

Review: Dr. Abbot's "Way Out of Agnosticism"

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DR. ABBOT'S "WAY OUT OF AGNOSTICISM." *

I.

IN the brief compass of a little more than eighty pages of text, and after a few pages of well-written introduction, Dr. Abbot has here attempted "to show that, in order to refute agnosticism and establish enlightened theism, nothing is now necessary but to philosophize that very scientific method which agnosticism barbarously misunderstands and misuses." Readers of the same writer's well-known "Scientific Theism" will find in the present volume a fashion of argument with which they are already in general acquainted. They will admire, meanwhile, the courage by virtue of which the author chooses to meet his adversaries, armed not with the numerous pages in which philosophers usually love to array themselves, but, as it were, with so few pages that they might almost seem by comparison, like David's five smooth stones from a brook. In an age of many words, students who are not without wordy sins on their consciences must therefore indeed envy Dr. Abbot his light equipment and his courageous willingness to enter upon so serious a task with so little external assistance. There is one kind of external assistance which our author, to be sure, does not disdain; his text fairly bristles with italics and small capitals, a device which possibly serves to set off what the author is pleased to consider the extremely "modern" character of his work, through the contrast with so antiquated and unfortunate a typography.

If we leave the manner of the book for the time and pass to the matter, we shall find, first of all, as a noteworthy feature, the author's sense of his personal originality as to method,

* The "Way Out of Agnosticism; or, the Philosophy of Free Religion," by Francis Ellingwood Abbot, Ph.D., late Instructor in Philosophy in Harvard University. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1890.

and, in part, even as to result. In so far as the result is a monistic theism, Dr. Abbot, of course, can be under no illusions as to the widely-spread agreement among many ancient and modern thinkers concerning the substantial truth of this doctrine. In so far, however, as the statement of this doctrine involves technical formulas of a philosophical sort, Dr. Abbot is confident of the newness of many of his propositions; and, with more courage than sense of humor, he is even pleased to name what he thinks to be his philosophical discovery concerning "Universals," the "American Theory of Universals," as opposed to the "Greek" theory, which he finds "undeveloped," and the "German" theory, to which he attributes a "malign influence." The "Greek" theory is essentially Aristotle's. By the "German" theory is meant conceptualism. As to Dr. Abbot's originality, we receive also yet other and numerous assurances. "By a wholly new line of reasoning," drawn from the sources of "science and philosophy," the work of this book is to be accomplished. So the opening "Note" informs us. And, again: "The first great task of philosophy is to lay deep and solid foundations for the expansion of human knowledge in a bold, new, and true theory of universals. For so-called modern philosophy rests complacently in a theory of universals which is thoroughly mediæval or antiquated" (p. 12). At the conclusion of the book we learn that we have been shown "the way out of agnosticism into the sunlight of the predestined Philosophy of Science." This "way," it is plain, might, according to its author's view, be called with some propriety the "American" way; and, in sum, Dr. Abbot's sense of the originality of his philosophical thought is such as to seem, in this age when the historical continuity of human thought is so constantly in our minds, fairly childlike in its confidence and in its simplicity. How well founded it is, we can only estimate after we have looked a little more closely at the doctrine.

II.

"The necessary beginning-point of all philosophy, which deserves to be called scientific," is in this volume as in the au-

thor's previous one, the principle, here stated on p. 5, that "the universal results of the special sciences, including the method common to them all, are the only possible data of philosophy or universal science." "Universal Human Knowledge," however, as thus defined, is embodied in "Universal Literature," in so far as this is a record of the positive results of human thought (p. 10). Universal literature depends upon language as its means of expression, and language is impossible without universal terms, in which, "in the last analysis," all human knowledge is "contained" (p. 11). "The results of science must be permanently stored in this form, and can only be found in this form." How necessary, then, the comprehension of the nature and objective relations of "Universal Terms." The true theory of these terms, now, is that they express universal meanings or "Concepts," and that any one of these stands for "the universal *what-is-meant*" (p. 13),—*i.e.* for "the genus."

