II.—ON PROGRESS IN PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH.

By VISCOUNT HALDANE.

IT is with hesitation that I address a Society that contains many who are devoting their whole time and attention to the study of Philosophy. My hesitation is the greater because Philosophy is becoming more and more exacting in her demands on those who are her votaries. In all branches of science it is the same, and specialism is the order of the day. All I can say is that hardly a week has passed during many years of a busy life in which I have not sacrificed at her altar. And if I feel that I remain an outsider, I have sought for an outsider's opportunity of seeing the game as a whole.

I am going to try to make an appreciation, meant not to be wholly one-sided, of the situation as it is at present in the battle of the philosophical creeds. There have been many affairs of outposts, but now it seems to me that the two main forces are coming into real contact. A decision may be a long way off, but we can already, as it seems to me, discern indications of new and great movements. Philosophy looked for a time as if it were at a standstill, but I think that this phase is so rapidly passing away that we may safely assert that notable progress is now being made, and that new positions are being steadily occupied by both sides. The struggle is, of course, between Realism and Idealism. But both of these names, as I shall have to point out, have changed their meaning, and are to-day uncertain in their significance.

To my mind the most striking feature of the situation is the extraordinary advance made by what is called the New Realism. One cannot open a philosophical journal without being impressed by the energy and knowledge of the adherents of this new movement, and by the freshness of its methods. The New Realism appears in various forms. The well known volume of the six American writers presents it in much detail, and carries the method into regions which have hitherto not been much attempted, such as biology. Mr. Russell, who has made for himself a great reputation as a logician and mathematician in one, proceeds, I think, with more reserve. But then he tends to concern himself largely with results attained by new methods in mathematics. Professor Alexander, on the other hand, seeks the very centre of things, and he writes without restraint, and with an obvious desire to be sympathetic to views of an older and different kind. There are other thinkers of much ability who represent different shades of opinion, but I refer to those I have mentioned because it appears to me that in what they have written one finds sufficiently instructive statements about the new point of departure.

Now this new point of departure not only cannot be ignored by anyone who is really interested in the study of philosophy as it is to-day, but such a person cannot be regarded as a serious student if he does not try to master it. For to my mind it presents the commencement of one of those advances in philosophical thought which, whether their results are permanent or not, beyond question leave things further on than they found them. It is a trite but true saying that philosophy has usually made progress by setting up a negative and then incorporating it. On this occasion there is no doubt about the negative. The old doctrine that philosophy must begin with the examination of knowledge because it is through the medium of knowledge that we attain to reality, a doctrine really as old as Descartes, is on its trial. The New Realism

denies that doctrine *in limine*. It wages war with representationism in every form. It distinguishes sharply the object of a mental act from the act itself. In the paper on "Sensations and Images," read before this Society by Mr. Alexander in the Session of 1909-10, a paper which should be considered along with his "Basis of Realism," he describes the fundamental method of the New Realism as he conceives it. It is to exclude philosophical presuppositions, and to state what is actually present in a given experience, so far, of course, as that experience has characters of metaphysical significance. What the method discloses is, according to him, that the object we experience is not only real but complete, apart from the work of the mind in apprehending it. He reproaches Idealism for confounding the mental act of perceiving with what is perceived. In the American treatise on the *New Realism*, Mr. Montagu, in a chapter on the "Realistic Theory of Truth and Error," puts the same case concisely. The argument for Idealism, he says, may be stated as a syllogism:—

"Ideas are incapable of existing apart from a mind. Physical objects in so far as they are perceived or known at all are certainly ideas. All physical objects are therefore incapable of existing apart from a mind."

And he goes on to charge this syllogism with involving the fallacy of an undistributed middle, in so far as the middle term "idea" is used in the major premise to denote the act or process of perceiving, while in the minor premise it is used to denote the object of that act, *i.e.*, the thing or content that is perceived. Now the point which Mr. Montagu makes against what he calls this Berkeleian fallacy is fundamental with the school of New Realism. Its general theory is that percepts are non-mental realities, and that the only mental reality is an act, the act of perceiving. The foundation of the relation of perceiving and perceived is that which underlies the whole Universe, the general relation of togetherness in a real space

and time, and on this foundation consciousness arises and is built up. I am not quite sure that Mr. Russell goes as far as this without some reservations. He seems in his book on *Our Knowledge of an External World* sometimes to go very near to assigning the reality of secondary qualities to the mind. But Mr. Alexander and the American writers draw no such line, as I understand the argument. For them, the entirety of the object of perception, whatever it may be, is external to and independent of the perceiving mind. What is important in the act of perception is simply a conation, resulting in the direction of the mind to the object it knows. For on such an act of direction, and on the capacity of the mind to select and take in perceptions passively and as through windows, depends the extent of the field of the object world perceived. Perception is only a particular case of the much more general compresence of objects in the real space and time which are wholly independent of it, and in which all that is real exists. Where there is consciousness it is an element superinduced on this compresence, and the same thing is true of conception and of abstract thought about things. They are in no sense foundational, but are mere relations superimposed on that of compresence in space and time. In memory we have this same phenomenon, although, as Mr. Alexander points out, time has to be regarded differently from space, and the word "compresence" has to be given a wider significance.

Thus perceptions are external realities, in so far as they signify what is in fact outside of and external to the mind, while consciousness itself appears to signify no more than a certain activity of a special kind developed by the nervous centres of the brain. What is quite clear from the standpoint of this doctrine is that we can no longer assume the concession, as Berkeley and Hume did, of the existence of an intermediate and a purely mental object called a presentation, or attempt to make anything of the kind the basis from which existence is inferred. Existence outside the perceiving mind is known

directly, not indirectly, and existence goes on whether or not there are windows in the mind to let us become aware of it.

