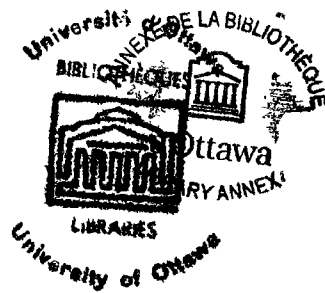


COLERIDGE



ON UNDERSTANDING AND REASON.

by

Hervé Marcoux, o. s. i.

1942

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INTRODUCTION

It will in all probability be held that a similar topic should be treated in a faculty of Philosophy rather than in a faculty of Arts, nevertheless we feel perfectly justified in presenting it as a thesis in English Literature. Nor can the fact that it deals exclusively with philosophical opinions carry weight in the negative argumentation, on the contrary, we opine that this point is directly favorable to an affirmative reply.

There is, and always has been, a strong prejudice against philosophy in any form, and a subsequent attempt to ostracize it from all fields of historical or literary research, as foreign and irrelevant. We should like to hazard the opinion that the contradictory proposition is true: that no advanced study in any sphere of history, literature, or science, can be adequately undertaken without a solid philosophical foundation. What is more, we maintain that no complete and personal judgment can be passed on the relative merits of a man and age, even in the realm of Literature, without a thorough comprehension of the philosophy underlying his work, or, (in the case of an age), of the principal ideas that gave to that age its particular bent.

Some place or other it has been said that "ideas rule the world", and it is through the utter contempt with which

ideas are regarded in our day, that the present age which is (as we had been told) the most civilized, because it has done away with all Medieval superstitions, finds itself face to face with the second world war in a quarter of a century. It is high time for the educated class to begin thinking, thinking seriously, thinking practically, thinking quietly, when everyone is craving for action, clamouring to do away with something, anything, because they do not realize what it is they want to do away with.

It was with such an objective in view that we began this study of Coleridge's philosophy. Coleridge lived in an age which in many respects was not unlike our own. The sudden development of mechanical sciences, the awakening of a spirit of liberty in human minds occasioned by the French Revolution, the shaking off of the aristocratic yoke effected by the Social Reforms after 1815, and lastly the alleged discoveries of the Evolutionists, provoked an explosion in the troubled reasons of men; religion was thrown to the winds, and man turned a page in his book of life to begin anew an existence of Utilitarian Pragmatism and Materialism.

Coleridge had been born and raised in this intellectual upheaval, and having salvaged the rudiments of his Faith from the shipwreck of his youth, he plunged headlong into the study of Philosophy in order to save his country from what he perceived to be an imminent menace.¹ During his

life he wrote considerably, and for many years when he lived at Highgate, his host's residence was the gathering-place of a group of admirers who listened to his Table-Talk several nights a week, when Coleridge's health permitted. It is chiefly through the influence of these men that Coleridge has survived as a philosopher, his health preventing him from writing in an orderly manner, and of harmonizing his philosophical thought into a systematic whole².

Now since Coleridge's entire life was devoted to the search of truth in the field of philosophical sciences, it seems quite evident that a real appreciation of the man and his contribution to English Literature cannot be had without a previous study of his philosophical tenets. For if anything is reflected in his work it must be his philosophy of life. Here we do not refer to his poetical works, although what we said of his works in general applies to these as well, "servatis servandis". We speak exclusively of his prose which forms the far greater part of his contribution to English Literature, for in the seven volumes of

¹ Coleridge tells of his liberation brought about by a study of the Kantian Philosophy in the *Biographia Literaria*, p. 294 sq. Here too, he tells us how he broke away from Unitarianism, to which he had adhered since his Cambridge days.

² Coleridge's health was greatly impaired by the use of opium, and from 1816 till 1834, the very years when he should have produced his greatest amount of work, he was confined to a sick-bed in the home of Mr. Gillman at Highgate, London, where he attempted to combat the enslaving habit contracted by the use of laudanum.

his published works, six are in prose, and these deal, a few chapters excepted, with philosophy or theology.

It is evident then, that if the real Coleridge is to be known, this knowledge will not be gleaned from an intensive study of his poetry without considering his prose, and this latter if it is to be understood, must be ordained, arranged into a synthetic structure, for Coleridge did not put it down on paper in this form. Nevertheless we cannot suppose that it did not exist as a logical unit in his mind, for it is proper to the human mind to unify its cognitions, and it is this work which we have attempted to do in a very limited sphere.

We said that our study was limited in scope, even in the philosophical domain. Indeed, there is one department in Coleridge's philosophy which we shall ignore completely in this study, not because it does not merit consideration, on the contrary, we are inclined to set it up as a model for all students of literary analysis; we speak of his literary criticism. In this field he did pioneer work in English Literature, and he is to be commended.