To understand the nature of knowledge, then, we must know what is the truth behind this word "genus." All science, Dr. Abbot teaches, presupposes that, in so far as we possess verified acquaintance with nature at all, we do know *real*—not abstract or ideal, but *actual*—genera in nature. "Nothing is known by itself alone; it is known through its kind. The essential constitution of every genus is *that of many things in one kind, one kind in many things*; the unity and multiplicity are known inseparably together. Hence the genus is in no sense an abstraction, but the concrete totality of many realities in one reality" (p. 14). Hence, again, the genus has an "essentially organic constitution;" and "science itself may be defined as knowledge of the genus, that is, knowledge of the universe as the highest kind which includes all other kinds." It is, meanwhile, some genus in the foregoing sense which is known through any scientific concept or word; and the word or the concept reveals "never the independent, isolated, or unrelated thing, nor yet the common essence of many unrelated things as a mere abstraction, but always the concrete kind of many interrelated things as one self-related reality" (p. 18). A fair example of a genus (p. 24)

is the "family" in human society; for a family in every case is "essentially and necessarily composed of several individual members" (p. 25), whose relations "in their totality make up the family constitution, and are precisely as real as the individuals related, inhering in the family *as such* and *as a whole*, and subsisting neither in any one individual member, nor in any outside observer." "Nay, more: no individual as such can exist except as a member of some family precisely as real as himself." Meanwhile, "all individuals compose the genus family. All families compose the genus society. All societies compose the genus mankind. All individuals = all families = all societies = all mankind." Again (p. 26), "in this union and interrelation of many in one and one in many, in this immanent relational constitution by which many individuals exist and are indissolubly united in one kind, lies the very essence of the family," which thereby exemplifies the genus as it is found everywhere in the "world-order." Another example of a genus is "mankind" (p. 40). "Mankind" may be, for the sake of precision, distinguished as a "concrete universal kind or genus, including all concrete individuals," from "Man" as the "Concrete Individual," and from "Humanity" as the "Abstract Class Essence," including only the universal nature which is common to all men as a class, and excluding all that is peculiar to each individual. "Humanity," in this sense,—viz., as "human nature,"—is then not the real genus, and has no "independent reality." "It is real, but only as existing in all real men," while the genus or "kind" is as real as the individuals, and in case of mankind "has its generic peculiarities, such as heredity, bisexuality, gregariousness, and all other attributes which can exist only through the social correlation of many individuals in one kind." Other examples of the genus are "book," "house," "tree" (p. 33), and the "three categorical types of Real Being," which the author discusses in his closing sections,—viz., "Machine," "Organism," and "Person."

The genus is therefore, of course, distinct from the individual as such. It is also distinct from the "abstract class essence." The relations of the three are, however, that (omit-

ting Dr. Abbot's small capitals, in which the words next following are printed by him) "the Individual Concrete Thing and the Universal Concrete Kind reveal each other through the Abstract Class Essence which is common to both."

I have used Dr. Abbot's words in stating the foregoing notions about "Universals," because he plainly makes much of these forms of expression himself, and has a right to his words in so far as they are his own. As to the use to which he puts this "new, bold, and true" theory, this "American theory of Universals," I have space only for an inadequate suggestion. "The Universe," namely (p. 45), as the "supreme Kind of Kinds," is the "real genus in itself," and we learn about *this* genus, as a whole, "by studying the constitution of its own finite parts. Each known part reveals one character of the whole." "The real essence of the individual thing, and the real essence of the universal kind more or less repeat, exemplify, and manifest each other" (p. 47). Hence we can and must judge of the character of the highest genus by virtue of an examination of the genera known to us. The principle of the reciprocal relation of thing and kind, extended to the universe, authorizes us to generalize from actual to possible experience. Upon this authorization all science depends; and we must be sure that "the essential constitution of the universe more or less repeats, reflects, and reveals itself in miniature in the constitution of the innumerable concrete kinds of which it is itself the absolute unity" (p. 44). "Real knowledge of any of these kinds is, just so far, real knowledge of the Universe as the supreme Kind of Kinds."