Now, although it is emphatically put by the New Realists, this conception is by no means new in principle. Thomas Reid had not their knowledge of modern mathematics and science. But he took a point of view which closely resembles their main point. Speaking of Hume, for whose insight he had a profound respect, he says this :—

“ For my own satisfaction I entered into a serious examination of the principles upon which this sceptical system is built ; and was not a little surprised to find that it leans with its whole weight upon a hypothesis which is ancient indeed, and hath been very generally received by philosophers, but of which I could find no solid proof. The hypothesis I mean is that nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it—that we do not really perceive things that are external, but only certain images and pictures of them imprinted upon the mind, which are called ‘ impressions ’ and ‘ ideas ’ I thought it unreasonable, upon the authority of philosophers, to admit an hypothesis which, in my opinion, overturns all philosophy, all religion, and virtue, and all common sense ; and I resolved to enquire into this subject anew without regard to any hypothesis.”*

And again, in a letter written towards the end of Reid’s life to Dr. Gregory, the former says :—

“ The merit of what you are pleased to call my philosophy lies, I think, chiefly in having called in question the common theory of ideas, or images of things in the mind, being the only objects of thought—a theory founded on natural prejudice, and so universally received as to be interwoven with the structure of language. The discovery was the birth of time, not of genius ;

* Reid’s Works (Ed. Hamilton), p. 96.

and Berkeley and Hume did more to bring it to light than the man who hit upon it.”*

Reid seems to me to be an underestimated thinker. His claim that “common sense” was his guiding principle has misled the public. He meant by the expression “common sense,” as he tells us, not unthinking prejudice, but what he believed in and names “as the first degree of reason,” and as having for its object to judge of things self-evident. And he contrasts it with reasoning, or the “second degree of reason,” which draws conclusions that are not self-evident judgments of the common sense.”† I cannot but feel that this Aberdeen Professor of a hundred and fifty years ago would have found himself in congenial company could he have heard the metaphysical criticisms in the papers read before this Society by the New Realists of the twentieth century.

But it is not merely Reid who is akin to them. In his admirable book on *The Philosophy of Change*, Dr. Wildon Carr has brought out the striking affinity between their teaching on the point in question and that of Bergson. It is true that they and Bergson have arrived at their results by very different paths, But Bergson, just as much as Mr. Alexander or Mr. Russell, while he insists that all physical reality can be presented to the mind only in the form of sense perception, also insists that the “image,” as he calls it in his book on *Matter and Memory*, is not something detached from the thing, or that merely represents it, but is the object or thing itself. So far from adding anything to the reality which was not there before, perception excludes something from this full reality. The body, Bergson holds, is so organised as to have for one of its primary functions the selection of influences, coming to us from externality, which the mind receives. The principle of the selection is that those influences which do not reflect eventual actions of the body pass

* *Ibid.*, p. 88.

† *Ibid.*, p. 425.

on, while those that concern its activity are reflected and come to consciousness. And consciousness gives us the possibility of choice, in the action of the brain and of the organism which it directs. What is conscious is, however, the mind, the essential character of which is for Bergson continuity of duration. The content of the mind is accordingly memory, which is constantly storing up perceptions. Commenting on this doctrine, Dr. Carr reminds us that for Bergson perception exists only at that point where action is in progress, where the past is becoming the future, and the future is becoming the past. Around this point pure perception exists as the consciousness of the actions of external objects or images, conflicting with the activity, or being utilised by the activity, of a mind which is a continuity of this past in a living present activity. There is no such thing as a pure perception. It is but an element in that living action which as it makes itself becomes memory, and adds continuously to the richness of the individual experience. There is no priority of perception over memory.

Bergson takes us yet further. It follows from his doctrine of selection that the division lines between objects which we identify in perception are really due to the selection which our mind and body exercise on reality. There are no things, but only actions; things are our eventual actions:—

“It is the plan of our eventual actions that is sent back to our eyes as though by a mirror, when we see the surfaces and edges of things.”

The brain is not the organ of thinking, nor the organ of consciousness, but it is the organ which enables consciousness, feeling, and thought to become operative—to become capable of action and to insert themselves in the reality of life. The life of the mind is its concentration in present action; the material motor mechanism by which action is accomplished is the body; and the contrivance by which the mind inserts itself in action is the brain.

Such is the view of Bergson and of his English disciple, Dr. Carr. As further developed in their hands it goes a long way beyond what the New Realists admit or could admit. Just as they, who have arrived at their results independently, hold a principle resembling that of Reid, so the teaching of Bergson seems to me to bear an analogy to that of a much neglected philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer. Bergson holds, quite logically, that as there are no things, but only actions, it follows that the supposed ultimate reality of the schematisation with which mathematics and physical science alone deal must be rejected. The mode of our mental activity is intellectual, and the intellect schematises so as to form for us a diagram against which to present the world as the sphere of our activity, and thus enable us to grasp it. Such a diagram is essential for action. But this schematism and space and time with it are artificial constructions in which reality though apprehended is distorted. They are quite different, Bergson tells us, from the movement and duration which are not only real but directly revealed to us by the intuition of our direct experience. Life is an order of reality that is original, matter is an order that is derived. The intellect is a mode of activity that materialises reality, is directed on the inert, and is unfitted to comprehend the living. The living activity is creative, is action which makes itself, and so far as it does so is free from external causation. And the body is one of the instruments of this activity, an instrument formed, created, adapted, by the living impulse, for action and for action only. In the consciousness of our own life as duration we have direct and immediate intuition of reality as original movement or change, and sense-data, *a priori* judgments, ideas, the elements which go to the constitution of what we call experience, are originated by this movement, and are intellectual schematisations of it which hide the reality from us. In this point Bergson differs *toto cælo* from the New Realists, who hold universals to belong to external reality as entities which, although for sense perception they do

not exist as separate and independent things, yet inhere in the very constitution of the reality that is external to the mind and independent of it.