It is to his philosophy proper, that is as a system of thought, containing the fundamental rules of reasoning, the principles of science the nature of knowledge, the nature of the world from a cosmological standpoint, the nature of man, and all issues that will follow from the answer given to these queries -- all these problems natural to the curious

animal that is man, are to be answered by the philosopher. Now it is to be noted, for herein lies the motive which prompted the present study, Coleridge has been presented to the thinking world, especially to youth, and Christians in a more emphatic manner, as the man best capable of equipping their mind with the methods necessary for disciplined intellectual combat, and the arms with which they may defend their Faith and demonstrate its rationality. Some admirers have gone further and stated that if Coleridge is to remain immortal, it is chiefly due to his philosophical and theological contributions. Professor Greenough Thayer Shedd puts it thus: "And yet it is our belief; that in this latter character - in the capacity of a philosopher and Theologian - Coleridge is to exert his greatest and best influence. After his influence upon Poetry and Belles Lettres shall have disappeared in that most vital and therefore most shifting of all processes - the ever evolving development of a national literature - the direction and impulse which his speculative opinions have given to the English thinking of the nineteenth century, will for a long time to come, be as distinct and unmistakable as the Gulf-Stream in the Atlantic"³.

Even in the field of philosophy proper however, we do not intend to present an exhaustive study. We should ra-

³ Introductory Essay, Works, I, 11.

ther limit our considerations to the development of Coleridge's views on one of the most intricate and acute problems with which the thinker of today has to cope, namely: the problem of human knowledge. Indeed, the human intellect has, since the birth of Nominalism, tried more or less happily to vindicate the possibility and the value of its cognitions. That the justification has often been less successful is warranted by the ever increasing number of skeptics of all tones and colors, and to our mind, the capital points of our social and private life, the existence of God, and the subsequent obligations, will never find a universal acceptance until the nature, possibilities and limits of the human mind have been likewise universally accepted. For to this enigma, as a fountain from which they have gushed forth, all great heresies whether, Atheism, Agnosticism, Rationalism, Fideism or Traditionalism, can and must be traced.

Coleridge claims to supply an answer. We propose to present it impartially, as he presented it himself. We do not wish to enter into a controversy, our intention is to offer to the reader an unbiased synthesis of Coleridge's solution to the problem of the day: What is the value of human cognition?

THE PHILOSOPHY

"I repeat the question then: is it likely, that the faith of our ancestors will be retained when their philosophy is rejected, - rejected a priori, as baseless notions not worth inquiring into, as obsolete errors which it would be slaying the slain to confute?"⁴.

As Dr. Shedd so judiciously remarks in his Introductory Essay to the 'Aids to Reflection', the philosophy of Coleridge must be gathered from his works rather than quoted from them. In order to accomplish a like task, a penetrating insight is required into the psychology of the man and the influences which affected his intellectual and moral life. For with Coleridge, we are in a continual flux for at least half of his literary career, and no one, to our knowledge, has yet presented a biography worthy of the man. We are consequently limited in our research throughout our study, but especially in this and the following divisions of our work, wherein we deal with his philosophical and theological tenets.

⁴ Coleridge, Statesman's Manual, Appendix E., Works. I, p. 480.

It becomes necessary then, in endeavoring to systematize his philosophical doctrines, to segregate that which is certainly his throughout his life, or at least in his latter years and that which he rejected after it had served its purpose as a stepping-stone permitting him to attain higher summits on the mountain of truth, real or apparent.

We have stated that Coleridge's philosophy is to be gathered rather than quoted from his works. The reason for this becomes manifest when we consider that Coleridge never elaborated, nor gave full and unconditional adherence to any system of speculative thought. He was an eclectic, having collected here and there, and assimilated in remarkable style, the most abstruse and difficult doctrines propounded by the German philosophers Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Schlegel, Leibnitz⁵. And it is to Kant that he seems to have given his firmest assent. It would be interesting to know just how this intellectual friendship was brought about, but the inquiry would lead us astray. We shall be content with a brief recording of the state of mind in which we find our friend when he wrote the *Aids to Reflection* and the *Biographia Literaria* from which we gather nearly all of his philosophical opinions with which we are concerned. We shall

⁵ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, chapter 9, Works, 3, 247, 256, 260, 262, 263. It may be noted that later Coleridge published tracts on Schelling and Fichte.

deal mainly with the evolution of his philosophical opinions, pointing out when it is necessary or useful, the accompanying changes in his theological positions.

CHAPTER I.

THE EVOLUTION OF COLERIDGEAN THOUGHT.

§ I. General Position and causes of evolution.

Having sought after truth in the empirical philosophy of the eighteenth century, especially that of Locke, Berkeley and Hartley, he turned away disgusted, for his keen mind quickly penetrated the subterfuge of the fundamental arguments which form the skeleton of this superficial and inadequate explanation of human knowledge ⁶. Fortunately he came across the works of Plato and Plotinus along with the commentaries of Platonis philosophy and theology developed by Giordano Bruno and the English philosophers Sir Philip Sydney and Fulke Greville ⁷. It is probably at this time, - while the battle for intellectual supremacy was being waged in his mind between the undiscovered remnants of materialism

⁶ With reference to these philosophers Coleridge states that he 'could find in neither of them an abiding place for my reason'. Biog. Lit. Works 3, 247. Cf. Statesman's Manual Appendix E, Works I, 478-484.

and the new principles of idealism gleaned in the writings of Plato and his followers, - that the reading of Aristotle's *De Anima*, *De Memoria* and the *Parva Naturalia*, along with Saint Thomas' Commentary of the latter work, effected in a decisive manner his divorce from Materialistic philosophy⁸.