If this suggests the procedure of "scientific philosophy" in general, the detail of the procedure is more fully suggested when we observe that in the universe of science these are, according to Dr. Abbot, the three types of Being: the "Machine" (under which name Dr. Abbot includes all embodiments of natural processes *quâ* mechanical), the "Organism," and the "Person." These, then, properly studied, will, as subordinate genera, reveal or manifest something of the nature of the highest genus itself,—*i.e.*, the Universe as Infinite Being.

Otherwise the American theory of universals is vain, and we are yet in our sins. For while ordinary agnostics, when they observe "machines" or "organisms" or "persons," remain still with foolish heart darkened as to the nature of the "Supreme Kind of Kinds," those who have escaped into the sunlight of the predestined philosophy of science know that, as the American theory teaches, and as the malign "German" theory does not teach, the higher kind and the lower kind reciprocally "manifest each other," so that in knowing persons, and the rest, we already know something of the universe. But still further, a closer examination of the concept of a "Machine," reveals to Dr. Abbot that a machine without an Organism, which constructs the machine "as a causal means to some definite organic end of its own," is an "abstraction," and can have no true reality. The reasoning by which Dr. Abbot reaches this result is, of course, supposed by him to be in principle founded upon his doctrine of the reciprocal manifestation of thing and kind and so on the "American" theory. In fact and in detail, however, the argument as stated will appear to any reader, who is not altogether in love with Dr. Abbot's formulas, nor yet terrified by the italics and the small capitals, as naught but our familiar friend the design argument, in forms which were in use some time before the discovery of America. By the aid of the science of "anthropology," to which Dr. Abbot, as "scientific philosopher," appeals on p. 50, he learns that men use axes as tools, and accordingly he gives as "anthropological definition" of machine, "a causal means between man and some definite human end." A reference to honeycombs, spider-webs, and the like, suggests the further generalization that "the essence of the Real Machine is to mediate causally between an Organism and its End," and one is thus led to a conception of a machine as a "material whole constructed by an Organism as a causal means to some definite organic end of its own" (p. 52),—a concept which, just because it "contains all the essential elements of the physical and anthropological concepts, but is more comprehensive than either," thereby shows that the concepts of the Machine and the Organism (*i.e.*, of natural processes as mechanical, and

of organic processes as teleological) are "universally, necessarily, and inseparably connected." This monstrous *non sequitur* is supplemented by a "discovery of supreme importance" (p. 53),—viz., that "the constitutions of the Machine and of the Organism involve each the other, and therefore are intelligible each through the other alone." The only further suggestion of a proof for this discovery is given in the illustrations on page 53, which show that, as guns and scythes, and the like, are used by men to "extend their organisms," the "Real Machine is only an Artificial and Separable Organ for Self-Extension of the Organism. When not used it is only a functionless lump of matter."

I am far from discussing here the truth of Dr. Abbot's conclusions apart from his method of reaching them. I am only reporting the nature of his "way out," just as a way. On p. 55 this "way" leads through an argument, presumably in Dr. Abbot's judgment, "wholly new" when applied to philosophy, although he quotes text-books which have already formulated it in special science. This argument assures us that the "causal nexus," in mechanical nature would remain utterly mysterious unless we supposed it to be in essence one with our own "conscious effort." This gives us another indication of the inextricable linking of the two concepts of "efficient causality and finality." With the remainder of the discussion, which leads Dr. Abbot along well-trodden roads to the monistic theism of his closing pages, where (as Julian Schmidt once neatly said of certain passages in Fichte) *Er in's Erbauliche uebergeht*, I will not just here deal, except by way of remarking that the capitals and the italics become none the less numerous as the topics under consideration become more exalted.

III.