I pass to Schopenhauer himself. But in referring to his anticipation in his doctrine of some features in that of Bergson I do so only in the same sense in which I referred to Reid as anticipating the New Realists. Schopenhauer died more than half a century ago, and the problem which Bergson set before himself has been dealt with by the French philosopher, not only with a wealth of new scientific knowledge which has come into existence only since Schopenhauer's time, but in his own fashion and, so far as I can see, without assistance from the work of the earlier thinker. Still it is worth while to look backwards. For Schopenhauer was a man of real genius, with the power of penetrating and anticipating which genius confers. He had been a close student of Kant, and looked on himself as the latter's true successor. He considered that he had not only improved the doctrine of the Categories, but had put that of the Thing-in-itself, indispensable as Schopenhauer thought it to Kant's system, on an intelligible foundation for the first time. The other development from Kant, that which culminated in Hegelianism, he loathed and despised. Hegel himself he spoke of as an "intellectual Caliban."

The foundation of his teaching is that in the phenomenal world we do not come into contact with the ultimately real. The intellect constructs that phenomenal world, according to a "principle of sufficient reason," which he substitutes for Kant's arrangement of Categories, in the forms of space and time. So far he is not much removed from Kant. But something that is not phenomenal is revealed to us by direct intuition, and this is a *nisus* or striving of which we are directly conscious as underlying the action at least of our own bodies, and which distinguishes the body, so far as direct experience is concerned, from surrounding nature. This *nisus* he calls Will. It is neither in time nor determined by motives, for these belong

only to its phenomenal manifestation. But it is the activity which underlies the whole Universe. We apprehend it directly in ourselves, but not intellectually. The intellect only distorts its character. The analogy with Bergson is so far pretty close. It is not for Schopenhauer admissible to say that the will has its seat in the brain. Rather does the whole body disclose itself as the exhibition of the will, although it is objectified, so far as perception is concerned, by the functions of the brain. The reason of this is that the will, which expresses itself in every phenomenon in nature, even in vegetable and inorganic phenomena, appears in men and animals as a conscious will. The necessity of consciousness, explains Schopenhauer in Chapter 20 of the supplement to the second book of his *World as Will and Idea*, is that in consequence of the multifarious requirements of an organism the acts of its will must be guided by motives, and not, as in lower grades of existence, by mere stimuli. Thus there is developed by the impulse of the will itself a cerebral organisation, so perfect in the case of man that unity of consciousness arises in the form of a theoretical ego, the supporter of the entirety of consciousness, in which it presents itself as identical with the willing ego, whose mere function of knowledge it really is. It thus becomes Kant's synthetic unity of apperception "upon which all ideas string themselves as on a string of pearls, and on account of which the 'I think,' as the thread of the string of pearls, must be capable of accompanying all our ideas." The world thus becomes idea as well as will.

Such is the main thought of Schopenhauer, the "single thought" of which he speaks in his chief work as being reiterated throughout that work in different applications. It leads to a conception of the Universe as, on the one hand, a phenomenal construction by the intellect, and as, on the other, disclosing to intuition, not only will as something of which we are directly aware, but different stages or degrees in that Universe in which the will manifests itself by giving rise to

forms which are not things subject to the principle of individuation, in accordance with which the intellect fashions phenomena in space and time, but are rather universals analogous to the Ideas of Plato. In Music and the Arts in particular these universals disclose themselves as stages in the self-realisation of will. In this way they are analogous to what in a very different school of thought are called degrees of reality and value.

Schopenhauer's writings are full of acute criticism of the science of his time, directed from the standpoint of his system. The science is largely superseded, but I do not think that we can even now neglect the criticism. It is work that stands by itself. He has, indeed, no school and no organised following. The Universities of Germany held aloof from him. But, like Bergson, he pulled up current thinking, and no man could be abreast of the time who had not considered what Schopenhauer had to tell him. My own feeling about the system of Bergson is much the same. I think we shall come to see that we owe an immense debt to his investigations. Like Schopenhauer, he has taken intellectualism to pieces. And he has done this so thoroughly that I doubt whether a purely intellectual doctrine is likely to be set up again, at all events in our time. But when I look at the positive and constructive principle of his philosophy (I do not refer to the invaluable contributions he has made to psychology and the foundations of natural science, but to his metaphysics), I am haunted by a misgiving I cannot get rid of. Can the parts of his system hang together? If, as he has said, the intellect distorts reality, we must not forget that it is the only instrument that can give us definite knowledge about that reality. It was not by mere intuition that Bergson learned how the world was constructed by selection for the purposes of action and of fashioning images. His theories of perception, of action, of memory, and of intuition itself, seem to me to be themselves the outcome of intellectualism. I think that in his case, as in that of

Schopenhauer, the doctrine of the fundamental and original *nisus* is one which can in truth be regarded in no other light than as being an inference by intelligence. While, therefore, speaking for myself, I set a high value on what I have learned from the study of his three great works, and while I think he has made a distinctive and most valuable contribution to progress in philosophy, I feel that he has not met the dilemma which all scepticism has to face. I turn away in the end with the sense that I have seen much material passed through a furnace in which the dross has been separated from the pure metal, rather than that I have found a method by which the pure metal has been added to. I derive the impression that, in the philosophy of Bergson, as elsewhere, I have to be on my guard against the notion that metaphors, however attractive, do more than disguise unsolved difficulties. And I have this impression not the less in that I fully appreciate the valuable stimulus to inquiry which his methods afford. There is, for example, present to my mind the admirable investigation into the nature of the "specious present" made by Dr. Wildon Carr in the paper on *The Moment of Experience*, read by him before this Society a few weeks ago. With several prominent things in that paper I find myself in cordial agreement. The fresh light which Dr. Carr has cast on a great problem shows that the methods of various schools of thought can be made to converge towards a result in which to-day there tends to be much concurrence.