Here we are at cross-roads. Why Divine Providence in the intimacy of its Eternity decided and decreed that things should follow as they did, is subject for conjecture. For our part we are inclined to believe that had Coleridge read the rest of Saint Thomas or Aristotle, England would have produced one of the most brilliant philosophical minds the world has ever known. Instead, Coleridge fell into the company of Spinoza and it is established beyond doubt that for a long time he gave his whole-hearted assent to German pantheism. For the rest of his life, the above-mentioned German philosophers were his sole masters. France and her intellectuals remain isolated from him for political reasons.

⁷ Ibid. He refers to the 'commentaries of the Theologia Platonica of the illustrious Florentine; of Proclus and Gemistius Pletho; 'De Immenso et Innumerabili' and 'De la causa, principio et uno', of the philosopher of Nola, who could boast of a Sir Philip Sydney and Fulke Greville among his patrons.' Works 3, 249.

⁸ Biog. Lit. Works 3, 217-222. How favorably he was impressed by these works of the Stagyrte and the Angelical Doctor may be gathered from this passage of the Biographia. "In as much as later writers have either deviated from, or added to his doctrines (Aristotle's), they appear to me to have introduced either error or groundless supposition".

In fact Descartes is the only one for whom he seems to have had any admiration.

With this in mind, we must consider another point. What was the motive of Coleridge's philosophical pursuits? We have already stated that it was not merely, nor primarily, love of speculation. Had this been the case he would have constructed a magnificent edifice of his own, not necessarily one which would stand the storms of internal criticism, but one capable of catching the fancy, and gaining the admiration of the reader. For Coleridge had the magic of words, a rich imagination and could entice when he so desired.

We would readily compare Coleridge in his quest for truth to an Augustine, if of course the comparison bears only on this point, for Coleridge is not a Saint. However he does seem to be sincere, and we deem it necessary to bear this in mind throughout our study of his philosophy. Coleridge is obsessed by one problem - the salvation and defence of the Christian Faith.

We have seen that Coleridge lived in an age when Materialistic philosophy was rampant throughout the world of thought, outside the Catholic Church⁹. But if the

⁹ Even Protestant Divines have and still do admit as is, witness Dr. Marsh in his Preliminary Essay to the Aids to Reflection. (Works, vol. I. pp. 100-101); also Professor Muirhead in; Coleridge as Philosopher, Introduction, pp. 28-30.

cause of spiritual philosophy was an abandoned one in other parts of the world, then is this doubly true of Great Britain and America, where the Materialism of Locke and the Scotch School reigned supreme. It was against this enemy of spiritual cognition that Coleridge was to wage fierce and incessant war. For he saw in an intuitive place, that although Materialism might and did pretend to defend the Christian religion, or at the very least, remain indifferent to it; it was nevertheless, an undermining force - consequently it was a question of time before the human intellect revolted against this revealed absurdity. For absurdity it must be, an stark contradiction with reason; and this was exactly the relation between the Mysteries of the Christian Religion and the tenets of Materialism - stark contradiction.

He therefore threw all the weight of his attack against Materialism, and it appears quite in conformity with his state of mind to group all his philosophy around two problems so intimately connected that they might be woven into one ¹⁰.

¹⁰ Coleridge, to our mind, did not establish this synthetic unity, at least it does not appear in print. Nevertheless we feel that his philosophy can be thus unified. Later on we shall treat with Dr. Caird's statement to the contrary.
Cf. op. cit. Preface, p. 16.

- 1st. The problem of human knowledge, which has its nucleus in the distinction between reason and understanding, and culminates in the establishment of the nature of man.
- 2nd. The impossibility of proving the existence of God by demonstration; consequently, the necessity of adapting the Kantian innate ideas of God, Soul, and Immortality.

In this paper we shall deal only with the first point, referring occasionally to the second when it is necessary to explain certain attitudes taken by Coleridge in relation to the first.

We affirmed a moment ago that the first step in Coleridge's progressive philosophical reaction was a flight from the gross Materialism of Locke and the Scotch philosophers. Three distinct phases seem to mark this intellectual evolution. They are not out in distinct pattern in his works, but from the date of publication of his works we can gather, at least approximately, his state of mind at that particular period. Moreover we have been able to gather from a certain number of his letters facts which have helped us to put a logical sequence to this evolution in his thought. Since however, the division is somewhat arbitrary, we shall always proceed by stating what is absolutely certain, and in second place only, shall

we put down what is matter for conjecture.

§ 2. The rejection of Hartley.

