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## BOOK REVIEWS

### A NEO-REALIST'S CONCEPTION OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

Simon Alexander, professor of philosophy in the University of Manchester, has been recognized for some years as a leading exponent of the "new realism" in England. His articles, which have been appearing from time to time in *Mind* and in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* have attracted a good deal of attention in philosophical circles, so that when it became known that he had worked out a new metaphysical system along realistic lines, the publication of these Gifford lectures was awaited with interest.

In the introduction to his metaphysical treatise Professor Alexander indicates briefly his position with reference to the problem of knowledge. Although bred, as he tells us, in the school of Bradley and Bosanquet, he has reacted emphatically against even the revised version of absolute idealism which these thinkers present. What he objects to, fundamentally, in absolutism is its assertion that the parts of the world are not ultimately real or true, that only the whole is true. Alexander's own view is that minds and external things are co-ordinate members of the real world, the act of mind and the object of the mind's awareness being distinct existences united by the relation of "compresence," or togetherness, in the experience. The mind's direct awareness of its own mental state is denoted by the term "enjoyment," while "contemplation" is the term reserved for the mind's awareness of objects. Every object is, as an existence, independent of mind; it is selected for contemplation from the world of independent being. The object owes to mind neither its qualities as known nor its existence, but only its being known.

Philosophy for Alexander is essentially metaphysics, defined as the empirical study of the non-empirical, or in other words the science of the *a priori* features of the actual world. It is the study of the pervasive as opposed to the variable characters of experienced things. With this conception of his task, he presents his material in four books: I, *Space-Time*; II, *The Categories*; III, *The Order and Problems of Empirical Existence*; and IV, *Deity*.

In its general features the system reminds one of Spinoza's, except that instead of Space and *Thought* as the fundamental attributes of

<sup>1</sup>*Space, Time and Deity* (The Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, 1916-1918). S. Alexander. London: Macmillan and Co., 1920. 2 vols. xvi+347 and xiii+437 pages.

Being, all existences, mental as well as physical, are viewed as modifications of Space and *Time*. Space and Time, according to Alexander, are in reality one; they are the same reality considered under different attributes. In reply to the question, What do you mean by Space and Time? Do you mean by it physical Space and Time, extension and duration, or do you mean mental space and time, that which you experience in your mind? The answer is that in the end both are one and the same; what is contemplated as Space-Time is enjoyed as mental space-time.

The categories, or pervasive characters of existent things, are "the grey or neutral-colored canvas on which the bright colors of the universe are embroidered." They are common to mind and to physical things, but this does not mean that as present in the physical they are due to mind; rather is it that they are fundamental properties of Space-Time, of which both minds and physical things are modifications. The categories examined are Identity, Diversity, and Existence; Universal, Particular, and Individual; Relation; Order; Substance, Causality, Reciprocity, Quantity and Intensity; Whole and Parts, and Number; Motion; the One and the Many. Quality and Change are not regarded as categories, inasmuch as quality is simply a collective name for the various specific and variable characters of things, while change is transition from one quality or variable empirical character to another.

In the third book interest centers in the discussion of mind and its relations. The main levels of existence are motion, matter as mechanical, matter with secondary qualities, life, and mind. When matter, which is itself a complex of motions, attains to a certain degree of complexity, colors, sounds, and other secondary qualities emerge. Life is an emergent quality taken on by a certain complex of physico-chemical processes belonging to the material level. Similarly mind, the last empirical quality of finites that we know, is an emergent from the level of living existence when it reaches a certain new complexity.

The doctrine of a parallel relation between the mental and the neural is rejected on the ground that in reality they are not two, but one. That which, as experienced from the inside, or enjoyed, is a conscious process, is, as experienced from the outside, or contemplated, a neural one. The mental process *is* physiological, and it would seem that it is simply its locality which makes it mental instead of merely neural, although its being mental means that a new feature, that of mind, has emerged. However, while mental process is something new, a fresh creation, the mind is itself identical with the totality of certain neural processes, only not as contemplated, but as *enjoyed*. Different processes of consciousness

can belong to one mind simply because all the parts of the neural structure are physically connected. Thus the entire weight of the system before us is against belief in the continued existence of mind after physical death. "Should the extension of mind beyond the limits of the bodily life be verified," the author admits, "the larger part of the present speculation will have to be seriously modified or abandoned."

