

M I N D

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OF

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.



I.—PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT.

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IN contemplating the historical development of speculative philosophy we must recollect the ultimate problems of primary human interest which the philosopher tries to solve. There are three central ones of this sort, concerned severally with God, Man and Matter, in subordination to which the others may be arranged. Each of these three is so connected in reason with the others that, while a philosopher may put any one of them in his foreground, he cannot separate it entirely from the other two. Let us look for a little at each.

I. It is told of Bishop Butler that, in conversation one day with his friend Dean Tucker, he suddenly put the question,—whether communities, and even whole nations, might not be seized with fits of insanity, just as individual men sometimes are. “I thought little,” the Dean shrewdly adds, “of that odd conceit of the bishop at the time; but I own I could not avoid thinking of it since, and applying it to a good many cases of nations and their rulers.”

Butler’s ‘odd conceit’ suggests the philosophical problem about God. For the question about the insanity of nations

might be expanded and translated into this form:—‘Why may not the Universe, into a dim perception of which we all awake in the first exercise of our senses,—why may not the universe, in its ever-changing phenomena of matter and mind, be really the manifestation of Power that either is insane or that may become insane? Have we any guarantee against the insanity, the irrationality of the supreme directing Power, and the consequent absence of reason from the nature of things? How can we justify the faith of common sense, which, alike in daily life and in the experiments, previsions and verifications of science, assumes that we are living in a Cosmos; for may it not at last turn out that we are living in a physical and moral Chaos? Why may not the supposed order in nature, or reason in the nature of things, turn out to be purposeless unreason and illusion; so that all our reasonings about things—all our mental assertions and denials even—become paralysed and worthless?’

Descartes, who represents the rise of the modern spirit, was led into philosophical speculation by the pressure of questions akin to these. We all know how he came to ask himself whether he was really justified in presupposing, as all people practically do, that the strange world into which sense-perception introduces us cannot be illusion, and must be valid experience. May it not be an expression of unreason, or else of the malignant calculations of the Power by which its changes are determined? Why should the omnipresent influence be wise Reason, and not blind caprice or meaningless contingency? Yet, in conduct as well as in our scientific previsions, we indulge the faith, that law or reason is latent in nature, and indeed only thus could things be reasoned about or experienced.

Much of the philosophical speculation that we find in history is the issue of endeavours to find what can be answered to questions of this sort. Reflective men have indulged in it, because they wanted some ultimate guarantee that the worlds of nature and spirit are not, and cannot become, insane, and thus unfit to be experienced intelligibly. Philosophy has accordingly in our own day largely taken the form of a reasoned criticism of experience from within. It tries to show the coherence of experience, as an organic unity that is so in harmony with itself that no rightly exercised human understanding can ever be put to permanent confusion by its latent contradictions. In other words, it is an endeavour to exhibit GOD or perfect reason latent in all, by articulating the divine reason and moral

purpose according to which all physical and moral experience is constituted,—thus unfolding the intellectual secret that is in the heart of things. The philosophical conceptions of the universe as universal reason into which some reflective persons thus rise is *their* philosophy. In their case the problem in the foreground is concerned with God.

II. But a humbler inquiry than this has drawn others into philosophy : an inquiry in which Man—not τὸ πᾶν, the All, with order, reason, purpose therein immanent—is the immediate object. For inquiry into the intellectual and moral capacity, the origin and destiny of man is a potent factor in stimulating reflection,—in the recognition that men each emerge at birth, separately and alone, out of the darkness of unconsciousness, and that individually we gradually advance more or less into the light of self-conscious personality and an always incomplete knowledge, all which at death seems to relapse into unconsciousness. This self-conscious life, between birth and death, is virtually *our* universe for each of us, knowable by each under the conditions implied in this transitory glimpse. What, then, are the limits within which this merely human knowledge of the appearances presented by reality must be contained, and what its certainty or trustworthiness? If all human understanding of things is necessarily disproportionate to the reality, is this imperfect experience of any real worth to its possessor? And what is the origin and final destiny of the individual self-conscious persons who, in the interval between birth and death, receive this incomplete experience? Is each to continue for ever in its separate conscious individuality, or do we all relapse into the darkness of unconsciousness from which we emerged for our hour into the conscious life in which for us eternity differentiated into time and change? Is each man a 'mode' of the One Being which, whether insane or not, whether transcendently conscious or unconscious, is at least conscious in those modes of itself that we call 'persons'? What, on the whole, is the meaning for me of the thus limited self-conscious experience in which I now find myself, and out of which I cannot rise; and what conduct is obligatory on me individually, and as included in the organism of Society, by virtue of this meaning? Such questions as these about Man have in all ages, but especially in the modern world since Locke, been powerful motives to philosophical reflection. Indeed, the philosophical questions about Man are mainly three—What we now are? How we have