It is due to Dr. Abbot's position and past services as a writer and a leader of liberal investigation, in this country, to give at least as full an account as the foregoing of his latest work, and I should be glad if I had time for fuller quotations. It is due also to the extravagant pretensions which he frequently makes of late as to the originality and profundity of

his still unpublished system of philosophy, to give the reader some hint of what so far appears to be the nature of our author's contributions to philosophical reflection. But now, as to the estimate of the book, I must, however, insist that no amount of agreement with Dr. Abbot's monistic and essentially idealistic conclusion—no such agreement, I repeat, as I myself feel with this outcome, and no sympathy, such as we shall all sincerely feel, with his desire to serve our careworn and doubting age—can blind or ought to blind any intelligent reader to the essentially vicious and injurious nature of Dr. Abbot's fashion of argument. Of novelty, good or bad, the book contains, indeed, despite its vast pretensions, hardly a sign. The agnostic, meanwhile, who should actually be led "out" by Dr. Abbot, would be of necessity a person of so unreflective a mind, so ignorant of the history of thought, so badly afraid of italics, so little grounded in his agnosticism, that, whatever humanity might dictate as to the value of any pious effort to benefit his soul, there may be grave doubts whether his philosophically self-critical powers were worth the trouble of saving. And I say this not because I have the least desire to be disrespectful to Dr. Abbot, whose sincerity and earnestness are throughout admirable, but because the book, as it stands, forces such a judgment upon one, and that for the following simple reasons:

For the first, it is useless for any thinker in our day to undertake to philosophize, without both the time and the coolness of judgment needed to form some clear consciousness as to his own historical relations; and Dr. Abbot is hopelessly unhistorical in his consciousness. His "American Theory of Universals" is so far from being either his own or a product of America that in this book he continually has to use, in expounding it, one of the most characteristic and familiar of Hegel's technical terms, namely, "concrete," in that sense to which it is applied to the objective and universal "genus" itself. Dr. Abbot's appropriation of Hegel's peculiar terminology comes ill indeed from one who talks of the "malign influence" of the "German" theory of universals, and who interprets this theory as teaching that, in case of his own

illustration of the "family," "the observer and the family are one, and the observer is that one." As applied to Hegel's theory of universals, which is certainly not to be called precisely an "American" theory, Dr. Abbot's description of the consequences of the "German" theory would be an intolerable slander. And this I say not to defend Hegel, for whose elaborate theory of universals I hold in no wise a brief, but simply in the cause of literary property-rights. When we plough with another man's heifer, however unconscious we are of our appropriation, however sincerely we seem to remember that we alone raised her from her earliest calfhood, it is yet in vain, after all, that we put our brand on her, or call her "American." Hegel himself never made any secret of his own historical dependence, but at all events it was Hegel who, as the outcome of his study of the history of thought, said, in speaking of the relation of the universal and the individual, "Der Begriff (substantially one with Dr. Abbot's genus in so far as the latter is "one kind in many things and many things in one kind") ist das schlechthin Konkrete." And Hegel's *Begriff*, I repeat, is *not* Dr. Abbot's merely subjective "concept," which the "German theory" shall put wholly "in the observer." On the contrary, as § 167 of the "Encyclopädie" has it, "To say that a judgment shall be merely subjective in sense, as if *I* attributed a predicate to a subject, contradicts the very form of expression of the judgment, which is objective: 'The rose *is* red,' 'Gold *is* a metal.' *It is not I who merely attribute something to them.*" Nor is this a chance word of Hegel's. His whole system depends on the assertion that there is an objective Begriff, a universal kind, manifested in the individuals, and at the same time, as universal a truth, as real, as they are, and making the individuals possible. For this reason—viz., *because* of this objectivity and reality of the *Begriff*—Hegel calls it "concrete," makes it organic, precisely as Dr. Abbot does, so far, at least, as concerns this initial definition, and then tries to demonstrate, in his own fashion, that this concrete and objective universal is a person. Now Hegel's whole theory may be false; but what is certain is that Dr. Abbot, who has all his life been working in an

atmosphere where Hegelian ideas were more or less infectious, has derived his whole theory of universals, so far as he has yet revealed it with any coherency, from Hegelian sources, and even now cannot suggest any better terminology than Hegel's for an important portion of the doctrine. Yet in the volume before us we find all this pretentious speech of an "American" theory, and discover our author wholly unaware that he is sinning against the most obvious demands of literary property-rights.

