



The Philosophy of David Hume

Alfred Weber

“There are no bodies,” the idealists dogmatically declared; “there is no spiritual substance,” was the equally dogmatic assertion of the materialists. The Scotchman, David Hume¹ (1711-1776), an acute thinker and classical historian of England,² opposes to each of these schools the doubts of Protagoras and Locke: Can the human mind solve the ontological problem? Is metaphysics, considered as the science of the immanent essence and primary causes of things, possible? In his *Essays*, which are inimitable masterpieces of acumen and clearness, modern philosophy enters upon the path marked out by English empiricism. The human mind begins to reflect upon its resources with a view to ascertaining the pre-conditions of knowledge, the origin of metaphysical ideas, and the limits of its capacity. Philosophy becomes decidedly critical and positivistic.

For the old metaphysics, i. e., the alleged science of the essence of things, “that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which, being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom,”³ we must, according to Hume, substitute criticism. In other words, we must inquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects as traditional metaphysics busies itself with. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after; and must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterate.

Though criticism is more modest in its pretensions than ontology, it is no inconsiderable part of science to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming disorder in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflection and inquiry. This science has the immense advantage over metaphysics of being certain. Nor can there remain any suspicion that this science is uncertain and chimerical; unless we should entertain such a scepticism as is entirely subversive of all speculation, and even action.⁴ To throw up all at once all pretensions of this kind may justly be deemed more rash, precipitate, and dogmatical than even the boldest and most affirmative philosophy.⁵ We esteem it worthy of the labor of a philosopher to give us a true system of the planets, and adjust the position and order of those remote bodies. How much more highly should we value those who, with so much success, delineate the parts of the mind, in which we are so intimately concerned! We have succeeded in determining the laws by which the revolutions of the planets are governed. And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our inquiries concerning the mental powers and economy. All we have to do is to enter upon the enterprise with thorough care and attention.⁶

Hume loves to call himself a sceptic, and he is a sceptic as regards dogmatic metaphysics. But from the above explicit statements and many other like assertions, it would seem that his philosophy is nothing but criticism. It is not his purpose to renounce philosophy or even metaphysics, but to give it a different direction and a different object, to turn it from fruitless speculation, and to establish it on the firm and certain foundation of experience.⁷ Had Hume been an absolute sceptic he could never have produced an Immanuel Kant. Now, whatever difference there may be between the results of these two thinkers, one thing is certain: The spirit of their theoretical philosophy, the fundamental conception of their investigations, and the goal

at which they aim, are perfectly identical. Theirs is the critical spirit, and positive knowledge the goal at which they aim. To claim for Kant the sole honor of having founded criticism is an error which a closer study of British philosophy tends to refute.

The following is the substance of Hume's inquiries concerning human understanding: --

All our perceptions may be divided into two classes: ideas or thoughts and impressions. Ideas are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious when we reflect on our sensations. By the term "impression" Hume means all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will.⁸ Nothing, at first view, he says, seems more unbounded than thought; but a nearer examination shows that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that it amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. All the materials of our thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment; the mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will.⁹ Or, in other terms, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones. Even the idea of God arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom which we observe in ourselves. We may prosecute this inquiry to what length we please; we shall always find that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. A blind man can form no notion of colors; a deaf man of sounds.¹⁰ Moreover, all ideas, compared to sensations, are naturally faint and obscure.¹¹

After having proved that all our ideas are derived from sensation, Hume shows that they succeed each other in a certain order, and that there is a certain connection between them. This order and this connection presuppose certain principles of connection, according to which our thoughts succeed each other. They are: Resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and causality. The question here presents itself: Are these principles, especially causality, the most important of all notions, *a priori*, innate, anterior to all impressions, as idealism claims, or are they ideas in the sense which sensationalism attaches to the term, i.e., faint sensations, copies of similar impressions? Kant answers the first question in the affirmative; Hume, the latter. He devotes all the efforts of his criticism to the notion of causality, force, power, or necessary connection, and the explanation of its origin. This idea, like all others, arises from sensation. Experience teaches us that one billiard-ball communicates motion to another upon impulse, and that the latter moves in a certain direction. We have no *a priori* knowledge either of the movement or of the direction of the movement. Between what we call the cause and what we call the effect there is no necessary connection that could ever be discovered *a priori*. The effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination; and wherever experience shows us that a particular effect succeeds a particular cause, there are always many other effects which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural.¹² In vain, therefore, should we pretend to determine any single event, or infer any cause or effect, without the assistance of observation and experience. In a word, the idea of cause is no exception to the rule according to which all our ideas arise from sensation.