become what we now are? What we shall individually become hereafter? Of these three the second, treated as a question of natural science, is the most prominent just now in the popular mind. Yet surely the other two have more philosophical relevancy and human interest. For if we find ourselves endowed now with a spiritual constitution, with reason and conscience, and will and sense of responsibility, each of these in a limited degree; and if the active reason in each enables each in some considerable degree to forecast the future, then it less concerns our highest relations to know by what physical steps mankind have become what they now are,—whether by sudden acts of what is popularly understood by ‘creation,’ or by the slow, continuous process, at once natural and supernatural, called ‘evolution,’ which is a constant (it may be unbeginning) creation. Man being what he is, he does not become other than he is, because physically he is the issue of unconscious organisms which have themselves been evolved from molecules of matter. For he is this only at the point of view of natural or physiological science, which cannot as such entertain the philosophical, which is the theological, problem about Man and Nature. Natural science inquires what the processes in external nature are, according to which, or conditioned by which, man as we find him came to be what he now is, and it tries to determine the organic law of these processes. Philosophy, on the other hand, asks whether there is law or order in nature at all, and why; and whether man in his present constitution does not share in the spiritual or supernatural through his will and reason, as well as in nature through his organism. Thus science, within its own sphere, can never conflict with religion and philosophy. Its utmost discoveries can only illustrate them. All this suggests the third great philosophical problem, which puts Matter in the foreground.

III. For we find that we are individually separated from one another, through personal connexion with the solid and extended organisms in which we each become conscious of separate personal existence, and mediately also of the existence of other separate conscious persons more or less like ourselves. That is to say, we live and move and have our being in a world of sensible things, which occupies space (whatever that may mean), and with which, in and through that small organised portion of it which each calls ‘his own’ body, we are daily in contact and collision. Now, what does this mean?—this matter and

energy which thus environs and expresses the self-conscious activities that are associated with it in the system of nature? We think of the phenomena that are presented to our sight and touch as manifestations of 'something,' as qualities of a substance which we call Matter. But what is this 'something' to which we attribute the manifestations which greet our senses? Are we who are percipient of the manifestations, along with our whole self-conscious life in all its spiritual contents, only one sort of manifestation of the solid and extended substance which we touch and see, a sort which breaks forth under special conditions of physical organisation when nerve-tissue is somehow irritated? Are natural force and the (so-called) 'agency' of matter its own self-existent and independent endowments, in virtue of which it blindly operates without reason or purpose?—Or is the reverse of all this true? Are the things of sense, with their supposed natural powers, only modes in which the immanent yet transcendent Reason expresses itself, while it is itself the cause and explanation of the universal and eternal prevalence of law, order, reason in nature, whether mechanical laws like gravitation or physiological laws like evolution? In the ultimate analysis of philosophy, does matter and energy come out as the primary principle,—self-consciousness, which finds this out, being only secondary or derived; or is self-conscious spirit the original reality, and, in the deepest and truest sense, the 'real'? On this second alternative, does the 'world' of sense, with its so-called 'laws of nature' and 'natural agents,' presuppose the constant creative agency of Active Reason,—nature being thus throughout and always supernatural as well as natural in its orderly evolution or continuous creation; interpretable only in part, and only in its mechanical relations, in physical or natural science, but, when viewed philosophically, found to involve the immanence of Supreme Reason and the purpose of Perfect Will? May not the final end or purpose of the material world, in the successive integrations and disintegrations of its unbeginning and unending evolution, be—to enable finite or individual conscious spirits to become aware each of his own existence, to become cognisant of one another, and to become more distinctly conscious than at this stage of their existence they could otherwise be of the eternally active Reason and Will in which we all live and move and have our being?

To the questions in each of these groups the epistemological inquiry of Locke and Kant, as to the *extent* of

human knowledge, applies. Can any *man* say that he *knows* the true answer to them, or that he can do more than accept the most probable of the possible hypotheses by which the problem might be determined? Can any theories about the origin of the universe, and of its natural laws, or about what the actual laws are according to which its phenomena are determined—be it law of gravitation or law of evolution or any other,—can any such conclusions be absolutely demonstrated? Can more be found out by man than that some one conclusion is immeasurably more probable than any other conclusion that is conceivable; and that, accordingly, until it is disproved, or shown to be less probable than some other, it ought in reason to be believed? Does our belief that the sun will rise to-morrow rest at last on a firmer ground than this, or (more generally) our belief in any alleged event in the past or future history of the universe? Can physical or natural sciences, as formed by man out of an experience that is presupposed to be essentially or ultimately reasonable, ever be for him more than systems of conclusions determined by a balance of probabilities?

