

the interest which I took in the statue, had it photographed with the permission of the authorities of the Museum, and we owe it to his courtesy that we are able to offer it to the readers of *The Open Court*. We hereby publicly express our thanks both to him and to the authorities of the Royal Museum of Leyden.

We have before us in this statue the ideal of Wisdom sitting in the attitude of a teacher, evidently enforcing the instruction which she gives by the assistance of her fingers, used in enumerating the points which she makes. The halo behind her head indicates that the spirit of Buddha is incarnate in her; her seat, like that of the Tathâgata, is a lotos flower; her features indicate the influence of the Gandhara school, founded by Greek artists in the Græco-Indian kingdom of Gandhara in the valley of the Indus, flourishing in the second and first centuries before Christ.

Javanese art is distinguished by a purity of taste that indicates a purity of religious sentiment and conception in the artists. What a pity that the civilisation of which the work of art before us is a symptom was swept from the face of the earth to be succeeded only by periods of barbarism!

P. C.

### BERKELEY'S TREATISE CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Berkeley's *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, of which a reprint has just been published as the fourth of the series of Philosophical Classics of the Religion of Science Library,<sup>1</sup> first appeared in Dublin in 1710. The second edition, the last of the author's life-time, appeared in London in 1734, in the same volume with the third edition of the *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, a reprint of which will also immediately appear in the Religion of Science Library.

The *Principles*, published when the author was only twenty-six, is the most systematic of all of Berkeley's expositions of his theory of knowledge: it was the direct outgrowth of the *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709), which sought to banish the metaphysical abstractions of Absolute Space and Extension from philosophy, and was itself mainly concerned with the abolition of Abstract Matter and of the ontological and theological corollaries of that concept. The *Dialogues* treat of substantially the same subjects, but are more familiar and elegant in form and are devoted in the main to the refutation of the most plausible popular and philosophical objections to the new doctrine. They have been called the gem of British metaphysical literature, and on them Berkeley's claim to be the great modern master of Socratic dialogue rests. No other writer in English, save perhaps Hume, has approached Berkeley in lucidity of metaphysical style.

The two books, which mark a distinctively new epoch in philosophy and science, together afford a comprehensive survey of Berkeley's doctrines, placing within the reach of every reader in remarkably brief compass opinions which have profoundly influenced the course of intellectual history. Works of this kind have been almost invariably distinguished by their brevity. "I had no inclination," is Berkeley's characteristic remark, "to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with the view of giving hints to thinking men, who have leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds. Two or three times reading these small tracts, and making what is read the occasion of thinking, would, I believe, render the whole familiar and easy to the mind,

<sup>1</sup>The Open Court Pub. Co. Chicago and London. 1901. Pp. xv, 128. Price, 25 cents.

and take off that shocking appearance which hath often been observed to attend speculative truths."

Berkeley's philosophy, having been the victim of much popular, and even professional, misapprehension, the editor has endeavored in his prefatory remarks to the *Principles*, to give by appropriate quotations and digests a synthesis of current philosophical opinion concerning his doctrines, to point out his relation to his predecessors, to indicate certain peculiarities of terminology and thought necessary to the understanding of his theory, and to show finally wherein certain of his analyses



GEORGE BERKELEY

(1685-1753)

From a picture by Smibert, now in Yale College

have been rendered antiquated by modern scientific inquiry. Berkeley's life is so interesting that we cannot refrain from offering to our readers the sketch given of it in Lewes's *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845), a work which, though on technical points partisan and not always trustworthy, has at least the merit of a vivacious style.

LIFE OF BERKELEY.

"There are few men of whom England has better reason to be proud than of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne; for to extraordinary merits as a thinker and

writer he united the most exquisite purity and generosity of character; and it is still a moot point whether he was greater in head or heart.

"He was born on the 12th of March, 1685, at Kilcrin, in the county of Kilkenny, Ireland. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was in 1707 admitted as a fellow. In 1709 he published his *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, which made an epoch in science;<sup>1</sup> and the year after, his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, which made an epoch in metaphysics. After this he came to London, where he was received with open arms. Ancient learning, exact science, polished society, modern literature, and the fine arts, contributed to adorn and enrich the mind of this accomplished man. All his contemporaries agreed with the Satirist in ascribing

To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

Adverse factions and hostile wits concurred only in loving, admiring, and contributing to advance him. The severe sense of Swift endured his visions; the modest Addison endeavored to reconcile Clarke to his ambitious speculations. His character converted the satire of Pope into fervid praise. Even the discerning, fastidious, and turbulent Atterbury said, after an interview with him, "so much learning, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman."<sup>2</sup>