It is impossible to state with absolute accuracy at what time Coleridge perceived the inconsistency of the Hartlean theory of Association with his doctrines on natural and revealed religion, but abandon Hartley's School he did, and that between September 1796 and May 1798 ¹¹. Indeed it seems evident that Berkeley (after whom he named his second son) had supplanted Hartley in his esteem. Why Berkeley had become his favourite is much disputed among Coleridge's biographers. The difficulty arises from this, that to abandon Hartley's theory of Association and adopt Berkeley's seems a retrogression rather than a progression, and one so evident that Coleridge could not help seeing it. Dr. Muirhead presents a plausible solution: "The difficulty vanishes if we remember the difference between the earlier empirical Berkeley to whom "esse" is "percipi" and the later Platonic to whom "esse" is "concupi", and the discovery of this difference was itself one of the important steps in Coleridge's philosophical development" ¹².

¹¹ Muirhead, op. cit. ch.1, Berkeley and Spinoza, pp.45-46. Cf. Letters XXIII, XXV. Potter, 559, 562

¹² Ibid. p. 46.

If it be true however, that at this early stage Coleridge had already abandoned the Associationist theory, we have no proof that the arguments which he puts forth against this doctrine in the *Biographia* were so clearly and definitely formulated in his mind ¹³. This argument is contained in a refutation of the theory of Association as advanced by Sir James Cockintosh, which is summarily that of Hartley, Locke, Hobbes and to a great extent at least, of Berkeley.

It is certain that at the time when these chapters of the *Biographia* were written, Coleridge had already seen the fallacy, at least in part, of the idealistic doctrine of identity which we shall present later, but even if this were not the case, the refutation in question could have been well defined in his mind, for it treats with another aspect of the question of knowledge, with a more elementary phase, namely; that of sense perception alone. The Coleridgean contention may be reduced to this: that the Associationist theory is not a definite answer to the problem for it presupposes as associating, ideas of

¹³ To solve the question definitely it would be necessary to know at what date Coleridge read the works of Aristotle and Saint Thomas. As a matter of fact, the refutation advanced against the Associationist theory in the *Biographia* is certainly identical with that presented by the *Schoolmen for Aves*. We would not go as far as Dr. Muirhead, however, and state that, "it would be a mistake to attribute to this overly cried the devastating criticism of Hartley which we have in chapters V-VII of *Biog. Lit.*" (op. cit. *Philosophical Development*,

which association is to be the origin and cause.

To the perplexing puzzle that the human nature, as a principle and fount of cognition, presents to the philosopher and psychologist, two solutions were offered, one assigning to our cognitions an exclusively internal cause—Idealism; another, in the opposite extreme, championing the cause of an exclusively external agency—Materialism, and that, under a very specific form, the Law of Association, as advanced by Sir James Mackintosh, claiming as its founder Hobbes, while to the great Hartley evolved the honor of having perfected the system.

It is not our intention to go into the historical study of this doctrine with Coleridge. The entire fifth chapter of the *Biographia*, in which this historical aperçu is offered, can be summarized quite easily. First of all, Coleridge denies the contention that the system had its origin with Hobbes. On the contrary, it is from Descartes that Hobbes would have acquired the doctrine.¹⁴

p. 46, note 2.), we would rather admit that the point must remain unknown, without affirming one way or the other. Cf. Letter XLV, Potter 588-90.

¹⁴ Works 3, 209-210. Whether or not this be true is of no importance to us. However it seems that Coleridge erred in assigning this doctrine to Descartes in *De Methodo*. The American editor has a note which favours our opinion.

Our author then goes on to state that Descartes showed how generic images (abstract ideas) are formed by a mechanical association of representations in the senses, stored up in the memory, which association is due to the interdependence of the matter in which they are impressed. But, proceeds Coleridge, even Descartes, was not the first to formulate the law of Association in a philosophical language. Vives, and ultimately Aristotle, had given the law its "fullest and most perfect enunciation" ¹⁵. Coleridge then states briefly the fundamentals of Association according to the Stagyrte as: 1) connection in time, 2) vicinity in space, 3) dependence in cause and effect, 4) likeness, 5) contrast ¹⁶.

In the subsequent chapter, Coleridge shows the fallacy of the Hartlean theory, basing his refutation entirely on the doctrine handed down by Aristotle. The mechanico-materialistic explanation would have it that all ideas are to be accounted for by the rhythmic oscillations of the brain-nerves. What constitutes the ideas themselves, is the force propagated by these oscillations, in such wise that an identical force will be the cause of different ideas ¹⁷. Consequently in this materialistic

¹⁵ Works, 3, 217.

¹⁶ Works, 3, 220-221.

¹⁷ Works, 3, 218, 222-231.

version of the origin and nature of ideas, it is necessary to exclude all possibility of spiritual perception, or immaterial representation of material reality.

This is precisely the point to which Coleridge takes objection, for if the human mind is capable of no other intellectual operation, than that of having objects of perception forced upon itself from without, in an entirely haphazard fashion, independent of any internal principle which is capable of considering whatsoever it wishes, of concentrating the attention on thoughts relative to any subject within the range of its cognition, then, it is utterly foolish to speak of a will, as spiritual intellect in man, to mention the name of God, for all these supposed realities have their only existence in the material sounds that form their names and the perfections we ascribe to them ¹⁸. Coleridge however, does not tax Hartley with the errors contained in these conclusions. On the contrary, he exonerates the "excellent and pious Hartley" from all blame, for Hartley did not urge his principles to their logical conclusions. The point which Coleridge is out to make is all the more patent. He wishes to show how this materialistic philosophy, while pretending to defend the Christian Economy, if applied logically, will effect its very destruction.

