given at random or blindly."

"A *reason*, therefore, is invariably the cause of certainty; and of the three elements whence certainty results, it is the *third* (i.e. the sufficient reason) that generates it in the individual."—(*Origin of Ideas*, vol. iii, sec. 1,052.)

In these passages the characteristic of Rosmini's teaching to which I have called attention is clearly seen.

Now, it seems to me that we must of necessity eliminate from our definitions of certitude all such dualism as Rosmini introduces. We

must be content to accept the subjective certitude inherent in the data of experience without endeavouring to penetrate into some metempirical realm to ascertain whether things as they are, are really just what experience reports them to be. Concerning the data of experience we can be certain. They belong wholly to the subjective realm (although, beyond question, they reveal to us a world which is not subjective), and, in the only sense in which we can speak of the real, they are real, and we need no objective criterion of truth in order to accept them. The certitude which is given in experience itself is ultimate and adequate. Cardinal Newman endeavoured in his *Grammar of Assent* to preserve the distinction between the external criterion and the inner certitude, but he had to confess that this raised the question of the difference between real and apparent truth, a question which he was wholly unable to solve, and in more than one passage we find him relying solely on the subjective certitude, without reference to anything objective.

III. From Rosmini's doctrine concerning the origin of our knowledge I entirely dissent.

It seems to me quite untrue to say that our knowledge arises out of judgments. As I have said before, knowledge is ultimate and un-derived. If it be asked by an advocate for Rosmini how can we think of things as existing unless we already possess the idea of being—I reply, “I am sure I do not know; I *know* that things do exist, and I also know that I can think about them as existing, but beyond that I see no occasion to go.” Our intellectual life begins with knowledge, not with ideas or judgments, and that knowledge needs neither vindication nor explanation in order that we may accept it. This appears to be the fundamental error which vitiates so much of the *Grammar of Assent*. Dr. Newman started with assent and endeavoured to travel from simple assents to certitude. Now it seems to me to be equally incorrect to start in this way as to start from judgments or ideas. What reason is there for saying that our active intellectual life starts with assent? Is it not far nearer the truth to say that it starts with assertion—with the assertion, that is, of the knowledge given in experience? It was because Newman started from this purely artificial position, instead of from facts as given in experience, that he was, as we have seen, never able to show the way to certitude.

I have ventured upon what may, perhaps, seem to be an interpolation, because several of Rosmini's remarks on this subject are strikingly like those of the great Cardinal.

IV. The principal criticism I desire to submit on the details of Rosmini's system is this—that he does not appear to keep us clear of idealism.

This, I know, he expressly repudiates. He declares that the idea of being is *not*, like Kant's forms and categories, constitutive of the objects of perception, but is simply the means by which we come to know them. He says elsewhere that the idea of being is simply a logical principle by which we judge of the existence of things.

On the other hand, however, there are many passages in which he almost explicitly adopts the view he in other places rejects. The idea of being is no longer a simple principle of judgment, it is something real perceived by the intellect, which, when added (synthesis is the very word he uses) to the object of the corporeal sensitive perception, constitutes the latter a being, and makes it the object of intellectual perception.

I will not detain you with a multitude of examples; it will be sufficient to illustrate my meaning if I draw your attention to the following phrase taken from the *Philosophical System*:—

"In perception we add the essence of being to feeling."

Does not this embody the very essence of idealism?

The same aspect of his teaching is strikingly brought out in that chapter in his *Psychology* which deals with the union of the soul and body. In the opening sentence he says:—

"That among the things different from the soul, the body is the only reality capable of being felt and perceived by man—is a fact which we learn from consciousness, and which therefore requires no other proof but this immediate one.

"Hence we may derive an immediate and most important corollary, which is, that the soul and the body are united by means of feeling."

I will not detain you by an analysis of this passage; the critical words are those with which it concludes—"are united by means of feeling"—that is, something which is purely subjective is made to serve as a bond which, if it exists at all, must be objective.

The very same criticism may surely be passed upon a passage I have already quoted:—

"Hence, having removed the veils of such relations, we have found at the bottom of the *Ego* a feeling anterior to the consciousness—a feeling which constitutes the pure substance of the soul." "*A feeling which constitutes the pure substance of the soul.*" Is not this pure idealism?

V. The hour is getting late, and I must not detain you for many minutes longer, but there are three other points of considerable interest to which I desire to invite your attention.