"His acquaintance with the wits led to his contributing to the *Guardian*. He became chaplain and afterwards secretary to the Earl of Peterborough, whom he accompanied on his embassy to Sicily. He subsequently made the tour of Europe with Mr. Ashe; and at Paris met Malebranche, with whom he had an animated discussion on the ideal theory. In 1724 he was made dean of Derry. This was worth eleven hundred pounds a year to him; but he resigned it in order to dedicate his life to the conversion of the North American savages, stipulating only with the Government for a salary of one hundred pounds a year. On this romantic and generous expedition he was accompanied by his young wife. He set sail for Rhode Island, carrying with him a valuable library of books and the bulk of his property. But, to the shame of the Government, be it said, the promises made him were not fulfilled, and after seven years of single-handed endeavour he was forced to return to England, having spent the greater part of his fortune in vain.

"He was made Bishop of Cloyne in 1734. When he wished to resign, the King would not permit him; and being keenly alive to the evils of non-residence, he made an arrangement before leaving Cloyne whereby he settled 200*l.* a year during his absence on the poor. In 1752 he removed to Oxford, where, on the evening of the 14th January, in 1753, he was suddenly seized, while reading, with palsy of the heart, and died almost instantaneously.

"Of his numerous writings we cannot here speak; two only belong to our subject: the *Principles of Knowledge*, and the *Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous*. [His other most important philosophical work was *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1733)]. We hope to remove some of the errors and prejudices with

<sup>1</sup>This statement is hardly exact. The *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* was a psychological rather than a scientific treatise. The work has been well characterised by Prof. A. C. Fraser in his edition of the collected works of Berkeley, Vol. I., page 5, as follows: "The treatise is a professed account of the facts, the whole facts, and nothing but the facts of which we are visually conscious, as distinguished from pretended facts and metaphysical abstractions, which confused thought, an irregular exercise of imagination, or an abuse of words had substituted for them. It is a contribution to the psychological analysis of the fact of vision, and not a deduction from merely physical experiments in optics or the physiology of the eye."—*T. J. McC.*

<sup>2</sup>Sir James Mackintosh.

which his name is encrusted. We hope to show that, even in what are called his wildest moods, Berkeley was a plain, sincere, deep-thinking man, not a sophist playing with paradoxes to display his skill.

THE TRADITIONAL MISCONCEPTION OF BERKELEY'S IDEALISM.

"All the world has heard of Berkeley's Idealism, and innumerable 'coxcombs' have vanquished it 'with a grin.'<sup>1</sup> Ridicule has not been sparing of it. Argument has not been wanting. It has been laughed at, written at, talked at, shrieked at. That it has been *understood* is not so apparent. Few writers seem to have honestly read and appreciated his works; and those few are certainly not among his antagonists.<sup>2</sup> In reading the criticisms upon his theory it is quite ludicrous to notice the constant iteration of trivial objections which, trivial as they are, Berkeley had often anticipated. In fact, the critics misunderstood him, and then reproached him for his inconsistency—inconsistency, not with *his* principles, but with *theirs*. They force a meaning upon his words which he had expressly rejected; and then triumph over him because he did not pursue their principles to the extravagances which would have resulted from them.

"When Berkeley denied the existence of matter, he simply denied the existence of that unknown *substratum*, the existence of which Locke had declared to be a necessary *inference* from our knowledge of qualities, but the nature of which must ever be altogether hidden from us. Philosophers had assumed the existence of substance, i. e., of a *noumenon* lying underneath all *phenomena*—a substratum supporting all qualities—a *something* in which all accidents *inhere*. This unknown substance Berkeley denies. It is a mere abstraction, he says. If it is unknown, unknowable, it is a figment, and I will none of it; for it is a figment worse than useless; it is pernicious, as the basis of all Atheism. If by matter you understand *that* which is seen, felt, tasted, and touched, then I say matter exists: I am as firm a believer in its existence as any one can be, and *herein I agree with the vulgar*. If, on the contrary, you understand by matter that occult *substratum* which is *not* seen, *not* felt, *not* tasted, and *not* touched—that of which the senses do not, cannot, inform you—then I say I believe not in the existence of matter, and *herein I differ with the philosophers and agree with the vulgar*.

" 'I am not changing things into ideas,' he says, 'but rather ideas into things; since those *immediate objects of perception*, which according to you (Berkeley might have said, according to philosophers) are only *appearances of things*, I take to be the real things themselves.

" *Hylas*: Things! you may pretend what you please; but it is certain you leave us nothing but the empty forms of things, the *outside of which only strikes the senses*.