¹⁸ Works, 3, 232-234. In fact, in this hypothesis, man would not really act, but be acted upon.

To all this we may add that Coleridge also rejected as insufficient, the Dualism of Descartes, The Hylozoism of Spinoza and Leibnitz, and in general all systems of associationism or isolationism of subject knowing, and object know. The answer is to be found in a "hypostasis" of the two. How this is realized, we shall see immediately ¹⁹.

§ 3. The doctrine of Identity.

This rejection of Materialism in its grossest and most patent form left Coleridge empty-handed. His mind was much too penetrating, and his intellectual curiosity too keen to be content with a negative position. He was in quest of a system enabling him to establish a link between his natural reason and his Faith, so for want of better, he turned to Shelling and his doctrine of Identity. This is the second step.

With regard to this doctrine as adopted by Coleridge many questions arise. Some however are not only beyond the scope of our work, but absolutely irrelevant to it. Others, on the contrary, would be of great use, but their solution is impossible with the materials at hand. Let us illustrate our meaning.

¹⁹ Works, 3, 239-246.

Whence did Coleridge derive his theory of Identity? Did he assimilate it from the writings of Schelling and Spinoza or Fichte, or was it the product of his own mind? Did Coleridge arrive at this doctrine altogether independently? If not did he merely copy it from another, or finally, did he really assimilate it as one takes his own the good he finds elsewhere?

We think that the first question must receive a negative answer. Coleridge himself in fact does not claim an absolute independence from his fellow Idealists, and it seems hardly probable that such would be the case. Nor does it follow that the accusation of plagiarism launched by certain of his biographers is true. Indeed we are inclined to disagree with this accusation, which as a matter of fact has lost most of its weight since the defence made by Sarah Coleridge has been published ²⁰. Whatever the case be, the outcome is indifferent to us. We do not care how Coleridge came about his matter, we are merely studying the opinions that he launched for the first time before the English-speaking world, to see what their intrinsic value is.

For our purpose then, we shall state with Coleridge that he was influenced in some small measure by this school

²⁰ Cf. Introduction to the Biographia Literaria, by Sarah Coleridge, works, 3.

of Idealists, at least in as much as he found a confirmation and further development of doctrines which he had elaborated and conceived in an elementary form, in his own intellect ²¹.

In speaking of the influence exercised by Idealism, as far as it accepts and propounds the theory of Identity, a word must be said of Coleridge's Pantheism. He admits having accepted for a time any of Spinoza's views even on subjects of Moral and Religion, and he professed for a long time considerable admiration for Schelling ²². However, as early as 1825 he rejects the "(substantia una et unica) of Spinoza, of which all phenomena, all particular and individual things, lives, mines, thoughts, and actions are but modifications" ²³. On account of this open denial of adherence to Spinoza's pantheism, critics have claimed

²¹ This is the influence (at least as a minimum), which Coleridge himself admits having received from Schelling. It is taken from the Biog. Lit.: "It would be a mere act of justice to myself, were I to warn my readers, that an identity of thought, or even similarity of phrase, will not be at all times a certain proof that the passage has been borrowed from Schelling, or that the conceptions were originally learned from him. Many of the most striking resemblances, indeed, all the main and fundamental ideas, were born and matured in my mind before I had ever seen a page of the German philosopher". Reproduced by Nelson Coleridge in preface to Table Talk. (Works, 6, p. 248.). Cf. Works, 3, 263.

²² Cf. Introductory Essay, Works, 1, p. 21. Also Muirhead, op. cit. p. 47.

²³ Aids to Reflection, Works, 1, p. 211.

that Coleridge had abandoned all Pantheism, and have gone so far as to propose his philosophy as the best defence of the Christian doctrine put forth in English ²⁴.

Unfortunately we are unable to agree with this assertion; on the contrary we believe that Coleridge was the advocate of Pantheism in a much more subtle form, consciously or unconsciously. The whole argument centers around the doctrine of Identity of subject and object. In adhering to this theory, Coleridge made himself the protagonist of Pantheism in its most subtle form; we refer to spiritual Pantheism. The doctrine is found in several of his works. Let us examine briefly the argument advanced in the *Bio-graphia*. It runs as follows:

"Truth is correlative to being and consequently, knowledge without a corresponding reality is no knowledge. Now knowledge is either conditional or absolute.

²⁴ This is the case with Professor Shedd. He states in his *Introductory Essay*:
 "And in the first place, we think this author to be recommended and confided in, as the foremost and ablest English opponent to Pantheism. We do not speak of formal opposition to this, the most powerful and successful of all systems of false philosophy, for Coleridge has left on record no professed and finished refutation of Spinoza or Schelling, but we allude to the whole plan and structure of the philosophy which he finally adopted and defended, as in its own nature the most effectual preventive of the adoption of Pantheism, and the best positive remedy for it when adopted, to be found out of that country which has furnished both, the most virulent bane, and the most powerful antidote." (*Works*, I, p. 17). Later we shall give the rest of this quotation when we deal more specifically with the arguments advanced by the followers of the English philosopher. For the moment it suffices to have presented their contention.