Much of the human value of philosophical inquiry consists in its making the thinker even conscious of questions like these. If he fails to find complete answers, his mind is at any rate widened when he realises how they underlie the whole surface of common experience. The questions are latent in the individual mind till they are made patent by reflection, when it is quickened into exercise by sympathy with the great reflective minds of the ancient and modern world. And reflection leads into one or other of the three questions about God, Man and Matter:—Is Reason, or is purposeless unreason, at the root of things and of my individual life? What am I; what can I know and do; and what shall I become? What is the deepest and truest meaning of the sense-presented, or visible and tangible, world with its 'natural' laws?

The human interest of constructive philosophy consists in its being the progressive issue of continuous effort, on the part of a few persons in each age, to think out for themselves adequate and coherent ideas concerning their destiny and duty in a universe presupposed to be rooted in reason and goodness. The philosopher differs from the man of ordinary common sense only in that he tries either to *articulate* in system the reason and goodness that is presupposed to be expressed in the behaviour of things; or else to show articulately why, in consequence of man's merely

finite point of view, the articulation cannot be fully worked out into perfect unity of system, but must for him remain 'broken,' or a mysterious faith, even at the last,—unless the human individual can rise into Omniscience, and see what exists from the Divine Centre.

When we turn from the problems of philosophy to the actual history of man's philosophical endeavours and their results, a curious, even pathetic, spectacle is presented. Instead of an attained "vision of the world and the wonder that shall be," we see a Sisyphus-like toil—sects of thinkers, in controversy with one another, exhausting their strength and ingenuity in the production either of 'systems' or of sceptical negations that wax and wane—that dissolve almost as soon as they are formed—to be replaced by others, or by the old ones in new forms. A perennial discussion of the same problems, in manifold verbal expressions of them, few in number as appears when we penetrate beneath the varied ways of stating them; which receive in the course of ages similar, but dissimilarly expressed, sets of discordant solutions, or else a similar announcement of their permanent insolubility, from rival sects—none of the offered solutions or insolubilities finally annihilating its rivals. And all the while, the spontaneous or unreflective living experience of men, of which philosophy, generated in the minds of the few, should be the ultimate intellectual interpretation, maintains itself independently of them all from generation to generation.

There is a pathos in the birth-throes of successive philosophies, put forth, often dogmatically, by their projectors, as the deepest and truest explanations of the intellectual secret of man's life in the universal system of things; with the joyous anticipations of their sanguine authors, each confident that the 'secret,' or at least the way to find it, has been at last revealed to *himself*. To confine illustrations of this to modern philosophers, we find Descartes confident that he had found a method destined to solve the ultimate problems as certainly, as luminously, as the mathematicians of his day were solving problems of abstract number and quantity; or Malebranche, pictured by Fontenelle as obliged anon to turn his thoughts to something else for relief from palpitation of heart produced by sanguine sympathy with the intellectual perspective which Descartes had partially opened to his view; or Spinoza, confident in his demonstration of a unity which seemed to reconcile the duality of thought and extension left unexplained

by Descartes; or Leibniz, aglow with his discovery of the universal order in the continuous development of monads, according to the established harmony of the sufficient reason; or Berkeley, carried away in astonished enthusiasm at the comprehensive sweep and simplicity of his new philosophical conception of the meaning of matter and its powers, and of the sensible world—a conception which was to relieve scepticism, and remove sectarian divisions from philosophy in all future time; or Kant, with his promise of victory to the often disappointed philosopher, if he would turn over a new leaf under Kant's guidance as the Copernicus of the intellectual world; or Fichte, in the confidence of infallible truth, imprecating judgment on those who should reject his new Idealism; or Ferrier, with his demonstrations which were to illuminate the universe from "stem to stern"; or Hegel, with his dialectical evolution of the rational organisation of Nature and Spirit, produced almost contemporaneously with the pan-phenomenalism of Comte, who, like Hume, relegates all constructive philosophy—theological or metaphysical—to the limbo of illusions which belong to the earlier and ruder stages of man's history. This Sisyphus-like toil of over-confident theorists has landed the generation in which we live in a war of cross-purposes between two confident extremes—those at the one extreme proclaiming that All is light, in a fully articulated reason, and those at the other extreme that All is at last lost in the darkness of unreason; each remaining equally confident in their constructive and in their negative conclusions, after hearing the argument on the opposite side.