Discussions about priority are indeed often of peculiar uselessness in philosophy, just because of our inevitable bondage to the history of thought, and to the common notions of our age. I should therefore owe the reader a hearty apology for the suggestion of the present discussion, were it not for the light that it throws upon Dr. Abbot's whole method of work. If we are unable to discover, after the most sincere and pious scrutiny, our own most obvious debts, is it not a little hopeless for us to undertake to straighten the world's accounts, and to lead all the agnostics of our generation out of their reflective embarrassments?

If the book is thus based upon an historical misjudgment, the main doctrines, regarded as Dr. Abbot's, are, in the second place, not a little confused in statement. So far, I have said, as Dr. Abbot actually defines his genus, his "concrete kind of many interrelated things as one self-related reality," his genus is nothing but Hegel's *objektiver Begriff*. Meanwhile, however, Dr. Abbot, as "scientific philosopher," disdains to give any argument for this doctrine of the genus but the bare *Versicherung*, as Hegel would have said, that *so it is, since so science assumes*. Beyond this assurance here, as in his previous book, Dr. Abbot, who has an especially keen hatred for sceptically critical reflection upon fundamental truths, has nothing to suggest to his agnostics, by way of leading them "out," save a certain lofty and stern abuse of their dreary scepticism, an abuse which has a well-known and somewhat clerical sound, and which may be left to one side here along with the rest *des Erbaulichen* of which the book, as I before said, contains a little. The edifying is indeed one of the most necessary

and useful things of life; but it has as such no place in a philosophical argument about fundamental problems. We ought not to be enticed to accept a philosophical theory by the suggestion that it is "new and bold." We ought not to be warned away from a critical scrutiny of the bases of science by hearing that, "If popular agnosticism only had philosophy enough to understand the logic of its own denials, it would be a mad plunge into bottomless, shoreless, skyless ignorance, —the suicide of reason itself in a delirium of cowardice." This sort of thing, one may remind Dr. Abbot, is very much what the parson said of old to us in the country village: *nur mit ein bisschen andern Worten*, and with the further difference that the parson of old used, if I remember rightly, to warn us that just such evil consequences would follow from any doubt as to Jonah's precise relations with the whale. Agnostics of any experience are used to such speeches, and we shall in vain get them "out" after that fashion.

But if one looks a little further at Dr. Abbot's development of the doctrine of the genus, one finds indeed at least this about it which, if not precisely either novel or "American," is at all events not wholly due to Hegel. I refer to a certain unexplained confusion in his mind as to what his *genus* shall be or imply. A given "family" in human society, as would seem from his chosen example, is a genus as against its individual members. Meanwhile, "book" and "house" are just as truly genera. All these genera have an "organic" constitution, and are "units" of existence (p. 15). They exemplify the "concrete kind of many interrelated things as one self-related reality." Each of them, namely, has "an inherent system of relations or immanent relational constitution," and Dr. Abbot is never weary of pointing out that relations are as real and objective as are the related things. "Immanent in the very nature of being, this principle of the objectivity or reality of generic relations, is the absolute condition of the possibility of a World-Order" (p. 26). The "relational constitution" of each genus is discovered by "classification" (p. 14), and this, as scientific and methodical procedure, depends upon "observation," which first discovers real genera, "hypothesis,"

which tentatively extends generalizations, and "experimental verification," which tests hypothesis (p. 36). Through the "immanent relational constitution" thus discovered, we find that "many individuals exist and are indissolubly united in one kind" (p. 26); and this "indissoluble" unity of the individuals in the kind is again apparently the same as Dr. Abbot's "organic" unity of the generic constitution of things.