But since conditional knowledge depends upon an absolute, it is futile to link a series of conditionals together -- we must ultimately come to an absolute or else have no knowledge. It would be as reasonable to say that an infinite series of blind men does not need a guide, because it is infinite, as to say that conditional knowledge needs no absolute because its series is infinite. No! infinite blindness does not supply the place of light. Consequently, we must come to an absolute which is, simply because it is, and communicates to all others their certainty. Now this principle must be one, for if it were two, one would refer to the other. Neither can it be an object (thing), for an object is inconceivable without a subject as antithesis (*omne perceptum percipientem supponit*). Nor can the principle be a subject as contradistinguished from an object, for: *unicuique percipienti aliquid obicitur perceptum*. Therefore it is the identity of both.

The principle is the Sum or I am, and it may be described as a perpetual self duplication of one and the same power into object and subject, which presuppose each other and can exist only as antithesis.

If a man be asked then how he knows that he is, he can only answer: *sum quia sum... sum quia Deus est*, or still more philosophically, *sum quia in Deo sum*" 25.

25 Works 3, 342-345; cf. *ibid.*, 336-340.

He then goes on to show how the principle of "co-
gnoscendi et essendi" is the will and the object of trans-
cendental philosophy alone, while the limit of natural phi-
losophy is the objective field (as far as it is exclusively
objective).

"The result of both", he adds, "would be the principle of
a total and individual philosophy.... In other words phi-
losophy would pass into religion, and religion become in-
clusive of philosophy. We begin with the 'I know myself',
in order to end with the absolute 'I am'. We proceed
from the self, in order to lose and find all self in
God" ²⁶.

It is useless to carry our inquisition further, and
all critics agree that when he wrote these lines, Coleridge
was certainly a Pantheist. Admirers of Coleridge however,
have claimed when confronted with this difficulty, that
Coleridge abandoned Pantheism the day he gave up the theory
of Identity and accepted the distinction between reason and
understanding ²⁷. Without anticipating on this final phase
of the evolution of his theory of cognition, we shall merely
state that although Coleridge certainly did abandon the sys-
tem of Identity, and perhaps for that matter, deliberately

²⁶ Works³ 348.

²⁷ Precisely the contention advanced by Shedd. Introductory
Essay, Works, I, 21.

renounced all affiliation to Spinoza, he never in our opinion, succeeded in freeing himself from the intricate meshes of Pantheism; and what is more, his system of thought contains the very elements which lead to it.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING AND REASON.

The last step in this climb from Materialism, was indeed, to free him from the snares of Materialistic Pantheism, this we do grant, although at the time Coleridge himself may well have been unaware of it. We refer to his assumption of the doctrine of a specific difference between the "intellectus et ratio". The moment of this point in his philosophy may be gathered from these words: "Until you have mastered the fundamental difference, in kind, between the reason and the understanding as faculties of the human mind, you cannot escape a thousand difficulties in philosophy. It is pre-eminently the *Gradus ad Philosophiam*" 28,

²⁸ Table Talk, dated May 14, 1830. Works, v, 313.

For Coleridge however, and those of his school, this problem is intimately connected with another, or rather with two, namely: - the distinction between Nature and Spirit, and the nature or constituent elements of Ideas. Let us examine these questions separately. They merit consideration, for, as he himself says, they are the corner-stone of his philosophical edifice.

Before beginning the exposition proper, we would ask the reader to be attentive, and especially patient. We are entering on new ground, and we must proceed slowly. Especially to the student of Scholastic Philosophy, the entire procedure appears as a hodge-podge, an undigested mass of scattered ideas, far-fetched, often times even fantastic. This cannot be helped, for although we have coordinated the matter into as logical a whole as possible, after gleaning it here and there in Coleridge's works, we have been forced to maintain his terminology, and frequently to reproduce the texts verbatim, in order to avoid a misrepresentation of his precise meaning, which unfortunately is not always clear.

§ I. Nature and Spirit of Natural and Spiritual.

a- Purpose.

This is outlined by Coleridge himself in his *Aids to Reflection*, in the Aphorisms on Spiritual Reli-

gion Indeed. In the "Reflections Introductory to Aphorism X (On Original Sin)", he says:- "I entreat the intelligent Reader, who has taken me as his temporary guide on the straight, but yet, from the number of cross roads, difficult way of religious inquiry, to halt a moment and consider the main points which, in this last division of my work, have been already offered for his reflection. I have attempted, then, to fix the proper meaning of the words, Nature and Spirit, the one being the antithesis to the other...

These views of the Spirit and the Will as spiritual, form the ground-work of my scheme" 29.