Deeper insight into the meaning of this historical drama, and more candid interpretation and appreciation of opposed tendencies, may perhaps so transform the scene as to make it less discouraging to those who are now about to make their own fresh adventure on the ocean of philosophy, in an honest search for the best intellectual expression of that on which our lives, and our beliefs (without which we cannot live), rest in the end. It is surely only one side of the truth that David Hume proposes when he says, that every philosophy owes its success to its novelty, and that it is no sooner canvassed with impartiality than its weakness is discovered. Philosophies seem to the superficial observer of history to pass away without leaving a trace of their transitory dominion. He fails to see in their succession the long education of human understanding; or the adaptation of each to the particular age, with its characteristic experience,

in which it flourished. For, after all, surely through the sects and systems of the past an unceasing, if often an unconscious, "purpose" (unconscious often to the philosophers themselves) has all the while been running, so that the philosophic thought of mankind has gradually "widened with the process of the suns". All true-hearted intellectual endeavour must advance that purpose, while it educates the individuals who engage in it. So long as we "sit still," we are, according to the Greek sage, "never the wiser," but "by going into the river, and moving up and down, we discover its depths and shallows". If we exercise and bestir ourselves we may, even in this life, discover something of its philosophic secret, although we may not fully realise the Divine or Perfect Insight.

For, has not the seemingly confused and self-contradictory philosophic past really been a struggle between, on the one hand, successive Idealistic Constructions, in which the secret of Real Existence is professedly evolved out of a single principle, and, on the other side, the different phases of Sceptical Nescience—materialistic, pan-phenomenalistic, agnostic—with their pessimist despair of the immanence of reason or rational purpose in things? And is not the perennial issue of the struggle—as Idealisms are gradually widened and corrected by sceptical criticism and by enlarging human experience—a gradual approach to the philosophy which corresponds to the true intermediate between absolute Ignorance and the Divine Idealism, which in its infinity evades the philosophic grasp of a human understanding? Has not the philosophic drama—especially as enacted in the last two centuries since the publication of Locke's *Essay*—been a struggle between two antithetical conceptions of man's intellectual relation to the universe, which is issuing, by a composition of forces, in a deepening reverence at once for the facts and the mysterious rational implicates of his physical and spiritual experience? Are educated men not now becoming more ready to acknowledge that "things are what they are, and not other things than they are"; and to ask themselves "why, therefore, should we allow ourselves to be deceived?" Thus one seems to hear three conflicting voices throughout these centuries. The response made by one of these to the three great philosophic questions is:—"I can see *nothing*, nor even reason for having faith in anything, beyond the momentary, ever-changing data of sense";—adding, nevertheless, with monstrous inconsistency, 'I have faith all the same in the inductions of physical

science, so as to be sure that the sun will rise to-morrow, although this future event has not been a datum either in my senses or among my conscious states'. A contrary utterance to this comes from another voice:—'*I can see the universe through and through*, in the light of its immanent rationality, and am so in possession of its secret that I am able to dispense with faith, by rising into a philosophy that moves in a sphere aloof from the irrelevant events and probabilities of the changes in space and time'. These two voices are apt to overbear the third, with its recognition, as the final lesson of reason, that individual man can understand only 'in part,' even although possession of any knowledge seems to imply that the whole should be seen in order that the part even may be visible. 'I see enough,' it proclaims, 'to justify to reason the *faith* that I am living and moving and having my being in a universe in which the merely natural is subordinate to, yet in harmony with, the moral and spiritual order and purpose which my higher being requires; and I also find that the more I cultivate this faith by philosophical reflection the better I can see the little that can be conquered by practical reason, and the more wisely I can shape my life.'

The first of these three voices is that of the philosophic Sceptic or Pessimist, who in modern times has essayed, in the words of David Hume, "a sceptical solution of sceptical doubts," under the self-contradictory name of Agnostic Science. The second is the voice of Gnostic Omniscience, in which the speaker confesses, nevertheless, that he fails to bring the 'probabilities,' on which man's life turns, within the range of his Omniscience.

The impossibility of remaining in a state of universal scepticism, which is logically incapable of either speech or action, on the one hand, with the failure, on the other hand, of the successive attempts to see All in the light of a single rational principle—or, as we might say, to see All from the Divine central point of view—is what leads the philosophic thinker who recognises ineradicable facts of moral experience to enter the *intermediate* path. Here he may deepen his intelligent sense of the reasonableness of the universe, sufficiently, at least, to justify inductions of natural and spiritual laws, which, when so justified, are more than 'leaps in the dark,' since they are then made in the philosophical assurance that facts and events can never put our physical and moral intelligence of the universe to permanent confusion. To follow this path,—intermediate

between complete Nescience and Divine Omniscience,—is to recognise that men, who are the individual thinkers of all human philosophies, are neither mere animals nor identical with God, but are, through their sense-organisms, sharers in nature, while, through their active reason, they participate in the Divine. A philosophy which looks only to man's *organic* participation in *nature* is logically atheistic, or at least agnostic, and, if logical, is in the end completely nescient. A philosophy which sees the infinite macrocosm in our microcosm, and thus fully identifies itself with the divine knowledge, is logically acosmic and pantheistic. But what is man, as Pascal asks,—in the spirit of the philosophy of the intermediate,—what is man amidst the realities which encompass him? In one view he seems individually lost in Infinity: in another view he is as Nothing. He must therefore be the medium between these extremes—alike distant from the Nothing from which he was taken, and from the Infinity in which he seems to be swallowed up. The intermediate is thus characteristic of all our faculties. We are equally unable to know all and to remain ignorant of all. The words applied by Bacon to theology seem also to apply to the only permanent philosophy that man is capable of having regarding the universe of his sensuous and spiritual experience:—"As for completeness in Divinity it is not to be sought. For he that will reduce knowledge into an art or science will make it round and uniform; but in Divinity many things must be left abrupt." So too we may have philosophy, but not a philosophical system which explains all.