I turn back, therefore, to that other plan for restoring belief in reality and for rescuing it from idealistic intellectualism, which is distinctive of the New Realists. Mr. Alexander deals with this question, not only with understanding of the idealistic contention, but with resolution to come to close grips. He stands up to his difficulties. He is conscious of what he has to face in the object world in what he recognises as the "all pervasive principle of interpretation." The interpretations, he admits, form part of the object itself, and the meanings of

things are part of their constitution.* This is what makes constructive imagination possible. But still it is always external materials that are being handled. And for him the stores of experience which the mind brings with it to the apprehension of things are themselves non-mental and physical, and the mental actions are themselves but instrumental. The percept and the image, whether given at the moment or given through memory, are the object appearing in different forms, and the one form is non-mental in the same sense as the other. In the first case the experience means the togetherness of the mind as perceiving with the percept-object, in the other the togetherness of the mind as imagining with the image-object, equally non-mental. The difference is that the mental action has been evoked in the two cases by different means, in the one case by the direct action of an object compresent in space, in the other by association or by some stimulus. By compresence generally Mr. Alexander is careful to tell us he means co-partnership. The expression must receive a special meaning in reference to time. For an object remembered is "prior to the memory of it, and may have ceased to exist before we remembered it." This, he admits, suggests difficulties as to the nature of time. Still, what is remembered is for him non-mental. It is distinct from the act of remembering, which is an act of consciousness, a distinctive quality which belongs to the nervous system at a certain stage. Consciousness appears as a phase of compresence and is related to its object as effect to cause. Thus consciousness is a real existence; "whether we call it thing, or function, or quality, it is clear that it cannot be a relation." The only true relation is indicated by the "of" in conscious experience of object, and consists in the togetherness of the perceiving and of what is perceived. To sum up the result in Mr. Alexander's own words†:—

* *On Sensations and Images*, p. 19.

† *The Basis of Realism*, p. 12.

“Granted that our thoughts and material objects are identical, whereas Berkeley repelled the Lockean separation of ideas and things by declaring material things to be ideas, our realism declares that such ideas are material things.”

Now the last criticism that would be just in the case of Mr. Alexander is to suggest that he does not try to realise the case of his opponents. He is well aware that the view with which he contrasts his New Realism is one which is not the view of many modern Idealists. He knows that between Kant and some later forms of what is called Idealism there is a distance almost as great as that which separates Kant from Berkeley. The choice is, I think, no longer between ideas and material things, nor are we driven by common sense or common experience merely to choose between Berkeleian or even Kantian “ideas” on the one hand and non-mental realities on the other. Accordingly, speaking for myself, while I recognise that considerations of common sense are claimed as premises for the conclusions of the New Realism, I do not think that the conclusions follow from the premises. It is one thing to hold the “That” to be incapable of being deduced or constructed out of intelligible relations, or of being reduced to universals. It is another thing to draw the inference that the “That” is non-mental, in the sense of existing apart from any relation to a subject of knowledge. Much evil in philosophy has arisen from labels. Idealism is a highly ambiguous word, and to-day I feel shy of it. Hegelianism is another vague expression. In using it one must be careful to define one’s attitude. Some of us who feel we owe a great debt to Hegel do not forget that his work ceased 84 years ago. Now no one who wrote so long ago as that can be a guide sufficient in all respects for to-day. Science, extending from the fields of mathematics to those of psychology, has advanced in the interval with great strides. The material to be sifted has changed. Moreover, Hegel himself declared that the detailed

scheme of his *Encyclopædia*, the system of the Categories, and the account of nature alike, although they were the best he could do, were by no means the last possible word. Only of the general method did he feel sure. What he says of the method of his logic is that it must be susceptible of much improvement and many completions in detail, but that it is, in point of principle, the only method that is genuine.

Yet it is not the method, even in its broadest features, which seems to me to be Hegel's lasting contribution. His true contribution consists rather in his having offered an analysis of the meaning of reality more comprehensive and penetrating than any that had been presented before his time. His result has the great merit that it allows room for every element, and especially for values and degrees in reality. This is not in itself a test of truth, for these apparent values and degrees may be illusory. But inasmuch as they appear as aspects of our object world, aspects which must be recognised as actual unless they can be explained away, there is a presumption in favour of the kind of analysis which can recognise them as belonging to the system of the real as against the kind which cannot do so. To me those phases of experience which I meet with in high forms of lyrical poetry, or in portraits by great artists, or in that other kind of artistic expression which characterises the work of the best historians, or, for that matter, in religion, are as real as the phases of which logical atomism, to use a phrase of Mr. Russell's, takes account. Yet logical atomism, and even the form of the New Realism, which is most comprehensive, seem unable to do the former justice. In the phases of experience of which I am speaking the universal is nothing apart from the particular, and the particular as such is, taken by itself, equally unreal. Both are abstractions. The only actuality is the individual fact from which they are abstractions non-existent by themselves. And the essence of this actuality is that identity-in-difference which seems to some of us to be possible only where existence means existence which is included in the experience and context of

mind when existence is its object. There alone the whole is present in every detail. Because its essence is to be so included, the individual is always breaking out, in the intellectual movement from which it is inseparable, into relations, into predicates, into universals, which have yet no subsistence apart from the facts which they qualify, facts which appear as particular only to the abstraction which forces direct apprehension to strip and isolate its work. Much of the obscurity in the language of philosophers has been due to a mode of speaking about particular and universal as though these were entities subsisting independently. It was one of Hegel's services to philosophy that he strenuously contested the validity of this mode of speech. For him, as I interpret his doctrine, individuality was the form characteristic of the object world, and the foundation of this form rested on the fact that in the only experience of it that is ours this world implies a subject-object relation. Things and substances are in themselves abstractions and incomplete. It is within the over-reaching subject-object relationship that reflection brings into definiteness the distinction between subject and object themselves. Now the entirety within which this distinction is made is necessarily a higher and further reaching conception than that of mere substance, itself only one of the abstract conceptions of reflection.