From this passage it is quite clear that the establishment of a distinction between Nature and Spirit is a fundamental point in the philosophical line of argumentation for Coleridge. Indeed, were this link to fall out of his chain, the ends would be of little use. Let us therefore consider attentively what is Nature and what is Spirit.

b- Definition of Nature.

In an extremely general sense, Coleridge has defined Nature as, whatever is not Spirit, and conversely, implying of course, that all things, beings, to be more precise, can be classified in these two categories just

29 Works, 1, 263-264.

as if one were to say that all beings are either white or else they are not white. The disjunction is complete yet the classification is not very incriminating because the second term, "not white", implies no limitations other than the boundaries imposed by the word "white". The point becomes more pertinent when the inquiry is pushed a little further.

Nature, again, is whatever is included in the "mechanism of cause and effect" ³⁰, and consequently is not independent in its origin or in its sequence. To alter the formula, in the realm of Nature, of the Natural, there is but one interminable chain of causes and effects in strict relationship to one another. But, argues Coleridge, "no natural thing or act can be called originant, or be truly said to have an origin in any other". (of the same order, i.e. Natural) ³¹. -- The reason? Because in the causal chain of Nature, the causes do not really exercise a causative influence, but rather serve as occasions, antecedents, or again conductors of causative action.

It logically follows from this, that the complex reality which we call Nature is a force "subject to the law of continuity (lex continui; nam in natura non datur

³⁰ Works, I, 154.

³¹ Ibid., 274.

saltus)", which law our understanding (the word is all-important in the Coleridgean scheme) on account of its make-up cannot conceive nor formulate in relationships other than that of cause and effect. This representation of reality in the mental framework of cause and effect has not, nevertheless, objective correspondence in external reality, but is merely the creation of our mental faculties which of necessity must perceive objects presented to them through the forms of cause and effect and in the categories of space and time.

Nature then, is the sum of that which is represented and representable in the "forms of space and time, and subjected to the relations of cause and effect; and the cause and existence of which, therefore, is to be perpetually sought for in something antecedent. The word itself expresses this in the strongest manner possible: Natura, that which is about to be born, that which is always becoming" ³², hence the idea of change, of continuity, and never of beginning or end; and this so much so, that "the moment we assume an origin in nature, a true beginning, an actual first -- that moment we rise above nature, and are compelled to assume a supernatural power (Gen. 1, 1.)" ³³.

³² Works, I, 263.

³³ *ibid.*, 272-273.

To sum up we would define Nature as that which is representable in our understanding in the trappings of space and time, in function of cause or effect, and holding of necessity an intermediate position in the causal chain.

c- Definition of Spirit.

Accepting the method of exclusion, we can state with Coleridge that Spirit in the "antithesis" of Nature and everything it comprehends. Consequently, whatever cannot be conceived in the forms of space and time, whatever contains in itself the principle of its own origin, or is capable of originating its own actions: this is Spirit!

The Spirit, Spiritual, Supernatural, is to be found (if we may use the expression), at both ends of the chain called Nature. Indeed, the latter finds its principle and its culmination in the former, just as God is the Alpha and Omega of the entire Creation. If we cannot fathom the depths of this abyss called Spirit, there is no need for astonishment; on the contrary, to attempt to measure its profundity by means of the laws of Nature would be an absurdity, for it would be judging the Spirit by the laws and maxims of Matter, the Supersensuous, by the sensuous. Nor does our incapacity provide a motive for rejecting the Spiritual and its values when the voice of our conscience and light of our reason testify to its existence ³⁴.

³⁴ Works, 272-274 (in note).

d. The Distinction between Nature and Spirit.

From the definitions given above, the reader will have no difficulty in perceiving, not only the fact, but the nature of the distinction established by Coleridge between Nature and Spirit; nor will it be less easy to observe that the two can never become identical in the order of reality by an increase of one and a diminution of the other. It is not a case of differing more or less in the same domain, not a question of disparity of degree (as Thomists would say), but in kind (specific). In fact, there is no doubt that the "Spiritual" as defined, pertains in no manner whatsoever to the "Natural", but is, as he designates it himself, "Super-Natural".

Even the basis of his argumentation demands that the conclusion establish either a specific divergence or none at all, for, although he does not formulate it in so many words, it is evident that he is ratiocinating from the axioms, "omne agens agit secundum naturam propriam", and this other, "agere sequitur esse".

It is little wonder then, that critics saw in this "substantial distinction" ~~distinction~~, an impregnable rock on which all Materialistic pantheism must break itself-- for surely the channel dredged by Coleridge between Nature and Spirit, Matter and Mind, Mechanism and Will, can never

be bridged ³⁵.

In order to assure a better understanding of this capital point of the Coleridgean philosophy, we feel justified in reproducing at length a note affixed to the "Reflections Introductory to Aphorism X" of the Aids to Reflection.