Take an illustration of this composition of philosophical forces. It was in reaction against traditionalism, and the dogmatic or uncritical demonstrations of the schools, from which neither Bacon nor even Descartes had fully emancipated themselves, that, for example, John Locke, at the commencement of the philosophic era in which we live, sought—by his polemic against "innate" ideas and principles, and by his analysis of the genuine ideas and certainties and probabilities that are gradually attained in the exercise of our faculties—to administer a check to a *priori* assumptions, unwarranted by experience, and to empty verbalism. Locke invited a new philosophical departure. He began by recognising that every philosophic thinker, as human, has to occupy an intermediate position between the animal and the Divine, where his knowledge must come "far short of a universal or perfect comprehension of what

science is," and at which, for the most part, "probability only is to be had, which is sufficient to govern all our concerns". This was a departure from the point of view of a human Epistemology, not in abstract Ontology. Philosophy had previously been recalled to this human or intermediate ground by sceptical pressure, in hope of finding relief from doubt or nescience in a deeper and truer estimate of man,—for instance, in the Socratic reaction against the agnosticism of the Sophists. In Locke's case it was with the opposite motive of testing traditional dogmatism by reason and experience, so as to clip the wings of Idealistic Omniscience, which, by help of verbal abstractions, concealed from itself its own failure to eliminate all mystery, and to substitute perfect rational insight for faith and presumptions of probability.

That Locke was moved mainly by the second motive explains much in his *Essay*, and in that evolution of thought onwards to this day which *his* recall of philosophy to the intermediate may be said to have inaugurated. For his proposal that we should examine our own abilities, and see what objects our human share of understanding is or is not fitted to deal with, was made, not because he found the current of opinion in the latter part of the seventeenth century running towards a sceptical despair of the power of human understanding to make any way at all in the interpretation of the data of human experience, or because he wanted to make men more intrepid in their speculations. It was for an opposite reason—because he suspected that men claimed, under the name of "knowledge," more than could be justified by a true philosophy. He found that they had been "letting loose their thoughts into the vast ocean of Being, as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension". The *Essay* is virtually an inquiry whether past failures to reach truth may not be due to our assuming, either as uncritical traditionalists or as dogmatic rationalists, to put ourselves virtually at the Divine or central point for viewing the universal reality, instead of seeing that our human individuality necessarily withdraws us, as it were, from the centre, and keeps us at the side, where much must remain out of our sight, and where things, under finite relations of time, must appear at a different intellectual angle. He accordingly inquired what could be seen from the side-position, or from the point which men, as finite persons, have to occupy intellectually. The *Essay*

thus returns again and again to the contrast between the few points of light or knowledge within our human horizon, the many points at which we have only the dim twilight of probability, and the boundless realm of darkness which surrounds both ;—all suggesting the moral advantage to us of dwelling much throughout our philosophic thinking upon the enigma of a human life, in its intermediate between Ignorance and Omniscience.

It was perhaps inevitable that Locke, disposed by temperament as well as by his surroundings to keep before him the danger of dogmatic claims to something like omniscience rather than the danger of sceptical despair, should be more apt to see the weakness of human understanding and the limits of human experience than the abstract constitution of the Universal Reason in which man shares, or even the distinctive facts of his moral and spiritual being ; and that his own philosophy should thus draw more towards the extreme of Nescience than of Omniscience. All this was in the spirit of the age in which he lived, and of which he was eminently the intellectual representative. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the presuppositions of dogmatic theology, supreme in the middle ages, followed by a century of theological controversy and religious wars, were becoming objects of free criticism. At the same time, the tendency to bring every belief before the tribunal of the merely generalising understanding, judging according to the categories of sense only, was gaining strength in England, through the astonishing rise of mechanical science of external nature. Thus the philosophy formed by its representative mind, in an age when philosophic imagination was weak, and which was reacting even in excess against the pressure of the Past, was naturally disintegrative in its influence more than constructive and idealistic. Locke's aim was to dissolve and disperse empty verbalisms and the prejudices inherited from the Past, which he assailed under the name of "innate ideas" and "innate principles". He wanted to induce a collapse of verbal formulas and dogmas that were imposing themselves in the place of "experience"—not sparing even Descartes and Bacon. When he engaged in his *Essay*, Cartesianism had been passing into Spinozism, and all along its course it seemed to Locke to be too much a "letting loose of thought in the vast ocean of Being". Even Bacon's sanguine anticipation of a coming science of nature which should disclose its "fixed, eternal, universal principles" seemed to Locke to need the check which he so often administers in the *Essay*, to those

who vainly imagined the possibility of a "demonstrable" physics; and there, in support of this check, he insists upon man's inevitable *a priori* ignorance of the relation between the innumerable secondary qualities of matter and its few primary qualities.