It remains to be seen how it is derived, what is the impression from which it comes?

Let us first observe — and here the sensationalistic explanation strikes a difficulty which Hume fully appreciated — let us observe that what we call power, force, energy, or necessary connection can never be perceived. One object follows another in an uninterrupted succession; that is all we see; but the power or force which actuates the whole machine is entirely concealed from us. We know that, in fact, heat is a constant attendant of flame; but what is the connection between them we cannot conjecture or even imagine. Since external objects give us no such idea, let us see whether this idea be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds. It may be said that we are every moment conscious of internal power; while we feel that, by the simple command of our will, we can move the organs of our body, or direct the faculties of our mind. But the influence of volition over the organs of the body is a fact which, like all other natural events, can be known only by experience. The motion of our body follows upon the command of our will. Of this we are every moment conscious. But the means by which this is

effected; of this we are so far from being conscious that it must forever escape our most diligent inquiry.¹³ A man suddenly struck with a palsy in the leg or arm, or who had newly lost those members, frequently endeavors, at first, to move them, and employ them in their usual offices. Here he is as much conscious of power to command such limbs as a man in perfect health. But consciousness never deceives. Consequently, neither in the one case nor in the other, are we ever conscious of any power. We learn the influence of our will from experience alone. And experience only teaches us how one event constantly follows another, without instructing us in the secret connection which binds them together and renders them inseparable.

The idea which we are examining is not derived from any consciousness within ourselves. Nor do we get it through the senses. Then how does it originate? As we can have no idea of anything which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion seems to be that we have no idea of power or connection at all, and that these words are absolutely without meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life.

But there still remains one method of avoiding this conclusion; it is to explain the idea of cause by *custom* or habit. We are accustomed to seeing certain events in constant conjunction. When any natural object or event is presented, it is impossible for us, by any sagacity or penetration, to discover or even conjecture, without experience, what event will result from it, or to carry our foresight beyond that object which is immediately present to the memory and senses. But when one particular species of event has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other.¹⁴ We observe, for example, that there is a constant connection between heat and flame, between solidity and weight, and we are accustomed to infer the existence of one from the existence of the other. We then call the one object, *cause*, the other, *effect*. We, suppose that there is some connection between them, some power in the one by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity.

Hence the idea of cause does not arise from any single impression, from the perception of a particular object; it springs from our habit of seeing several impressions and several objects follow each other in regular order. This connection, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connection.

To recapitulate: Every idea is copied from some preceding impression or sentiment; and where we cannot find any impression, we may be certain that there is no idea. In all single instances of the operation of bodies or minds, there is nothing that produces any impression, nor consequently can suggest, any idea of power or necessary connection. But when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event, we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connection. We then feel a new sentiment or impression, to wit, a customary connection in the thought or imagination between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea which we seek for.

Hume, whose criticism aims to overthrow the principle of causality on the ground that it is neither an *a priori* possession, nor derived from any particular experience, is nevertheless a thorough-going determinist in morals and in history. Indeed, he is, with Hobbes and Spinoza, one of the founders of *positive* historical science, which is based on the principle of necessary human action. "It is universally acknowledged," he says,¹⁵ "that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English; you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former most of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and

places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. *Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature.*”

“Were there no uniformity in human actions, and were every experiment which we could form of this kind irregular and anomalous, it were impossible to collect any general observations concerning mankind. . . . The vulgar, who take things according to their first appearance, attribute the uncertainty of events to such an uncertainty in the causes as makes the latter often fail of their usual operation, though they meet with no impediment in their operation. But philosophers, observing that almost in every part of nature, there is contained a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid by their minuteness or remoteness, find that it is at least possible the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. *This possibility is converted into certainty* by farther observation, when they remark that, upon an exact scrutiny, a contrariety of effects always betrays a contrariety of causes, and proceeds from their mutual opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for the stopping of any clock or watch than to say that it does not commonly go right, but an artist easily perceives that the same force in the spring or pendulum has always the same influence on the wheels, but fails of its usual effect, perhaps by reason of a grain of dust, which puts a stop to the whole movement. From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim *that the connection between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes.*” The human will is governed by laws which are no less steady than those which govern the winds, rain, and clouds (Spinoza); the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature.¹⁶

This truth has been universally acknowledged among mankind; it is the source of all the inferences which we form concerning human actions, the basis of all our inferences concerning the future. Physical necessity and moral necessity are two *different names*, but their nature is the same. Natural evidence and moral evidence are derived from the same principle. In spite of the reluctance which men have to acknowledge the doctrine of necessity in words, they all tacitly profess it. “Necessity, according to the sense in which it is here taken, has never yet been rejected, nor can ever, I think, be rejected by any philosopher. . . . By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will (Locke). . . . It is universally allowed that nothing exists without a cause of its existence, and that chance, when strictly examined, is a mere negative word, but it is pretended that some causes are necessary, some not necessary. Here then is the advantage of definitions. Let any one define a cause, without comprehending, as a part of the definition, a *necessary connection* with its effect. Whoever attempts to do that will be obliged either to employ unintelligible terms, or such as are synonymous to the term which he endeavors to define, and if the definition above mentioned be admitted, liberty when opposed to necessity, not to constraint, is the same thing with chance, which is universally allowed to have no existence.”