I will only add that in stating this principle as it commends itself to me I am aware of the questions which Mr. Bradley has recently raised about it in the chapter of his *Essays on Truth and Reality* which deals with our knowledge of immediate experience. But I do not think that I find myself remote from what he says about the immediate feeling with which knowledge begins, "the direct sense of my momentary contents and being," provided that this feeling is taken as an asymptotic limit rather than as a concrete and actual fact of experience.

I am speaking, of course, of the world of experience as we encounter it, that is as it is presented within the human finite centre which alone we know directly. Of anything else I seem

to be able to tell very little. Of the mere feeling of a jelly-fish, if there be actually any such feeling, I can present to myself no adequate conception. The effort of abstraction seems here to carry me beyond reality as I know it. For my dog, again, the Universe is clearly more limited than it is for me. He does not develop abstract predicates to anything like the same extent as I do. He is apparently no automaton. He seems to me, as I observe his behaviour, to reason and to have something of a conscience, and some sense of himself as a subject. His world is certainly one of more than mere isolated particulars. But as to the worlds for organisms lower than human it is difficult to draw inferences. The analogies are misleading. Instinct, which is something between the mere quasi-purposiveness that marks off merely the organic world, and the conscious realisation of ends, is a phase by itself and is apt to be misinterpreted. Here Bergson has had much to say. The only safe course, under this head as under others, is to start from our own actual experience as the only reality we know directly, and to remember that we make our interpretations by abstraction. If we adhere closely to this method we must regard mere feeling as an unreal abstraction, although in the case of a finite centre lower than our own the individuality of feeling, where feeling is taken to exist, may be legitimately regarded as far less developed than in ours. But the actual experience that is ours always involves universals and the judgments which are required to bring these abstractions to light. Hegel may be superseded, the system may be out of date. But what appeals to me in reading him is that he seems to bring the broad principle of which I have been speaking more clearly into view than anyone else has done. He may be unreliable in these vast schemes for exhibiting his view of the Universe which he sets out in his *Encyclopædia*. I do not know. It is not the question which most interests me. I feel the force of many things that Professor Pringle Pattison long ago said in the penetrating criticism of the system in his *Hegelianism and*

Personality. With what he says later in *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, I find myself in much agreement. But as I understand Hegel he did not try to deduce nature from logic or mind from nature. He seems to me to have started with a "That" which could not be analysed into anything beyond itself, as the initial phase in the concrete content of experience. Such experience is for him object for a subject, and the subject-object relation is fundamental in it. His point of departure was, therefore, the world as it lies before and within the mind of man. On this, in his *Phenomenology*, the book which is really the preliminary to the whole of his system, he lets reflection play, and shows how apparent particularity is due to abstraction, and the truth always tends towards the whole. His so-called "absolute knowledge," an unlucky phrase I think, is not as I understand him the knowledge of an absolute mind, but a description of what knowledge would be if its abstract character and consequent imperfections were fully grasped. Having thus prepared the ground, he endeavours in his *Logic* to exhibit in systematic form the universals or forms of thought which the individual facts of experience involve. They are for him nothing but abstractions from the factual content of mind. He then exhibits another set of abstractions, the particularity of directly perceived Nature taken in abstraction from thought, and thus equally unreal. The two are abstractions which have reality only in that experience which is the world for Mind, the form of which is to be individual, the That which cannot be deduced, but which, because it exists in every detail as the field of mind, ever tends beyond itself. What is important is not the system but the broad principle. Mr. Bradley's Feeling and his Absolute seem to be the outcome of a similar principle differently applied. And they appear to me to indicate limiting conceptions rather than factual existences.

The view of reality which I am suggesting is not what is generally attributed to Hegel or meant by Idealism. But if Idealism in its essence imports of necessity that the facts

which confront our minds can be resolved into universals or into qualities or relations, then I say at once that I cannot follow it. On the other hand, I know nothing of any "That" existing independently of universals and qualities and relations. The form of individuality, the essential characteristic of which is identity in difference, seems to me just as unintelligible apart from a mind which finds its own nature revealed in the object world as is identity apart from difference and difference apart from identity.

There is growing up in this country and in America a new school of those who have been profoundly influenced by Hegel, and who, while sitting loose to his details, interpret the foundation of the Hegelian system somewhat in the sense I have tried to indicate. One recent American interpretation is striking, and has a freshness analogous to that of the New Realism for which the thinkers of the United States are doing so much. Professor Watts Cunningham, of Middlebury College, Vermont, has written a book called *Thought and Reality in Hegel's System* (published by Longmans here and in New York), a book which ought to be better known in this country. In it he gives an account of the Hegelian principle, basing his work on Hegel's own language and not on that of the commentators from whom most of the current ideas of Hegelianism have been derived. He starts with the *Phenomenology* as the foundation. The scheme of the *Phenomenology* he says, is not, as is commonly suggested, to trace an organic development from one to another stage of consciousness, ending with a knowledge which is that of the Absolute. All experience is characterised by a subject-object relation, and the purpose of Hegel is simply to exhibit the important changes that take place in the relation of subject and object as experience is traced through the various attitudes of consciousness. According to Professor Cunningham, Hegel's endeavour is not, like Kant, to investigate the possibility and limitations of knowledge. "He accepts knowledge and the knowing

experience very much as it is accepted by common sense, and then proceeds to develop its implications. Passing dialectically from sensuous consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit, and religion, he finally arrives at what seems to him to be the true attitude of consciousness, the truth of the knowing experience!" This he calls absolute knowledge, but it is based simply on our common experience in knowledge, and sensuous consciousness is an essential element in what is called absolute knowledge, just as much as in any other kind. "It is still experience, but it is experience thoroughly rationalised. What Hegel means by thought, when he asserts that it is conterminous with experience, is simply that principle by virtue of which experience is an organic and unitary whole. It is that life of mind itself, which includes within itself feeling, will, and cognition, and which finds its very being in the expression of the living unity of the mind's activity."* The idea that Hegel tried to reduce things to pure thought about things, or that he maintained that thought could possibly *be* the existent thing, is, for Professor Cunningham, a total misinterpretation of Hegel's real meaning. It is inconsistent with the pre-supposition of his whole philosophy, namely, that reality depends essentially on a subject-object relation. It is also inconsistent with his view that the universal and the particular are not separable. "He neither desires nor attempts to explain away the factual side of experience: he simply denies that an inexplicable datum has any part or lot within experience. Not immediacy but abstract immediacy, immediacy apart from interpretation, is unreal."† And "thought finds its capacity to express the real in the fact that its universals are always the syntheses of differences, and not the blank universals of purely formal logic. Actual living thought includes in itself the data of so-called intuitive perception, of feeling, of