Accordingly, one is not surprised that Locke, as the philosophical spokesman of his own age and indeed of the eighteenth century, was unconsciously led towards that narrow and incomplete conception of man, and his insight of things, which represents him as ending in sense and empirical understanding, generalising according to sense. Imagination, spiritual reason, emotion, conscience and thinking will,—on all which the *comprehensive* settlement of philosophical questions depends,—are left out of sight, or, at least, are attenuated. An experience that *ends* in sense and empirical generalisation must end incoherently and must contain the seeds of nescience, through its oversight of the larger and richer human life that is due to the factors of our moral and spiritual experience—often latent in individual men—which are the key to a metaphysical interpretation of the universe at the human or intermediate point of view. From hence come to us—

"Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the Eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy".

It was thus the tendency of Locke's philosophy—a protest on behalf of the right and duty of the human understanding to judge according to "experience"—to send the main current of thought in the eighteenth century in the direction of analysis and disintegration. Accordingly, before the middle of the century, constructive philosophy disappeared in Hume's "sceptical solution of sceptical doubts". Hume thus called out Kant in *his* turn, to resume, at a different point of view, the epistemological problem which Locke had tried, in the iconoclastic and empirical spirit of the time, to solve in the interest of individual liberty, to understand according to "experience". (In the ambiguity of the term experience lies the ambiguity of Locke's philosophy.) The

course of European thought from Locke to Hume represents the disintegrative tendency, even as that from Hume, through Kant, to Hegel tends steadily towards an idealistic integration or construction. But this composition of the philosophic forces, within the last two hundred years, has surely on the whole deepened and enriched the philosophy of mankind; and it may correspondingly educate the minds of those who, as students of its results, try to re-think the destructive and constructive speculations which have been developed in its course. The two centuries since Locke correspond in significance in modern philosophy with the memorable century of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world; but the one era originated in reaction against scholastic dogmatism, and the other in reaction against the scepticism of the sophists.

The conscious realisation, in the mind of an individual man, of a philosophy or philosophical system, must of course depend upon the actual intellectual development of that individual. The ultimate interpretation of self-conscious life and the universe which prevails among thinking men in any age or country thus depends upon the degree in which the spiritual faculties, originally latent in each of us, are then and there drawn forth into conscious exercise. When—as for the most part in the eighteenth century—external observation, mechanical association of ideas and empirical or merely generalising understanding are the mental characteristics, while the higher spiritual faculties are left in their latency, as at birth, then the prevalent philosophy inevitably tends to a self-contradictory scientific agnosticism and to theological nescience. On the other hand, when reflective thought is exaggerated, so as to leave the sense-faculties comparatively dormant,—as with some mediæval and some modern schoolmen,—abstractions then supersede concrete things and persons, and the resulting philosophy is a web of speculations, ingeniously spun out of the philosopher's thoughts, in disregard of the moral facts which would leave the thought abrupt. But the philosophy which corresponds to the spiritual experience of the complete man illustrates at once the need and value of the empirical methods in their own sphere, as well as their harmony with that of the natural sciences to which they lead, in subordination to the universalising reason, which sustains faith in God and connects us with the infinite. "Those," says Leibniz, "who give themselves up to the details of sense and to the external sciences usually despise abstract speculation and Idealism. Those, again, who

live among universal principles rarely care for or appreciate individual facts. But I," he adds, "equally esteem both." Bacon, too, profoundly remarks, that "those who have handled knowledge have been too much either men of mere observation or else abstract reasoners. The former," he continues, "are like the ant ; they only collect material and put it to immediate use. The abstract reasoners again are like spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course : it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and the field, while it transforms and digests what it gathers by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the work of the philosopher. For a true philosophy relies not solely on the power of abstract thinking ; nor does it merely take over the matter which it gathers from natural history and mechanical experiments, only to lay it up in the memory as it found it ; for it lays it up altered and digested by the rational understanding. Therefore, from a closer and better considered alliance between these two faculties—the empirical and the rational—such as has never yet been fully realised, much may be hoped for philosophy in the future."