Now, it needs no special ingenuity to suggest that this doctrine about the organic and "indissoluble" unity of things in their kind, has very different values when applied to the "family" of Dr. Abbot's illustration, and when applied to such a "genus" as, say, corkscrew, or rat-trap, or rainbow, or pebble, or atom, or tiger, or constellation. All these last are unquestionably "genera" of some sort. And I should fully agree with Dr. Abbot that the relations among things which these various generic names imply are as real and objective as the things related. This objective "relational constitution" of things is to my mind a very certain truth, although I should not, like Dr. Abbot, refuse to inquire as to the philosophical basis of this truth before making it the basis of the rest of my philosophy. But granting that truth, it is the barest confusion to dump thus all the genera into one place, as it were, and talk of the "indissoluble" unity of many things in one kind as if it were characteristic of every genus. "Indissoluble" and "organic" relations subsist, after a fashion, between the members of a given family, because, should any members die or go away, just this family must cease to exist in its old form as a genus, and must, if it persists at all, become an altered genus. No *such* organic relations characterize, however, the rat-traps and the pebbles. Even the genus tiger is unaltered by the death of thousands of tigers. The pebbles resemble one another, and this resemblance is indeed an objective fact in nature, dependent upon no observer (save God). But to call the pebbles, and the rat-traps, and the corkscrews, and the tigers, and the rainbows, genera, each one of which is a "concrete kind" of many interrelated pebbles, or rat-traps, or corkscrews, or tigers, or rainbows, as one "self-related reality," and to illustrate this "organic relational constitution" by the

further case of a family with its interrelated parents and children, brothers and sisters,—all this is but to confuse, surely not to clarify. Hegel, whose doctrine of the organic unity of thing and kind Dr. Abbot has unconsciously appropriated, was himself far too sly a bird to be caught by the chaff of such confusion. His *Begriff* is objective and organic, and it owns the whole universe; but the various corkscrews and the individual tigers and rainbows are still not by any implication suggested as “necessarily united.” On the contrary, Hegel’s ingenious system of graded categories, with its successive forms of Being,—viz., *Sein*, *Dasein*, *Existenz*, and *Wirklichkeit*,—gave a formula which enabled him to declare *das Wirkliche* through and through organic, while leaving room for all sorts of imperfect realizations of unity in the lower realms of *Dasein* and *Existenz*. I would not desire to recommend Hegel’s devices to Dr. Abbot, for they might produce worse effects upon his agnostics than even his present account of things. I only wish to suggest that the actually true doctrine of the organic unity of the world requires of us more adroitness in its statement that is involved in simply declaring every possible genus an organic unity, and avoiding distinctions. The pebbles have “unity” because they resemble one another; the atoms because, in addition, they have, or may have, physical and chemical relations; the corkscrews or the rat-traps because of their community both of structure and of purposes. The “family,” however, shows us a wholly different sort of organic or “indissoluble” relation among its members; while the constellation in the heavens is again a sort of “genus” in relation to the stars that compose it; but its unity, while indeed founded upon the “immanent relational constitution” of the world in space, has a yet widely different “organic” character from that suggested by the other “genera” mentioned. I use, indeed, examples which are my own; but Dr. Abbot has only himself to blame if, stating the “immanent relational constitution” of all genera in this direct and naïve way, without any distinctions, he forces upon a reader such reflections. In brief, as the foregoing reference to Hegel suggests, Dr. Abbot’s doctrine is in so far “American” as it is

Hegel with the subtlety of that crafty old fox left out. Hegel managed to make the *Begriff* organic, and yet leave room for the confused genera of ordinary observation. Dr. Abbot marks all genera with the same stripe, sees "indissoluble unity" in every case of objectively significant classification, and so makes indeed short work of "agnosticism," but unfortunately of the clearness of his whole thinking also.

For, of course, the whole use of this "American theory of universals" is to prove, by means of the reciprocal relation of thing and kind, that the universe as a whole has such unity as certain of its parts—to wit, "organisms" and "persons"—are already empirically known to possess. This is the whole question at issue between Dr. Abbot and his agnostics. No other line of investigation shall be "scientific" or "modern," except a study of empirical nature in the light of the "American theory." And this theory is, "Every genus is an organic unity of interrelated individuals in one self-related kind." Hence the kind of kinds, containing as it does persons and organisms, is at once in a fair way to appear as a person with an organism. Dr. Abbot's agnostics have, however, a right to ask how the organic unity of the universe, as the highest genus, differs from the organic unity of the rat-traps in the genus "rat-trap," or of the rainbows in the genus "rainbow," or of the tigers in the jungle, or of the stars in the constellation? Why is the human "family" a better case of the immanent relational constitution of the objective world than is the genus "corkscrew"? Upon the answer to such questions all must turn for these unhappy agnostic readers.