Experience refutes the dualism of will and physical agencies; it also destroys the dualism of reason and instinct. Animals, as well as men, learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, etc., and of the effects which result from their operation. The ignorance and inexperience of the young are here plainly distinguishable from the cunning and sagacity of the old, who have learned, from long observation, to avoid what hurt them, and to pursue what gave ease or pleasure. A horse that has been accustomed to the field becomes acquainted with the proper height which he can leap, and will never attempt what exceeds his force and ability. An old greyhound will trust the more fatiguing part of the chase to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; *nor are the conjectures which he forms on this occasion founded in anything but his observation and experience.* Animals, therefore, are not guided in these inferences by reasoning, neither are children, neither are the generality of mankind, in their ordinary actions

and conclusions; neither are the philosophers themselves. Animals undoubtedly owe a large part of their knowledge to what we call instinct. *But the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power that acts in us unknown to ourselves.*¹⁷

The universal propensity to form an idea of God, if not an original instinct, is at least “a general attendant of human nature.”¹⁸ This proposition contains the gist of Hume’s theology. He is an outspoken opponent of all positive religions, and finds it hard to regard them as “anything but sick men’s dreams,” or “the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape.”¹⁹ The doctrine of immortality is “a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery.” He opposes the following arguments to miracles: There is not to be found in all history any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good sense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable. The passion of surprise and wonder gives a sensible tendency towards the belief of those events from which it is derived. Supernatural relations abound among ignorant and barbarous nations; or if a civilized people has ever given admission to any of them, that people will be found to have received them from ignorant and barbarous ancestors, who transmitted them with that inviolable sanction and authority which always attend received opinions. It is a general maxim that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish.²⁰

Although Hume’s conclusions in theology, as well as in ethics and psychology, wholly agree, on the one hand, with the doctrines of the rationalist Spinoza, and on the other, with those of the French materialists, the Scotch philosopher nevertheless maintains to the end his scepticism, as he loves to call it, or criticism, or positivism, as we designate it nowadays, in order to distinguish it from the scepticism of the ancients. True scepticism, as he conceives it, does not consist in perpetually doubting all things, but in limiting “our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding.”²¹ . . . This narrow limitation, indeed, of our enquiries, is, in every respect, so reasonable, that it suffices to make the slightest examination into the natural powers of the human mind, and to compare them with their objects, in order to recommend it to us.”²²

The most salient feature of this scepticism, as compared either with metaphysical dogmatism, or the naive objectivism of *common-sense*, is that it distinguishes between things as they are and things as they appear to us. Without any reasoning, says Hume,²³ we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it; our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it. But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy. And no man who reflects ever doubted that the existences which we consider, when we say, *this house* and *that tree*, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences which remain uniform and independent. Even the *primary* qualities of extension and solidity are perceptions of the mind. (Berkeley.)

Are these perceptions produced by external objects resembling them? Here experience, which alone can answer this question of fact, is and must be entirely silent. Do external objects at least exist? Experience is equally silent on this point. However, to doubt the existence of bodies is an excessive scepticism, which action and employment, and the common occupations of life, subvert. This excessive scepticism, or Pyrrhonism, true scepticism rejects as barren.²⁴ Every time it attempts to reappear, nature puts it to flight. Nevertheless, the existence of bodies,

being a matter of fact, is incapable of demonstration. The only objects of *real knowledge* and demonstration are quantity and number. Experience decides concerning all matters of fact and existence, and experience never goes beyond probability.²⁵ (Carneades.)