" *Philonous*: What you call the empty forms and outside of things seem to me the very things themselves. . . . We both therefore agree in this, that we perceive only sensible forms; but herein we differ: you will have them to be empty appearances; I, real beings. In short, *you do not trust your senses; I do.*'

"Berkeley is always accused of having propounded a theory which contra-

<sup>1</sup> "And coxcombs vanquish Berkeley with a grin."—*Pope*.

<sup>2</sup> These words were written in 1845-1846. Since then Prof. A. Campbell Fraser's magnificent edition of Berkeley's collected works (4 vols. Clarendon Press, 1871) and his exhaustive dissertations on Berkeley's doctrines, together with the many excellent histories of philosophy of the last half century, have rendered such misunderstanding, at least on the part of the philosophical public, almost impossible.—*T. J. McC.*

dicts the evidence of the senses. That a man who should thus disregard the senses must be out of his, was a ready answer; ridicule was not slow in retort: declamation gave itself elbow-room, and exhibited itself in a triumphant attitude. It was easy to declare (Reid, *Inquiry*) that 'the man who seriously entertains this belief, though in other respects he may be a very good man, as a man may be who believes he is made of glass; yet surely he hath a soft place in his understanding, and hath been hurt by much thinking.'

"Unfortunately for the critics, Berkeley did *not* contradict the evidence of the senses; did *not* propound a theory at variance in this point with the ordinary belief of mankind. His peculiarity is, that he confined himself exclusively to the evidence of the senses. What the senses informed him of, that, and *that only*, would he accept. He held fast to the facts of consciousness; he placed himself resolutely in the centre of the instinctive belief of mankind: there he took up his stand, leaving to philosophers the region of supposition, inference, and of occult substances.

"The reproach made to him is really the reproach he made to philosophers, viz., that they would not trust to the evidence of their senses; that over and above what the senses told them, they imagined an occult something of which the senses gave no indication. 'Now it was against this metaphysical phantom of the brain,' says an acute critic (*Blackwood's Magazine*, June, 1842, p. 814) 'this crochet-work of philosophers, and against it alone, that all the attacks of Berkeley were directed. The doctrine that the realities of things were not made for man, and that he must rest satisfied with mere appearances was regarded, and rightly, by him as the parent of scepticism with all her desolating train. He saw that philosophy, in giving up the reality immediately within her grasp, in favor of a reality supposed to be less delusive, which lay beyond the limits of experience, resembled the dog in the fable, who, carrying a piece of meat across a river, let the substance slip from his jaws, while with foolish greed he snatched at the shadow in the stream. The dog lost his dinner, and philosophy let go her secure hold upon truth. He therefore sided with the vulgar, who recognise no distinction between the reality and the appearance of objects, and repudiating the baseless hypothesis of a world existing unknown and unperceived, he resolutely maintained that what are called the sensible shows of things are in truth the very things themselves.

"True it is that owing to the ambiguities of language Berkeley's theory does not seem to run counter to the ordinary belief of mankind, because by Matter men commonly understand the seen, the tasted, the touched, &c.; therefore when the existence of Matter is denied, people naturally suppose that the existence of the seen, the tasted, and the touched is denied, never suspecting that Matter, in its philosophical sense, is *not* seen, *not* tasted, *not* touched. Berkeley has not, it must be confessed, sufficiently guarded against all ambiguity. Thus he says in one of the opening sections of his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, that "It is indeed *an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men* that houses, mountains, rivers, and, in a word, all sensible objects have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding.' This is striking the key-note false. It rouses the reader to oppose a coming paradox.

"Yet Berkeley foresaw and answered the objections which Wimpey, Beattie, Reid, and others brought forward. He was not giving utterance to a caprice; he was not spinning an ingenious theory, knowing all the while that it was no more than an ingenuity. He was an earnest thinker, patient in the search after truth. Anxious, therefore, that his speculations should not be regarded as mere dialectical

displays, he endeavoured on various occasions to guard himself from misapprehension.

"I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sensation or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence I deny is that which philosophers call Matter, or corporeal substance. And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. . . .

"If any man thinks we detract from the reality of existence of things, he is very far from understanding what has been premised in the plainest terms I could think of. . . . It will be urged that thus much at least is true, viz., that we take away all corporeal substances. To this my answer is, that if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, &c., this we cannot be accused of taking away.<sup>1</sup> But if it be taken in the philosophic sense, for the support of accidents or qualities without the mind; then, indeed, I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination:

"But say what we can, some one perhaps may be apt to reply, he will still believe his senses, and never suffer any arguments, however plausible, to prevail over the certainty of them. Be it so; assert the evidence of sense as high as you please, *we are willing to do the same*. That what I see, hear, and feel, doth exist, i. e., is perceived by me, I no more doubt than I do of my own being; but I do not see how the testimony of sense can be alleged as a proof of anything which is not perceived by sense.<sup>2</sup>

"After reading these passages (and more of a similar cast might be quoted) in what terms shall we speak of the trash written to refute Idealism? Where was the acuteness of the Reids and Beatties, when they tauntingly asked why Berkeley did not run his head against a post, did not walk over precipices, &c., as, in accordance with his theory, no pain, no broken limbs, could result?<sup>3</sup> Where was philosophical acumen, when a tribe of writers could imagine they refuted Berkeley by an appeal to common sense—when they contrasted the instinctive beliefs of mankind with the speculative paradoxes of a philosopher, who expressly took his stand with common sense against philosophers?