Unlike the empirical qualities of external things, values, or tertiary qualities, as Alexander calls them, imply the amalgamation of the object with the human appreciation of it. What is true, good, or beautiful, is not true or good or beautiful except as many minds through conflict and co-operation have produced standards of approval or disapproval. Values are the creation of mind, but they are real characters which real objects possess by virtue of their relations to minds, which they satisfy. Pragmatism is criticized in these words:

All science is the unification of propositions of experience, and a proposition is true if it works with other propositions. Were the doctrine of pragmatism nothing but an assertion of this fact it could hardly claim to be a novelty. Its significance is that it maintains that there is nothing more to be said of truth. So apprehensive is it of the doctrine that reality is a closed system, fixed and eternal, into which all finites are absorbed and lose their finite character in the supposed Absolute, that it dispenses with all inquiry into the ultimate nature of reality. Reality is indeed no fixed thing, but being temporal is evolving fresh types of existence. But truth which is not guided by reality is not truth at all.

Appended to the discussion of values in general there is a protest against the philosophical method which adopts value as the clue to the nature of reality; to proceed thus, it is claimed, is to discolor the truth with our affections. Now, while our general criticisms of the book are reserved until the end of this review, a critical remark may be interjected at this point. Illegitimate as it may be to assume that reality as a whole, or fundamentally, is like what we appreciate, it does seem permissible to ask what logically must be believed about reality if we are to maintain without inconsistency that our critically examined and still assured evaluations are valid. This method is not to be used to contradict verified scientific results, but to supplement the necessary deficiencies of scientific information. For example, if the consciousness of moral obligation is to be regarded as at all valid, man must be to some extent a creative determiner of his own conduct. Absolute determinism, which scientific observation never has demonstrated and, we may be sure, never will demonstrate, can be contradicted with moral certainty. It is because he scorns to make use of such considerations in philosophy

that Alexander can subscribe to the unverified and unverifiable dogma of strict determinism and assert that human freedom involves no feature save enjoyment which distinguishes it from natural or physical action.

The fourth book begins with the question, In a universe consisting of things which have developed within one matrix of Space-Time, what room is there for God? The answer given to this question is novel, even startling. While mind or consciousness is the highest empirical quality which we know, deity, it is maintained, is the next higher empirical quality to the highest we know. Thus deity *is* not as yet; the universe is engaged in bringing it to birth. Since knowledge depends on experience we cannot tell what is the nature of deity, but we can be certain that it is not mind. God, the being which possesses deity, must be spiritual in the same way as he must be living and material and spatio-temporal, but his deity is not spirit. Deity is to spirit as spirit is to life, or as life to materiality. God is directly experienced in the religious emotion of worship as something higher than ourselves; but religious emotion cannot prove the *existence* of God. Only metaphysics could do that, but as a matter of fact metaphysics does not do that. God is, or rather would be, the whole world as possessing the quality of deity. But as the quality of deity has not yet made its appearance, the best we can say is that as an actual existent, God is the infinite world with its *striving toward* deity. This is the God of the religious consciousness. The world as *possessing* deity is not actual but ideal. And so what is felt in religious experience is not the actual presence of God, but simply the vague future quality of deity.

All this to religious common sense is bizarre enough, but a further most disconcerting qualification remains to be mentioned. Not only does the individual sketched as the infinite God not exist; it is only in this sense of straining toward deity that there ever can be an infinite actual God. If the quality of deity were actually attained, we should have not one infinite being possessing deity, but many (at least potentially many) finite ones. And beyond these finite gods which are to make up the next order of finite existence there will be in turn a new empirical quality looming into view, which will be for the gods what deity is for us spirits. Whether or not there are finite gods somewhere in the universe, we may not know. If they do exist they must have material bodies and life and mind as well as deity, and such beings are not recognizable by us in any form of material existence known to us. Moreover, instead of man's existence depending upon God, it may be surmised that the future existence of deity and the gods depends very largely upon the efforts

of man. And finally, while deity must be supposed to be on the side of goodness, since that which survives is good, God as the whole world possessing (in the future) the quality of deity *is* neither good nor evil. It *includes* both good and evil in the human minds which make up its body.