* *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

† *Ibid.*, p. 23.

cognition, and it is adequately conceived of only as this unifying principle of experience; it is the living unity of mind, the one reason that appears in every mental activity. Therefore, when Hegel teaches that thought is con-terminous with the real, he is simply stating the doctrine that experience and reality are one." And when we arrive in the *Phenomenology* at what is called absolute knowledge, "we have reached, not a new kind of experience, but only a more concrete point of view in our common every-day experience." When the *Phenomenology* has brought us so far the *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Philosophy of Mind* are only three points of view from which one organic whole is observed and interpreted. The first investigates the more strictly cognitive side of experience; the second has to do with its crass objective, its sensuous aspect; while the third undertakes to interpret its spiritual values. "Each in a sense has the same content: the difference among them is rather in the form which that content assumes" (p. 58). There is no transition to or deduction of one from the other.

I have dwelt on Professor Cunningham's book, not only because it contains an exposition of the Hegelian principle which is quite unlike some other expositions that pass current here, but because I think it conveys what Hegel really said. I have also referred to the book because the author belongs to a new school of Idealism which has apparently taken root in America. Like the New Realists these New Idealists reject, not only the teaching of Berkeley and Hume, but much of that of Kant. They believe in the reality of the world as it seems. And they hold universals to be real in so far as they enter into the constitution of experience, and account for the identity in difference which is characteristic of the individuality that is its fundamental form.

The conclusions of such an Objective Idealism bear some analogy to those of Mr. Alexander and of the Modern Realists who think as he does. The realism that asserts the actuality

of universals in the objects of knowledge, and that these universals are themselves objects of knowledge, is at least totally different from the old materialism. There is in some of its results a good deal of resemblance to an Objective Idealism which denies that reality can be resolved into relations or deduced from abstract universals, and draws a fundamental distinction between the That and the What. But the resemblance is limited. For Modern Realism, while recognising universals as belonging to reality, asserts that like all other objects of knowledge they are extra-mental, and exist as what I think may properly be called substances apart from a subject-object relation. Consciousness is but a property of a physical thing which is together in space and time with another thing. Cognition is an incident which may or may not arise between things in this relation. It thus soon becomes plain that while universals, the formal or categorial characters of things, as Mr. Alexander calls them, are present both in minds and things, their reality depends on a hypothesis which is hardly admissible for the objective Idealist. For it is difficult to see how these categorial characters can be isolated entities with which we come passively into contact in an *act of perception which is simply the physical relation of one substance with another*. They appear rather to be aspects arising within a whole, the conception of which we are striving to organise as we extend our knowledge.

The relation of compresence in space and time of two substances is surely not one that is final. Its nature is rather derivative, arising within the world of mind and not outside it. The mind seems, when its nature is considered, to envelope that world and not to be a thing acting inside it. The "Two Substance" notion appears to be inadequate, and the relationship alleged must surely at all events be one that is a long way from being final. It must fall within a larger whole if it is to be intelligible and not a mystery. And if this be so the categorial characters which are under discussion can only

stand on the same foundation with the characters that have been called the "tertiary" phases of the Universe, those qualities which belong to art, to morality, and to religion, and which are unmeaning excepting in relation to the mind which is capable of artistic feeling, of moral judgment, and of religion. On this aspect of the controversy I do not wish to dwell farther. For all that strikes me has been said better than I can say it by Mr. Bosanquet in his criticism of Mr. Alexander, published under the title of *The Distinction between Mind and its Objects*. What I will venture to observe is that I think that the history of philosophical controversy affords few illustrations of argument more helpful and useful on both sides than the discussion which has been carried on between these two thinkers.

Mr. Bosanquet seems to me, and I hope I do not misinterpret his careful statement, to present the concentrated essence of Objective Idealism. Shortly stated, his argument is that if dualism, or what is sometimes called eclecticism, is to be avoided, the New Realism must claim more than it does for the external world. For if mere feeling is reserved for the mind, then tertiary qualities, such as beauty, cannot have justice done them. Moreover, if universals are to exist in the extra-mental world and apart from mind, then physical reality is so transformed from the way of regarding it of the old-fashioned realist that it exhibits a logical vitality impossible to dissociate from continuity with a psychical system. Mind, says Mr. Bosanquet, does not really confront its object as one thing in space confronts another. It takes itself as a world and not as an object in a world. Mind is a whole, its object is a fragment in a world that may be erroneously conceived, but is not the less a world and a system always striving towards self-completion. As for universals, either you throw the work of mind on the shoulders of a physical reality and thereby transform the latter fundamentally, or you connect it with the nature of mind as living in the contents, and then

you have abandoned the doctrine of petrified or extra-mental universals. Realism, in short, ceases to be realism, for idealism is let into the fortress from the back. Continuity of the real world with mind seems to Mr. Bosanquet to be the inevitable goal and climax of twentieth century physical realism, as opposed to eclectic materialism.