"Men trained in metaphysical speculations may find it difficult to conceive the non-existence of an invisible, unknowable substratum; but that the bulk of mankind find it almost impossible to conceive any such substratum is a fact which the slightest inquiry will verify. We have experienced this more than once. We remember a discussion which lasted an entire evening, in which by no power of illustration, by no force of argument, could the idea of this substance, apart from its sensible qualities, be rendered conceivable.

"Berkeley, therefore, in denying the existence of matter, sided with common sense. He thought with the vulgar, that matter was that of which his senses in-

<sup>1</sup>An answer to Dr. Johnson's peremptory refutation of Berkeley, viz., kicking a stone: as if Berkeley ever denied that what we call stones existed!

<sup>2</sup>*Principles of Human Knowledge*, Sections 35, 36, 37, 40.

<sup>3</sup>"But what is the consequence? I resolve not to believe my senses. I break my head against a post that comes in my way; I step into a dirty kennel; and after twenty such wise and rational actions I am taken up and clapt into a madhouse. Now I confess I had rather make one of those credulous fools whom nature imposes upon, than of those wise and rational philosophers who resolve to withhold assent at all this expense."—Reid's *Inquiry*, ch. vi., sec. 20. This one passage is as good as a hundred.

formed him; not an occult something of which he could have no information. The table he saw before him certainly existed: it was hard, polished, coloured, of a certain figure, and cost some guineas. But there was no *phantom table* lying underneath the *apparent table*—there was no invisible substance supporting that table. What he perceived was a table, and nothing more; what he perceived it to be, he would believe it to be, and nothing more. His starting-point was thus what the plain dictates of his senses, and the senses of all men furnished."

### MONCURE D. CONWAY, A MILITANT MISSIONARY OF LIBERALISM.

Some time ago we published an article on the Boxer Movement, illustrated by the reproduction of Chinese proclamations and pictures, from the pen of a Christian missionary, the Rev. George T. Candlin, who lived in China during the outbreak of the troubles, and who is known to our readers through several thoughtful contributions on Chinese literature to both *The Open Court* and *The Monist*. His pamphlet, *Chinese Fiction*, published in our Religion of Science Library, shows his thorough acquaintance with and appreciation of the Chinese character and modes of thought.

In the present number we offer an article on the same subject, from the opposite standpoint, by Moncure D. Conway, whose trenchant pen has won him a deserved reputation for the humorous and satirical treatment of such phases of the religious and social conditions of our age as seem to need reform.

Moncure D. Conway is a descendent of the Washington family, a Virginian by birth and a minister by education. In 1857, he was compelled to leave Washington, D. C., where he had charge of a congregation, on account of his denunciations of slavery. He then accepted a call to a Unitarian church in Cincinnati, and when the war broke out lectured gratuitously throughout the Northern states, advocating emancipation. He set a good example to his fellow-citizens by colonising his father's slaves in Ohio. In 1863, he visited England, and in 1870-71 served as a war correspondent for the *New York World*, during the Franco-German War. Having grown more and more liberal, he became the speaker of the South Place Ethical Society in London, and since resigning his position lives as a literary man, devoting himself mainly to religious and ethical topics.

Moncure D. Conway is not yet entirely free from a certain acerbity in the statement of his propositions, which may be due to the unpleasant experiences and persecutions to which he has been repeatedly subjected on account of his convictions. Our readers will observe that he denounces militant Christianity on account of the excrescences of its militant character, but it will be noticed that he himself has proved his whole life long one of the most fervid militant missionaries for what he recognised as the truth.

P. C.

### THE JUDGES OF JESUS, JEWS OR GENTILES?

*To the Editor of the Open Court:*

Allow me to ask if you will elucidate a statement published in your April number in your commentary on the story "The Crown of Thorns."

The passage alluded to is as follows: "Jesus was crucified by the Romans, not by the Jews." Meaning that the *death-decree* passed on the Teacher of Galilee by the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem was *executed*—according to the Roman law—by Roman officials?