So much space and time have been devoted to an exposition of Alexander's metaphysical system that little of either is left for evaluation. A few brief comments only may be appended. First, a word of appreciation. Even one who differs widely from many of Professor Alexander's conclusions can view with sympathy and some degree of satisfaction the attempt to construct on an empirical foundation a comprehensive theory of reality—particularly in these days when so many who bear the name of philosophers would deny, in the name of a rather superficial instrumentalism, that there are any such problems as those with which the theory of knowledge and the theory of reality deal. Nevertheless it must be admitted that it is the metaphysical attempt without the satisfactory completion of the task, as in the instance before us, that confounds the philosopher. What Alexander has given us, viewed as a whole, is little more than a singularly methodical and complete presentation of an original and interesting but highly fantastic world-view. Reasonably sober and scientific in the interpretation of experienced nature, when he undertakes to anticipate the future course of evolution he makes progress only through dogmatic assertion on the basis of arguments from analogy which are more than doubtful. His weird speculations are the resultant of perhaps three main factors: first, his rather wilful adherence to a very extreme form of realistic monism, according to which mind is not to be regarded as originating anything in the real world beyond the peculiar relation of awareness which is its own inherent quality. Second, his comparative indifference to certain spiritual values, making him willing to give up any idea of an existent God or creative human freedom or personal immortality; and finally, his passion for a neat and finished system. This last characteristic may be good or bad according to circumstances. If the philosophy is fundamentally sound, attention to systematic unity will make it better. But if the philosophy is fundamentally unsound, consistency and system may lead the thinker to conclusions ever further from the strait and narrow path of truth. Like many another system-maker the author of *Space, Time and Deity* seems much more eager to exhibit the curiosities of his really brilliant speculative imagination than to seek that true and sober wisdom of which the philosopher above all others is supposed to be the lover. While metaphysical truth may indeed be discolored by the mistaken appreciation of false values, is it not equally true that it may also be

discolored by a failure to appreciate sufficiently certain values which, after every fair critical test, still seem to be genuine and real?

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### A NEW EXPOSITION OF JOB<sup>1</sup>

The original plan for the Book of Job in the "International Critical Commentary" contemplated its being prepared by the late Professor Driver. But death took him from the task February 26, 1914. In accordance with his wishes, the completion was intrusted to Professor Gray, of Mansfield College, Oxford. Professor Gray's fitness had already been attested by his excellent commentaries on Numbers and on Isaiah, chapters 1-27, in the same series. In this commentary on Job, the work of each contributor is clearly indicated; the bulk of the grammatical, linguistic, and textual notes is the work of Driver, as is also a large part of the new translation. The main commentary, the translation of sixteen chapters, and the introduction are from Gray. Gray's hand is seen also throughout the commentary and particularly in the philological notes in the addition of bracketed material of great value. It may safely be said that the unity of the work thus coming from two authors is remarkable. Its value lies chiefly in its sound scholarship and its splendidly balanced judgment. No strikingly new points of view are revealed in either the textual criticism, the metrical form, or the literary analysis. But we are given the reaction of two level-headed scholars to most of the propositions regarding the interpretation of Job that time has produced. This reaction is, on the whole, conservative, as is fitting in a standard work like this. Whatsoever of the newer and more radical views has found recognition by acceptance here, may be regarded as having fairly earned its place. This commentary is a record of the ground thus far possessed.

The origin of the Book of Job is placed in the fifth century B.C., with allowance for the margin of a century either way. The main additions to the original book are: (1) the Elihu speeches (chaps. 32-37); (2) the poem on Wisdom (chap. 28), and a section of Yahweh's speech (chaps. 40:6-41:34), not to speak of glosses and minor additions scattered all along. The unity of the Elihu speeches is unchallenged; and Dr. Gray declares

<sup>1</sup> *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, Together with a New Translation* [International Critical Commentary]. S. R. Driver and G. Buchanan Gray.. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. 2 vols. xxviii+376 and 360 pages. \$7.50.