Thus it is that each person, according to the completeness of his developed humanity, is the measure of the philosophy which *he* is able to attain to, or in other words, to verify by his own consciousness. This is the measure of the system which he individually can either form for himself, or as a student mentally assimilate and rise into. One who has been accustomed to conceive reality only under the mechanical categories of physical science—who sees in *ultimate* causality only the necessary connexion of phenomena with *preceding phenomena*—cannot even entertain a spiritual philosophy, any more than one born blind can imagine colours in their varieties. We have Darwin's remarkable confession of his own loss of spiritual insight, through exclusive habits of external observation and scientific specialism. "I well remember my conviction," is his touching testimony, "that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body. But now the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions and feelings to arise in my mind. It may truly be said that I am like a man who has become colour-blind ; and the universal belief by men of the existence of redness makes my present loss of perception of not the least value as evidence." Other testimony might be quoted to the dormant state in individuals of the faith in natural law and order, through an exclusive study of the universe from the supernatural point of view. It is thus that

those factors of the complete mental experience of man,—of the physical and also of the rational or spiritual experience,—which find no response in merely empirical generalisations in the one case, or, in the other case, in an interpretation of the supernatural as what is inconsistent with nature and natural law, instead of (as it may be) comprehensive of both—it is thus that one or other of those two factors subsides into latency, or perhaps never comes into consciousness at all in the individual. God is concealed, not revealed, by the world of the senses when its phenomena *alone* are apprehended,—as by the scientific specialist, who disregards the immanence of the supernatural or metaphysical in all nature. Only when he rises above this mere specialism does the (otherwise merely empirical) observer possess the mental material, so to speak, which gives their meaning to the words that express the fundamental ideas of the spiritual and intelligible world. Cardinal Newman (whose name I introduce with reverence) truly remarks that it is “a great question whether Atheism is not as consistent philosophically with the phenomena of the physical world, *taken by themselves*, as the doctrine of a supreme thinking Will; and whether it is not, so far, the consistent philosophy of those who close their eyes to all beyond the phenomena of the senses and their succession, without realising in their own consciousness any deeper or truer experience than this”. An empty ‘Something’ behind sense-appearances is in fact the only ‘God’ recognisable by one who looks only to the phenomena of sense and their laws,—thus turning his back upon the rational constitution and ultimate unsystematisable facts of physical and moral experience, and so leaving undeveloped in himself the supernatural elements of universalising Reason and conscious recognition of free responsible Will.

This imperfect one-sided experience in the minds of individuals is, of course, common in times of extreme devotion to the sciences that are concerned only with external nature,—like that in which we are now living, or like that into which Locke entered when, with his early medical training and utilitarian disposition, he began to philosophise for himself. “The mere mechanical philosopher” (*i.e.*, the specialising physicist), says Berkeley, in *Siris*, “inquires properly concerning the rules and modes of operation alone, that is, the connexions between facts and coexisting or preceding facts, and not really concerning their originating Cause; *for nothing mechanical is or can be a Cause.*” He professes to ‘explain’ phenomena of sense by means of

other phenomena of sense only. He thus becomes blind at last to the truths that all such (so-called) 'explanations' need themselves to be explained; that the special laws of nature, and the very fact and presupposition that there *is* law and not chaos is part of the philosophical problem; and that an insight of the *ultimate* explanation presupposes the higher faculties of reason, conscience and will, with their correlative faith, in active exercise, all making their contribution to the individual's stock of verifying experience. After this education is accomplished, is not man found in fact *not* to end in sense, and in merely mechanical conceptions of the data of experience? Are not moral reason and free intending will even supreme in the idea of the human microcosm;—and so, by analogy, rightly concluded of the Macrocosm, as also therein supreme? Is it not our duty then to think of the universe in which we live and move and have our being, as rooted in moral Reason and free intending Will, so that, in the deepest meaning of 'reality,' only the spiritual can be called real?

Thus it is that an inadequate education of the individual spirit leads to an inadequate, that is, to a sceptical or agnostic, philosophy. When, in consequence of this incomplete education, the word 'cause,' for example, *can* mean to the individual no more than 'antecedent or coexisting phenomena,' then man himself, regarded only as a part of nature and as thus sufficiently explained, is consistently enough dealt with as only one kind of natural organism, all in him that a deeper insight verifies as essential having been eliminated. For a part of man, doubtless, may be measured by natural science; men are partly animals, and so within its range. Yet, if man shares also in universalising reason and in thinking will, if he is the creator of acts for which he is responsible, then he also shares in the supernatural and divine; and even 'Nature' itself, whether within or outside the human organism, could not be what in our sense-experience it is found to be, without the immanence of the metaphysical or supernatural in its very constitution.

