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I. THE FACT OF THE TRINITY AND THE FACTS
OF EXPERIENCE.

PRESENT-DAY philosophy may be characterized as an attempted explanation of the whole of human experience through a synthesis of its fundamental facts, on the basis of one ultimate and supreme fact. These fundamental facts, or principles, constituting the subject-matter of philosophy, are elucidated by a twofold method of procedure. First, an analysis of consciousness must disclose such principles, implicated in all experience as its necessary conditions, the *sine quibus non* of the very existence of human experience.

Next, the perils of faulty, incomplete, or fanciful analysis, and of the inadequate interpretation of the true and full significance of first principles, must be safeguarded by a supplementary and objective method. The evidences presented by the various aspects and successive phases of human experience, touching the character and significance of all ultimate facts must be scrutinized, and, if convincing, must be allowed due weight in the philosophical interpretation and reconstruction of experience as a whole. So far as may be competent to human intelligence, the sum-total of the results of the twofold method, must be brought into relations of harmonious adjustment.

Let us assume that through application of the methods indicated to human experience, including, of course, man's religious experience as an essential and supreme aspect of universal experience, a unitary conception of the ultimate principle of the uni-

Dr. Stifler is a Baptist, but there is the barest hint of his denominationalism in his comments on chapter vi. 3, 4. We must praise him for his self-restraint here; in his exposition, however, he verges perilously near to the heresy of salvation by "baptism." "The Romans," he says, "died to sin, the hour of that death being the time when they entered the waters of baptism." Again: "By the ordinance, or in the ordinance, they . . . came 'into' him." Again: "The union with Christ brought about in the ordinance." Again: "We are buried with him by means of into-death baptism." But Dr. Stifler distinctly repudiates the doctrine seemingly taught in these quotations. He expressly says, "It is not effected by the baptism, but in it."

But how can the doctrine of salvation by baptism be avoided by any of us? Christ said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Paul says: "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." Peter says: "Baptism doth also now save us." Paul again refers to it as the "laver of regeneration." Ananias said: "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Why do not these passages teach dogmatically salvation by baptism?

Dr. Stifler answers: "The sign stands for the thing, and is constantly used for the thing." Be it so; then does the "sign" become essential to salvation? It would look so, for the "baptism" mentioned in the texts quoted seems to carry salvation with it: "baptism doth also now save us."

We suggest another solution. The word "baptism" is used in two senses in the Scriptures: (1), Literally, for an ordinance; (2), Figuratively, for suffusion of power. In the list of texts above quoted, the word has its second and figurative meaning. It has no reference to the rite of baptism in these places. Here the word imports the endowment of the subject with the power of the Holy Ghost. If that is its meaning, then it is exactly true that "baptism [not the ritual, but the spiritual] doth also now save us." Without such a baptism there is no salvation. The word has this spiritual signification in Romans vi. 3, 4. So interpreted, it leaves the Baptist no proof-text for his interpretation of the significance of baptism, and so despoils him of one of his strongest arguments for immersion as the mode.

This is a good book, free from the controversial spirit and phrases.

R. A. WEBB.

STERRETT'S "POWER OF THOUGHT."

THE POWER OF THOUGHT: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT DOES. *By John W. Sterrett, Esq., of Rockbridge, Va.* With an Introduction by J. Mark Baldwin, Professor of Psychology in Princeton University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1896. 12mo, pp. xiv, 320.

This is a remarkable book. It is such for its authorship being the work of a country gentleman, who was moved by his love for thought to employ the leisure and retirement of a rural life in the profound and long-continued study of philosophy. He was a large farmer, a Presbyterian elder, who had carried his musket in the war between the States, and an alumnus of old Washington College, in the days of Dr. Henry Ruffner. His next studies were in the law, but the cares of a great inherited estate soon allured, or, perhaps, constrained him to relinquish his chosen profession. Those who are familiar with the reflective character and native

vigor of the Scotch intellect will not think it so strange that a retired country gentlemen should have produced a work on an abstruse science second in learning and power to none issued in our century.

Mr. Sterrett does not profess to have given a continuous and complete text-book upon mental science. For instance, he gives no complete classification of the mind's powers and faculties. He does not treat of the great faculties of suggestion, memory, and imagination. He gives no theory of the logical inference or syllogism. He does not profess to give any complete scheme of the feelings. The singular title of his book foreshadows its real design and contents with great precision. His system of psychology is obviously the Scotch in its main traits. He is a dualist, rejecting both the current modern materialism and idealism, and dealing at both these philosophic heresies deadly strokes of refutation as he passes along upon his chosen road. His one dominant purpose is to explain and establish his theory of volition, free agency, and moral responsibility. His central idea is, that rational thought is the active forth-putting of spontaneous mind, provoked, indeed, by sensation, but not created or directed by it. Sensations furnish the occasions, indeed, which incite the opening intellect to thought, but it is conscious mind which gives the form and power to its own thoughts. The author's main doctrine is, that cognition is by no means to be viewed as a passive function of mind, non-active in its quality; but that every thought, every concept, every rational idea is active, involving spiritual energy, engaging the soul's most intimate interests, and thus carrying in itself "ardor," "emotive energy," "desire," "rational impulse." With him thought is not only a light, but a power; and it is this power, and this alone, which culminates in choice. The power of thought, thus conceived, is the power which acts in a rational disposition, appetency and desire, and consummates itself in volitions. Thus the mind is only free, as it is a freely thinking power; thus the human agent is a rational one, and thus he is a morally responsible agent. In a word, with Mr. Sterrett thought is not only a light, but a power; and this is the power which constitutes man a free, rational, and responsible agent.