And Dr. Abbot indeed "more or less" feels, I apprehend, how the bare and undeveloped assertion, that science knows organic and unified genera, is not enough to make clear the peculiar unity which he attributes to the One Person. Hence the detailed discussion of machine, organism, and person, as scientific genera, in the concluding sections of the book. A more hopelessly "mediæval" discussion it would be hard to find. The design argument in all its dogmatic and animistic play with analogies is here repeated as if it were something wholly new. A "machine" needs a maker and a user.

Proof: men make axes. Science discovers physical nature to be a machine. *Ergo:* science discovers the world of physical nature to need a maker and a user. This maker and user cannot be a part of nature, but must be the whole of it. Hence the world is one organism. A further proof of the same bold and new doctrine is found in the fact that (as M. Deschanel observes, in the revised sixth edition, by Everett, of his "Elementary Treatise on National Philosophy") "we obtain the idea of force through our own conscious exercise of muscular force" (p. 57 of Abbot). Several other persons have said the same thing. Hence (p. 64) "the universe is a real organism." As for the rest of the argument, it is short and easy. The universe as a whole has nothing outside of it. Hence, for the real organism which is the infinite, "self and not-self are numerically identical. But numerical identity of self and not-self, subject and object, constitutes the unity of self-consciousness in the person. Consequently the infinite universe cannot be a real organism without being a real person too."

And so, finally, after this somewhat detailed study of Dr. Abbot's little book, I feel constrained to repeat my judgment as above. Results in philosophy are one thing; a careful way of thinking is another. Babies and sucklings often get very magnificent results. It is not the office of philosophy to outdo the babies and sucklings at their own business of receiving revelations. It is the office of philosophy to undertake a serious scrutiny of the presuppositions of human belief. Hence the importance of the careful way of thinking in philosophy. But Dr. Abbot's way is not careful, is not novel, and, when thus set forth to the people as new and bold and American, it is likely to do precisely as much harm to careful inquiry as it gets influence over immature or imperfectly trained minds. I venture therefore to speak plainly, by way of a professional warning to the liberal-minded public concerning Dr. Abbot's philosophical pretensions. And my warning takes the form of saying that if people are to think in this confused way, unconsciously borrowing from a great speculator like Hegel, and then depriving the borrowed conception of the peculiar subtlety of statement

that made it useful in its place,—and if we readers are for our part to accept such scholasticism as is found in Dr. Abbot's concluding sections as at all resembling philosophy,—then it were far better for the world that no reflective thinking whatever should be done. If we can't improve on what God has already put into the mouth of the babes and sucklings, let us at all events make some other use of our wisdom and prudence than in setting forth the "American theory" of what has been in large part hidden from us.

I speak plainly. Moreover, I give this work a treatment whose minuteness is wholly out of proportion to the value of the book criticised. Were I writing for expert students of philosophy, this paper would have been much briefer. But I write for the general reader, as well as for the expert. And, I repeat, nothing less than the foregoing fulness and plainness of speech is due to Dr. Abbot's rank as a public teacher, and to his well-earned reputation as a man who wants to advance the cause of sound religion. That cause, by his practical labors, as editor and counsellor, by his personal devotion to high ideals, by his heroic sacrifices in the service of duty, he has long indeed advanced; and I trust that he will very long continue to do so. But if we will philosophize in public, we must be content to be judged by formal criteria of a very impersonal sort. If not every one that saith Lord! Lord! is a good servant of the Lord, surely it is equally true that not every one who preaches a lofty creed and lives up to it can give even an American theory of why he holds it. And, in judging of the actual work of philosophical writers, we must lay friendly esteem aside in so far as it is necessary to do so for the cause of the "greater friend." In brief, in estimating these matters of the accuracy and fruitfulness of our reflective thought, we must show no mercy,—as we ask none.

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