But I should be doing injustice to both Mr. Bosanquet and Mr. Alexander if I tried to summarise further the controversy between them and the arguments they have used. There is just one observation, however, which I may repeat here. The terminology of the New Realists strikes me as being throughout hampered by the obliteration of a very real distinction. I mean by what is really an inveterate employment, not the less actual because it is rarely made explicit, of the conception of substance to the exclusion of that of subject. Subject belongs to fact just as much as substance, and to me it appears wholly wrong to treat mind as if it appeared to observation as a thing. This expression is not more appropriate in the case of what has been termed a finite centre than it is in that of the nature of mind generally. The words "mental" and "extra-mental" seem to me to bring in the assumption to the contrary in disguise and in a dangerous form. It is just the old "Two Substance" theory. Once brought in, the principle of the New Realism of course follows. Once excluded, the New Realism is hardly any longer a possible explanation. Compresence or togetherness, its very principle and foundation, becomes inapposite as a description of the relation of the subject and its object. The criticism applies to M. Bergson as well as to Mr. Alexander. If mind is subject it must always in principle cover, as it appears in fact to do, the whole, and include its particular objects as fragments, to use Mr. Bosanquet's language. Mr. Alexander appears on the contrary to treat mind as a substance, or, what is for practical purposes the same thing, as the activity of a substance, and by doing so to fall into difficulties arising out of the fragmentary character which he is thus forced to attribute to it.

But whether one agrees with Mr. Alexander or not it would be gross ingratitude not to acknowledge that by his fresh treatment of a great subject, and by the closeness and originality of his investigation, he has carried things a stage farther on. He seems to me to have brought the two great schools of philosophic thought so near that though opposed they can hear and understand each other's language. And this is a good thing to have done. We now know better how Realism and Idealism stand towards each other, and the hope of closer approximation in the future may well be entertained.

So far I have said little of Mr. Russell's contribution to the controversy. This has not been for want of admiration for the scientific work he has done. It is rather because I feel that I cannot penetrate his mathematical entrenchments. But none the less I am pretty sure that his positions are not tenable against turning movements. He does not seem to me to have always stated the case of the other side adequately. Some among us may recall a sentence in his *Knowledge of the External World* (p. 168), in which he himself says that "those philosophers in the present day who have had their doctrines stated by opponents will realise that a just or adequate presentation of Zeno's position is hardly to be expected from Aristotle." Now I do not think that Mr. Bradley, for instance, would admit that his theory that all predication is of reality compels him, as Mr. Russell declares, either to deny that for practical purposes, including those of mathematics and science, relations are to be regarded as real, or to admit that he is precluded from taking account of the asymmetrical relations which are involved in series. Nor is it obvious that antinomies are the terrible and unnatural errors that Mr. Russell takes them to be. Of course they are not final. They are the products of abstract and therefore imperfect methods in thinking, and they are superseded as thought progresses by such fresh methods as are illustrated, for instance, in Mr. Russell's own book. It was probably a great step forward when Mr. Russell

and Frege, to whose work he bears generous tribute, showed that the number of terms in a given class can be defined as meaning "the class of all classes that are similar to the given class," and that this definition not only yields the usual arithmetical properties of numbers, but is applicable equally to finite and infinite numbers. It may well be that this definition lifts us above certain apparent antinomies, arising from a previously supposed necessity for enumeration. In the same way it was no doubt a step forward when it was discovered that in cases of infinite collections they may be known by characteristics of this nature, although the terms in such collections cannot be enumerated. Even a non-mathematician can see this from a distance. But what is not apparent is why such a discovery should imply a revolution in the foundations of logic. Here I have not found Mr. Russell convincing. It is, of course, true that the data of common knowledge can by analysis often be made to result in simple and precise propositions, which not only give rise to new applications of mathematical and other methods, but justify deductive logic. In the absence of such analysis interminable and unnecessary controversies about apparent antinomies naturally arise. But does this fact properly lead to the conclusion that provisional antinomies do not arise, or that all predication is not in the end about reality, or to that of the "logical atomism" of such a New Realist as I take Mr. Russell to consider himself. Admirable constructions may doubtless be made through which the world of sense experience may be rendered amenable to mathematical treatment, by defining, for example, series or classes of sense-data which can be called respectively particles, points, or instants, despite the fact that these are not experienced as actually existing entities. But these constructions cover only certain aspects of the field of knowledge, and are wholly inadequate to some of its other aspects. For other aspects disclose to observation and experiment relationships which are difficult to understand apart from continuity with mind, or in other words

from a subject-object relation. I do not merely speak of such extreme cases as beauty, or morality, or religion, although these aspects unquestionably belong to the world in front of us. I refer to aspects of experience which are less remote from those with which physical science deals. The New Realism with its "Two Substances" view, and its denial of continuity between mind and its objects, has, indeed, a difficult task when it comes to the phenomena of life. Here Mr. Russell's schematisation seems wholly inadequate to the task of giving an account of the object world which appears before us. For the dominant aspect is now not one of mathematical or physical or chemical relations, but of the realisation of ends. If we confine ourselves to the phenomena of life alone the action we experience, although not yet consciously purposive, is quasi-purposive.

The facts which confront us when we examine a living organism disclose that we cannot base ourselves on the principle of "logical atomism," or take its data in fragments as if they existed one by one. The characteristic is that the details of form, of movement, and of chemical composition and change, which we distinguish in the facts observed, are essentially and not merely accidentally connected with one another. Identity in difference is the characteristic relationship. "We are accustomed to the fact that a limb, or even a bone, of a certain build is associated with a whole body of a certain build. We know also that if an animal is breathing we may expect to find its heart beating, and all its other organs in a state of more or less evident activity. We associate together the details of structure and activity as those of a living animal; we think and speak of it as alive, and we regard its structure and activities as the expression and manifestation of its life. What I wish to maintain is that in so regarding a living organism we use a hypothesis which is for biology just as intelligible, just as elementary, just as true as to the facts known, and just as good a scientific working hypothesis, as is the hypothesis of the

indestructibility of matter for physics and chemistry." I quote this from an address recently delivered by my brother, Dr. J. S. Haldane, on "The Place of Biology in Human Knowledge and Endeavour."* He illustrates the principle by a number of examples. Recent exact investigation has shown that the breathing in each person is so regulated as to maintain during rest a certain absolutely definite mean percentage or, more correctly, partial pressure of carbon dioxide coming off from the venous blood, and the amount of fresh air introduced into the lung alveoli by the breathing. The average breathing is thus regulated with almost incredible exactitude in accordance with the varying rate at which carbon dioxide is produced in the body and brought to the lungs by the blood. No existing physical or chemical method of demonstrating changes in alkalinity approaches in delicacy the discrimination of the respiratory centre.