(1) It is interesting to notice how often, in details of his system, Rosmini approximates to or coincides with the distinctively modern school of thought.

To begin with, his fundamental feeling seems to be essentially the

same thing as that sixth sense or vital feeling about which modern psychologists and physiologists have recently commenced to talk.

Then, again, the manner in which he makes the idea of force enter into our conceptions of bodies, is strikingly similar to Herbert Spencer's derivation of the concept of matter from experience of force.

More interesting still is the manner in which he deals with our knowledge of natural objects. Of these we know he says, two things—(1) that they exist; (2) that they have the power to excite in us those sensations which we customarily regard as directly indicating the qualities of the external bodies which excite them.

Upon this second point the subjectivism of his teaching is complete.

We must not think, he says, that these qualities exist in the objects as they appear to us; they have in themselves no objective existence, they are simply modifications of our own sensitivity. The most we can say is that bodies have powers capable of exciting such sensations in us.

The correspondence of this with much of current scientific teaching is almost too obvious to need pointing out.

(2) In the scholastic philosophy it is, I believe, customary to speak of the Ego as representing the entire man and, not simply the soul or spirit. Rosmini, it will have been noticed, adheres to the modern usage, but his teaching that the body forms one co-sentient subject with the soul renders his divergence from the doctrine of St. Thomas little more than nominal.

(3) The third and last point is Rosmini's teaching concerning our knowledge of the existence of God.

He denies explicitly that man can have in this life a positive idea of God. In a footnote to one of the sections in which he deals with the obscure and fantastic Transcendentalism of Bardili we read as follows:—

"Bardili, by assuming that man with his natural powers has a positive idea of God, fell into the same error as Schelling. The effect of this error is to create a false enthusiasm by inspiring men with an extravagantly exaggerated notion of his intellectual greatness; and throwing his imagination into a thrilling ferment of self-satisfaction at the contemplation thereof. Moreover, as I have repeatedly pointed out, the supposition that man has in himself the power adequately to perceive God inevitably induces pantheism."

The sections in his *Sistema Filosofico* which are devoted to Natural Theology deal with the matter in an entirely abstract and metaphysical manner, and do not contain a sentence calculated to awaken or strengthen faith.

In another place he speaks as though the idea of being which

stands before our minds—initial being, as he in one place names it—were, in some way or other, a dim shadow of the divine existence. Concerning it he says—“Is initial being God Himself? I answer No, because it lacks something which belongs to the divine essence. It lacks term, completion; which is equivalent to saying that it lacks self-subsistence, reality, and if the object of conception lacks anything, be it what it may, the thing perceived is not God, since, as Sebadino excellently says, ‘Nothing is proper to God unless it is full and perfect;’ that is, that being which is deficient in anything is not God. At the same time, if being should complete itself, that is if we should see being not initially but completely, then what we should see would deserve the name of God.”

I must confess that this seems to me a most inadequate and unsatisfactory basis for a philosophy of Religion, far less adequate and satisfactory than that which could be framed out of the writings of, let us say, St. Augustine, or of almost any of the great writers of the Middle Ages. Even the apostle of Conceptualism, William of Occam, points to a more excellent way than Rosmini.

Indeed, if our knowledge of God were such as Rosmini would have us believe, then would Religion, at least in its Christian form, be an impossibility, for this presents God to us as the supreme object of worship, of service, and of love. Now, these are acts which require a *person*, *apprehended as such*, as their object, and which cannot be performed unless such an object be thus apprehended. We can neither worship nor serve nor love a pure abstraction; a person, and a person alone, can be the object of these activities. But neither can a person who, although existing, is unknown to us to exist, or is unknown to us to exist as a person, be the object of devotion. That object must be a person known to exist as such. If, therefore, the Christian life be possible to us we must in some manner know God as an existing reality.

We may not on this occasion pursue this to any length, but this I may perhaps venture to say, that such a knowledge of God as I have referred to seems to me to be given to man in his moral and religious consciousness. This is a lesson plainly taught by Cardinal Newman in the *Grammar of Assent*, while Dr. Martineau, the greatest prose writer of our day, and one of our most accomplished philosophical critics, in a sermon of surpassing beauty, says with reference to Science, Art, and Religion:—

“These all go to life and nature to seek for that which the senses cannot apprehend nor the sciences explain; for glances of thought that appeal to the loving eye, for ideal aims that gleam through the dross and dust of reality, for the spirit of a calm Heaven and a dear God beneath the rush of change and the cold neutrality of nature.”