In defending this theory through twenty-four chapters, the author delivers some gigantic blows against the current philosophic heresies of our age, with a directness and crushing weight delightful to the friends of sound philosophy. Here is one specimen. He adverts to that piece of mischievous ingenuity, propounded by Kant, and since taken up by Darwin, Spencer, and the whole evolutionary school, viz., that the teleological concept cannot be validly drawn from the observed order and laws of the created universe, so as to be ascribed to God (if there is any). And hence, the teleological argument for the being and attributes of a personal and rational God, the very corner-stone of our natural theology, must be given up. "But," says our author, "suppose it be found upon correct inquiry that all human thought is teleological; that the whole interest and tendency of every thought in every rational human are towards some practical end and action; that were it not so, no thought would subsist in the human spirit? And this is just the truth. Now human thought is the only kind of thought of which man has any conscious experience. But if all known thought is found to be teleological, then for the human reason it is an inevitable induction that the thought seen in nature must also be teleological. In short, without teleology there can be no mind, no thought. But the universe is full of the products of thought, in its

order and adaptations. Therefore teleology is true; and it leads us up by one grand step to belief in the infinite creative mind.

Take another instance. Do Alexander Bain, Spencer, and their company try to persuade us that thought and volition may be accounted for as reflex sensations? Mr. Sterrett asks, Where is the physical seat of sensation? In the sensorium. How is the molecular tremor translated into a rational cognition, *and who translates it?* Only the conscious ego! And is not this the absolute condition of every such translation of physical sensation into thought, that I shall first cognize the me, the self, as a thinking agent over against the objective thing, which stimulated the sensorium as independent of it and antithetic to it? Yes. I must first know the ego, consciously and intuitively, in order to know the non-ego; and the absolute condition for cognizing the objective is that I must first distinguish and separate myself from it. Yet this wretched materialism would juggle us into the admission that the objective thing can generate the subjective as its own mere reflex! Which is precisely as absurd as to teach that the child generates its own father.

It is with similar power and directness that our author, in his twentieth chapter, annihilates the opposing heresies of a will fatally necessitated, and of a will *in equilibrio*, and endued with the power of contrary choice in the very instant of a determinate choice. He there establishes and accounts for the freedom of the mind, not of a distinct faculty of will, as consciously known to every man, and also asserts the doctrine of determinism or the certain directive power of the mind's own strongest subjective reason or motive. If any one has been embarrassed by that groundless antinomy, advanced by Sir William Hamilton and Paul Janet: "Since motives cause volitions, and efficient causes act necessarily, the will must be necessitated; but *per contra*, consciousness tells us immediately that we are free, and consciousness is an authority as high and original as the intuitive law of causation," let him read Mr. Sterrett's masterly exposure of the sophism.

The reader will notice two singular traits of this book. One is its highly figurative, not to say metaphorical style. This, indeed, is the natural expression of the thorough independence of the author's mind, *in verbis nullius magistri addictus jurare*. He has read numerous authorities; he bows to none. Having done his own thinking for himself, he creates his own vocabulary, and, indeed, his own nomenclature. His propositions are, in their dress, frequently metaphorical; and the metaphors are as bold and original as they are expressive. The reader who is familiar with nineteenth-century philosophy easily translates our author into the more exact terms of the science. But we may say of him who attempts to read Mr. Sterrett without previous knowledge of philosophy, what Socrates is reported to have said concerning the writings of Heraclitus, "that the reading will require strong swimming."

The other trait which we note with some regret is the absence of a distinct explication of the great fact of native active disposition in man as one of the ultimate subjective determinants of his will. Aristotle, the most thorough of ancient annalists, arrives at this and stops at it as a simple fact of humanity, incapable of further analysis by us, that every spirit has its own native *hexis*. This is what the Latins called *habitus*, not *consuetudo* in our modern sense of habit or wont, but the "holding" or attitude of the spirit, as to the preferableness of an objective

reported in thought. We inevitably conceive of every active spirit as naturally *disposed some way*, this way or that, rightly or wrongly. And its native disposition cannot be the mere product of cognition, seeing that it is one of the determinants of whatever cognition the mind may take up concerning objects of preference or aversion. Our author seems to us in error, when he asserts that *every idea* we have carries with it essentially the vigor of a personal interest, a potential desire and a potential choice. It appears to us that plainly there are ideas which carry no such interest whatever, because they appeal to no native *habitus*, regulative of our preferences or aversions. For instance, let one say to his fellowmen: Let us hasten to Cripple Creek in Colorado, and dig there, because we shall find there abundance of waste earth and stones. This idea will certainly lead to neither desire nor action in any sane man. Why not? Because there is no disposition in any human spirit attaching any value or preference to waste earth and stone. But let one say: Let us hasten to Cripple Creek, Colorado, because they dig much gold there. If his proposition is believed, men will recognize a motive for going, because their native disposition prefers wealth. Once more, let this be the appeal: Let us hasten to dig in Cripple Creek, Colorado, in order that we may thereby contract a malignant fever while we get no gold. This reason, if believed, will certainly repel all hearers, and prompt a negative volition, because their native disposition is averse to suffering. In a word, this is the simple account universally true of all man's rational free choices, that the reason or motive of choice presents in thought a something which stands in the double category of the true and of the desirable. Multitudes of objects in thought, which are believed true, are not desirable, and multitudes of objects which are desirable are not believed true. As it is evidence which determines the true, it is native disposition which determines the desirable. And here are the two co-ordinate and ultimate determinants of rational action. Our analysis should omit neither. Our author stands in curious contrast with Victor Cousin. He makes thought impersonal and finds our only personality in the function of will. Mr. Sterrett asserts that it is thought, and thought alone, which constitutes our personality. The theory of the Virginian may give us a useful counterpoise to that of the great Frenchman. The faculty of cognition and the energy of disposition are the two inseparable factors which together constitute the rational, free, responsible person.

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