Another example which Dr. Haldane gives is the new conception of the kidney as an organ which responds with almost incredible delicacy to slight changes in the composition of the blood, and so responds as to keep the blood composition normal. "The old gross mechanistic conceptions of fifty years ago with regard to the action of the kidneys are entirely obsolete, though they still-occupy a time-honoured place in current text-books. The kidney, if it be a mechanism, is like the respiratory centre, one of extraordinary delicacy and constancy in action; and we are again up against the question how, with such a labile structure as protoplasm, such constancy can be maintained in the physiological environment of the secreting epithelium as will correspond to the secreting constancy of the action of the supposed mechanism." The evidence is that the organism itself determines the stimuli to which it responds, and the ratio between physical stimulus and actual response. We have to grasp the phenomena of organic

* *Transactions of the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies*, 1915.

life as a whole, "simply because, whether we will it or not, they present themselves as an organically determined whole." Here is a summing up of the method of Physiology which forms an interesting parallel to Mr. Russell's views. I say a parallel, because I do not think that the two views really conflict. Both are arrived at by abstraction from more comprehensive aspects. "We can now get a clearer view of what the true aim of Physiology is. We can see also that this aim reveals itself to us in actual physiological observation and experiment. In the crude sense material which presents itself to us we are tracing the thread of constancy in which the living organism manifests itself; in the apparent chaotic whirl of life processes we are tracing organic activity. The idea of the maintenance of the faint alkalinity of the blood at once lights up for us and enables us to predict a whole mass of phenomena connected with respiration, circulation, and excretion, and points the way to interpretation and treatment of many of the symptoms of disease. Following similar lines, and proceeding always on the assumption that the living organism is really an organism and no mere machine, Physiology can progress steadily and confidently, adding continuously to what is already known about living organism, and with a clear appreciation of the essential points that await investigation."

It seems to be not only unnecessary but wrong to assume the existence of a vital force. The view just stated is as inconsistent with vitalism and its conception of a special force or quality of a substance as it is with the physico-chemical theory of life. What the biologist ought to do is to go back to ordinary observation, unobscured by prejudice, and to realise that the conception of a living organism stands for a fact which we see before us, and is the only hypothesis that will work. The life of such an organism is no doubt in one sense the sum of its activities, but then these activities can only be grasped individually in so far as they are grasped as activities of and within a whole. There is here again identity in difference.

When we turn to reproduction and development the argument seems even stronger. For "as if to convince us by an ocular demonstration that the organic whole is in the parts, Nature, in the reproduction of an organism, seems deliberately to scrap everything that might be supposed to be mechanism, and then build the whole organism up again out of one small part." A mechanistic theory of heredity in particular seems to break down *in limine*.

But after all, as I have said, these working hypotheses are all more or less abstract, whether they are those of the scientific field with which Mr. Russell deals, or of that with which Dr. Haldane is concerned. And I have quoted both writers because of their special knowledge based on direct research. I need not add that I am by no means in a position to check or criticise their observations, whether of the phenomena of number or of those of the living organism. What is, however, clear is that correct working hypotheses are in each case essential for the extension of knowledge. But these conceptions, although they may work and be true as far as they go, are neither the whole nor adequate to the whole. The importance for my present purpose of the conception of life is that it is an abstraction which points beyond itself. On the one hand if life can be traced back to inorganic matter it may well be that we shall have to revise our conception not of the organic but of the inorganic, and to recognise that the tendency to abstraction which is characteristic of thought has, in the so-called inorganic world, unduly stereotyped a mere working view. On the other hand, the quasi-purposive action of the living organism, and its control by the end which it fulfils, equally point beyond it to a phase of experience which is more concrete and less unsatisfying. The least abstract aspects of experience are exemplified in those in which mind is confronted, not by mechanism, nor by mere life, but by mind itself in the form of human beings around us organising themselves for conscious social purposes into larger

wholes, and dominated by intelligence and the sense of good and evil. May not the true method of science be to aim at proceeding downwards rather than upwards, and to start off with the set purpose of working from the starting point of the special characteristic of the most concrete phenomena, where the mind that perceives regards itself, not as mere substance confronting other substances, but as subject in a plainly realised subject-object relation, and as belonging to a whole of reality which embraces both the object world and itself? Our world of experience we may not be able to resolve; it is the *That* which confronts us. But mind reaches over it, for the final and full character is that of mind, and it is only by abstraction from that final and full character that we can approach, for instance, to such an idea as that of mere feeling.

I have tried in this paper to convey what is rather the tendency of my private reflections than any cut and dried conclusion. I doubt whether final conclusions are as yet practicable. The advance of our grasp of experience is always compelling us to do all our work over and over again. The New Realism is itself an illustration of this compelling force. Speaking for myself, I think its conception of reality is too abstract, in the sense in which I have used the word, to be adequate to the whole truth. But it has brought out the insufficient character of certain forms of Idealism, as well as of Materialism itself. Idealism as a system requires a continuous revision as science, and especially psychology, progresses. The result may in the end be the abandonment of the name equally with that of Realism. But from this result I think that we are still separated by a considerable distance that has yet to be traversed.