Hume's teachings were violently opposed, in the name of common-sense and morality, by Thomas Reid,²⁶ the founder of the so-called Scottish school, and by his disciples, Oswald,²⁷ Beattie,²⁸ and Dugald Stewart.²⁹ All of these men were psychologists of merit, but, with the exception of Reid, mediocre metaphysicians.³⁰ In order to refute Hume it was necessary to put oneself in his position, — the critical position, — to use his own weapons, to renew the inquiry into the human understanding, and, if possible, to make it more thorough and complete. Kant, the most illustrious continuer and the most acute critic of the Scotch philosopher, saw that very clearly. "Common-sense," he says, "is a precious gift of God. But we must prove it by its acts, by deliberate and rational thought and speech, and not appeal to it as to an oracle, whenever reasons fail us. It is one of the subtle devices of our times to appeal to common-sense when our knowledge gives out, and the shallowest fool confidently measures his strength with the profoundest thinker's. . . . And what is this appeal to common-sense but a bid for the applause of the rabble, which cannot but bring the blush to the cheek of the philosopher? I cannot help thinking that Hume had as much good sense as Beattie." Reason can be corrected by reason alone.³¹

It is true, Hume's philosophy was not unassailable. There were breaks in his criticism; difficulties were eluded rather than solved. If experience is the sole source of knowledge, whence arises the exceptional character of absolute certainty which Hume himself concedes to mathematics? If there is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the senses, how shall we explain the ideas of cause, necessary connection, and necessity? As was seen, the Scotch criticist explains the idea of necessary connection by the principle of habit. After the constant conjunction of two objects, we are determined by custom alone to expect the one from the appearance of the other. But this explanation does not suffice. The idea of necessity cannot come from experience alone, for the widest experience supplies us only with a limited number of cases; it never tells us what happens *in all cases*, and consequently does not yield necessary truth. Besides, it is not true that the notion of causality is that of necessary contiguity in time.³² Causality signifies connection, and therefore contains an element not included in the notion of contiguity. Now, Hume expressly states that *one event follows another; but that we can never observe any tie between them*. They seem conjoined, but never connected.³³ Hence, if experience never shows us a cause, but only a succession of events (for that is what Hume means by the ill-chosen term *conjunction*, which is synonymous with *connection*), must we not either negate the idea of causation, or infer a different origin for it?

At this point Hume's criticism is corrected and completed by that of Kant.³⁴

NOTES

1. [*Treatise on Human Nature*, 3 vols., London, 1739-1740; ed. by Selby-Bigge, Clarendon Press, 1888. Hume afterwards worked over the three books of the *Treatise*, and published them under the following titles: *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, 1748; *A Dissertation on the Passions*; and *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 1751. The first and last of these works, reprinted from the posthumous edition of 1777, have been edited, with introduction, etc., by J. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, 1894. *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, 1741. *The Natural History of Religion*, 1755. All of the above-mentioned works, except the *Treatise*, were published under the title, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, London, 1770. The best edition of this collection (with introduction and notes), by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, 2 vols., London, 1875, new ed., 1889. The *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* appeared after Hume's death. These, together with the *Treatise*, are published, with introduction and notes, by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, 2 vols., London, 1874, new ed., 1889. The *Autobiography* was published by Adam Smith, London, 1777. The essays on *Suicide* and the *Immortality of the Soul* appeared 1783. Selections from the *Treatise*

(B. I.), by H. A. Aiken, in *Series of Modern Philosophers*, New York, 1893; from Hume's ethical writings, by J. H. Hyslop, in the *Ethical Series*, Boston, 1893. Works on Hume: F. Jodl, *Leben und Philosophie David Hume's*, Halle, 1872; E. Pfeleiderer, *Empirismus und Skepsis in D. H.'s Phil.*, Berlin, 1874; Meinong, *Hume-Studien*, 2 vols., Vienna, 1877, 1882; G. v. Gizycki, *Die Ethik D. H.'s*, Breslau, 1878; T. Huxley, *Hume*, London, 1879; W. Knight, *Hume (Philosophical Classics)*, London, 1886; Introduction to ed. of Hume's works by T. H. Green. - TR]

2. *History of England from the invasion of Julius Cæsar*, etc., 6 vols., London, 1754-1763. Hume's historical work made a greater impression on his age than his philosophical works. He himself was especially proud of his achievements as a historian (see *Letters of David Hume to William Strahan*. Now first edited by G. Birkbeck Hill, Oxford, 1888). Our age, however, has reversed this opinion. Hume, the spiritual father of Kant, now takes precedence over Hume, the rival of Robertson and Gibbon.

3. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. I. [Green's edition of Hume].

4. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. I., p. 10.

5. *Id.*, p. 12

6. *Id.*

7. *Id.*, sect. XII., part III., p. 133.

8. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. II., p. 14.

9. *Id.*, p. 14. We have here, word for word, the teaching of Kant, who, however, adds that this mixture and composition depends on *a priori* forms, inherent in the mind. Hume also assumes that it depends on principles; but, absolute sensualist that he is, derives the principles themselves from sensation, experience, and habit.

10. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. II., p. 15.

11. *Id.*, p. 16.

12. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. IV., p. 27.

13. *Id.*, sect. VII., pp. 54 f.

14. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. VII., p. 62.

15. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. VIII., p. 68.

16. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. VIII., pp. 71 f.

17. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. IX., pp. 85 ff.

18. *The Natural History of Religion*, sect. IV., p. 362.

19. *Id.*, p. 362.

20. *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, sect. X., p. 94.

21. *Id.*, XII., p. 133.

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.*, p. 124.

24. *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, p. 130.

25. In excluding physics from the sphere of pure knowledge, the idealist Plato advances the same opinion.

26. 1710-1796. Professor at Glasgow. *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common-sense*, London, 1764 ff. [Selections from the *Inquiry* by E. Sneath in *Series of Modern Philosophers*, New York, 1892. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 1785; *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 1788. Complete works, ed. by W. Hamilton, Edinburgh, 1827 ff. On the Scotch School see James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy*, London, 1875; New York, 1890. - TR.]

27. *Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, Edinburgh, 1766.

28. 1735-1803. Professor at Edinburgh. *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*, Edinburgh, 1770; *Theory of Language*, London, 1778; *Elements of the Science of Morals*, 1790-1793.

29. 1753-1828. *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, 3 vols., London, 1792-1827; *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, 1793 [ed. with critical notes by J. McCosh, London, 1863. Collected works, ed. by W. Hamilton, 10 vols., Edinburgh, 1854-1858. Thomas Brown (1778-1820), a pupil of Stewart, approximates Hume (*Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, Edinb., 1803 ff.) - TR.].

30. In the philosophy of William Hamilton (1788-1856), the Scottish school, following the example of the Academy, culminates in scepticism, which it had undertaken to combat in David Hume. Sir W. Hamilton was noted for his *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, London and Edinburgh, 1852; 3d ed., 1866; *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 2d ed., 1860, and on Logic, 2d ed., 1866.

See J. Stuart Mill, *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, London, 1865; 5th ed., 1878, [Veitch, Hamilton (Philosophical Classics)].

31. *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*, Preface, vol. III. (Rosenkranz), p. 8.

32. What succession, as Thomas Reid aptly remarks, is older and more regularly observed than that of day and night? Now, it never occurs to any one to consider night as an *effect* of day, and day as the cause of night. Moreover, there is this peculiarity about the truths of experience that the certainty we get from them is susceptible of increase and diminution. After a second successful test, the physician is more convinced of the virtue of his medicine than after the first, and so on, until a long line of authentic cases changes into certainty what was at first a mere presumption and surmise. The case is quite different with a truth like the following: Nothing happens without a cause. The child, whose experience has just begun, believes in it with the same instinctive force as the adult and the old man, and experiences multiplied by the myriads can neither increase nor diminish its certainty.

33. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sec. VII., p. 62.

34. [Before the advent of Kant's criticism, German philosophy was dominated by the Leibnizo-Wolffian school (see pp. 368 f.), which culminated in a form of eclecticism similar to the English *common-sense* philosophy. J. H. Lambert (1728-1777), one of Kant's correspondents, attempts to reconcile Wolff and Locke, German metaphysics and English empiricism (*Kosmologische Briefe*, Augsburg, 1761); N. Tetens (1736-1805), who influenced Kant, aims to reconcile the rationalistic and sensationalistic psychology (*Versuch über die menschliche Natur*, 1776) ; M. Knutzen (died 1751), Kant's teacher, endeavors to reconcile Wolffian metaphysics, Newton's natural philosophy, and orthodox theology. Other representatives of this eclectic movement are the so-called *popular philosophers*, whose chief aim is to popularize philosophy: Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786; complete works, 7 vols., Leipsic, 1843-44) ; C. Garve (1742-1798), the translator of Ferguson's and A. Smith's writings; J. J. Engel (1741-1802; *Der Philosoph für die Welt*, 1775-77) ; T. Abbt (1738-1766; *Vom Tode fürs Vaterland*, Berlin, 1761); Ernst Platner (1744-1818; *Philosophische Aphorismen*, 1776); F. Nicolai (1733-1811). To the *Aufklärung* also belong the deist H. S. Reimarus (1694-1765; *Abhandlungen von den vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion*, Hamburg, 1754, 6th ed., 1794; and the poet G. E. Lessing (1729-1781). - TR.]

Alfred Weber. *History of Philosophy*. Trans. Frank Thilly. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.

© SophiaOmni, 2005. The specific electronic form of this text is copyright. Permission is granted to print out copies for educational purposes and for personal use only. No permission is granted for commercial use.