These considerations may help to show why successive philosophical systems, and also the philosophies which are not complete systems but left 'abrupt,' have one after another failed to verify themselves in the mental experience of mankind—why, in consequence of this, they have waxed and waned throughout the ages. Moreover, an

honest attempt to comprehend the universe in the light of its really ultimate conceptions is the most arduous enterprise in which a person can engage. Its even partial success requires a completeness or catholicity in the verifying mental experience which cannot be reached, still more cannot be sustained, without the pain of that fatigue which is inseparable from reflection. The very entertainment in consciousness of the problems (or questions) of philosophy is fatiguing. Accordingly, philosophical words, emptied of their once intended meanings, which it was so hard to think and to retain in living thought, are apt, as meaningless sounds, to be substituted for the philosophical insight of the man of genius who adopted them to express what *he* consciously meant. Through this natural indisposition to continuous reflection, the philosophical successes of epoch-making thinkers are lost almost as soon as a 'new' system has been verbally adopted by the mob of men, with their narrow experience and half-developed spiritual life. Like a sudden transitory flash of light, the discovery of philosophic genius becomes obscured even in the mind of the philosopher himself in his less reflective hours. Hume's account, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, of the disappearance from his mind of his own sceptical philosophy, after he returned from his chamber of meditation to the common affairs of life, is an extreme illustration:—"Where am I," he asks in his philosophic mood, "or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me; and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions. . . . But nature herself cures me. . . . I dine, I play a game at backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further. . . . These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence." Fichte's life supplies another illustration. Indeed, all, I dare say, whether philosophical geniuses or not, who have honestly tried to think the universe philosophically, in the light of man's *complete* mental and moral experience, must have had illustration of the 'waxing and waning' of their own philosophies (for we all have our philosophies, good or bad, consciously or semi-consciously held), in the history of their own minds—reflective exaltation followed by intervals of

philosophical collapse, after which they found it difficult to rise again into the conceptions which fatigue made them let go out of their minds for a time. The history of these 'ups and downs' in one's private philosophical experience so far represents the history of mankind in their dealings with the philosophical problems. The work has to be done over and over again by the individual, after preceding results have been consigned to the very imperfect guardianship of language. Not so in the merely mechanical sciences, where one can build upon results already reached, without the discoverer, or the student of the discoveries, being obliged to re-think the whole from the beginning, in order consciously to comprehend its organic intellectual unity.

It is in this way too that the past history of man's attempts to think the universe philosophically has been really the history of a very few epoch-making minds, who have reached some insight into the real meaning of that life and world in which we find ourselves—an insight that is beyond the intellectual grasp of more than a few. The *monads* of Leibniz, conceived by him in their several gradations, may illustrate the different approximations of individual human minds to the Supreme Mind and Meaning. We have, at uncertain intervals, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Thomas of Aquino, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, followed by periods, each of thirty years or more perhaps, in which attempts are made to interpret and assimilate, or to controvert, the thought which *they* severally and successively originated, but with imperfect success,—by disciples and also by antagonists intellectually inferior to these masters. Then follows an interval either of sceptical despair, or of empirical eclecticism, or even of general indifference to every form of philosophical enterprise—until another genius arises to lead the way in a philosophy, unconsciously widened by preceding constructive and destructive endeavours, as well as by the ever accumulating experience gained in civilised life and in the empirical sciences. And so it has come about that man's philosophic outlook of the universe to-day is immensely in advance of that of Thales or Anaximander.

There is another way in which the Philosophical Development may be looked at. It is this :—Abstract speculations about the rational constitution of the universe, about matter and spirit, and about the capacity of a human understanding for comprehending what is present to it, are remote from the

experience of ordinary men, and thus seem to have no connexion with human interests and affairs. They are accordingly disregarded; for most persons do not even try to think consciously, far less to think out and solve, the problems to which the philosopher is awake. Men in this state of mind cannot see that such questions have any important influence upon human life. Nevertheless, their great (but chiefly unconscious) influence on mankind might be illustrated in the whole social, literary, political and above all in the religious history of mankind. A volume might be written in verification of the summary statement of Coleridge, that "all the epoch-making revolutions of the world,—the revolutions of religion, and with these the changes in the civil, social and domestic habits of the nations concerned,—have coincided with the rise and fall of metaphysical systems: so few are the minds that really govern society, and so incomparably more numerous are the indirect or unconscious consequences of things than their foreseen and direct effects". It was thus that Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* fell "still-born from the press": while his *History of England* charmed the readers of the generation in which he lived. To-day his *History* is an anachronism, superseded by more scientific conceptions of historical research; but the philosophy of the *Treatise* and of the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* is diffused through the intellectual atmosphere of the age, and is the vital root of its agnostic speculation. Philosophy, in the form of abstract discussion, is passed by with indifference. It is recognised in its power only after it has, unconsciously to themselves, rightly or erroneously, transformed men's ordinary conceptions and beliefs about the world of the senses and the ultimate interpretation of their experience.