"It has in its consequences proved no trifling evil to the Christian world, that Aristotle's definitions of Nature are all grounded on the petty and rather rhetorical than philosophical antithesis of nature to art - a conception inadequate to the demands even of his philosophy. Hence in the progress of his reasoning, he confounds the Natura naturata (that is, the sum total of the facts and phenomena of the senses) with a hypothetical natura naturans, a Goddess Nature, that has no better claim to a place in any sober system of natural philosophy than the Goddess Multitudo; yet to which Aristotle not rarely gives the name and attributes of the Supreme Being. The result was, that the idea of God thus identified with this hypothetical nature becomes itself but an hypothesis, or at best but a precarious inference from the incommensurate premisses and on disputable principles: while in other passages, God is confounded (and everywhere in Aristotle's genuine works), included in the universe: which most grievous error it is

³⁵ View put forward by Dr. Shedd in the Introductory Essay. Works, I, 16-17. Cf. Muirhead, Coleridge as Philosopher, p. 118.

the great and characteristic merit of Plato to have avoided and denounced" 36.

The import of this passage is tremendous, and its veritable weight will become more manifest when we enter upon the possibility of proving the existence of God by demonstration. For the moment, let us call to attention a point which we made a few moments ago, in order to enlighten its meaning. We stated that the gap between Nature and Spirit could not be filled by running the material of one into the other, because the two are of a different nature, they belong to different spheres; in other words, the distinction between the two is one of kind and not of degree. Moreover, since Nature is that which can be represented only in the forms of time and space, and Spirit is that which can never be represented in these same forms, it follows necessarily that the knowledge gathered from Nature can never lead to a similar knowledge of the Spirit. It would be as ridiculous as saying that by looking at a barrel of apples long enough we would be driven to see Angels. For it is with our Understanding that we see the phenomena of Nature, and the reason why we can see them, is because they are tied down to categories of space and time; to which our Understanding is limited. Now Spirit of its nature cannot be reprodu-

³⁶ Works, I, 263-264 (in note).

ed in these categories, consequently a priori, it is silly to attempt its capture with this faculty and its instruments. But this point will be developed more thoroughly when we deal with the distinction between Understanding and Reason. The same problem should arise in the refutation of the proofs of the existence of God by demonstration from cause to effect, i.e. from Nature.

e- The Theory of Evolution.

In all our research work, at least that done firsthand in Coleridge's writings, we encountered nothing that expresses explicitly our Author's opinion on the subject of Evolution. Doctor Muirhead however, in his excellent book consecrates the fourth section of his chapter on the Philosophy of Nature to this subject. He had in hand when preparing his volume, manuscripts which we are unable to procure. From these he has quoted two or three texts in which Coleridge's opinion (in as much as one was formed in his mind) on the subject is expressed. From these texts Dr. Muirhead would argue that nothing in Coleridge's reasoning implies that he would have treated the problem of Evolution with contempt, but would have considered the problem without prejudice as one treats any reasonable hypothesis. In order to facilitate a treatment of the point at issue, we take the liberty of reproducing textually the citation

despite its considerable length.

"And here once for all, I beg leave to remark that I attach neither belief nor respect to the Theory, which supposes the human Race to have been gradually perfecting itself from the darkest Savagery, or still more boldly tracing us back the bestial as to our Larva, contemplates Man as the last metamorphosis, the gay Image, of some lucky species of Ape or Baboon. Of the two hypotheses I should, indeed, greatly prefer the Lucretian of the Fertility of our Mother Earth, some score thousand years ago, when the venerable Elder was yet in her Teens, and her human Litter sucked the milk then oozing from the countless Breasts of warm and genial Mud. For between an hypothetical ... or single Incident or Event in a state and during an epoch if the Planet presumed in all respects different from its present condition, and the laws of Nature appropriate to the same... anterior of necessity to all actual experience, and an assertion of a universal process of Nature now existing (since there is the same reason for asserting the progression of every other race of animal from some lower species as of the human race) in contradiction to all experience, I can have no hesitation in preferring the former, that, for which Nothing can be said, to that against which Everything can be said. The History I find in my Bible is in perfect coincidence with the opinions which I should form

on Grounds of Experience and Common Sense. But our belief that Man first appeared with all his faculties perfect and in full growth, the anticipation exercised by virtue of the supernatural act of Creation, in nowise contravenes or weakens the assertion that these faculties... in each succeeding Individual, born according to nature, must be preceded by a process of growth, and consequently a state of involution or latency, correspondent to each successive moment of Development. A rule abstracted from uniform Results, or the Facet of a sum put by the Master's indulgence at the head of the sum to be worked, may not only render the Boy's Task shorter, but without such assistance he might never have mastered it or attained the experience, from which the Rule might (have been derived ?)." And again: "When experience

is possible and in points that are the fit subjects of experience, the absence of experimental proof is tantamount to an experimental proof to the contrary. Ex. gr. If a man should seriously assure me that he had in the course of his Travels seen a Tree, that produced live Barnacles as its fruit, I could not in strict logic declare it contrary to all experience; for he would be entitled to reply, "No! for I believe it on my own." But if a Theorist should assert such a fact only because in his opinion it would be a rational account of the present parentage and existence of Barnacles, in that case I should have a right to charac-

terise his conjecture as against all experience" ³⁷.

How Dr. Muirhead could arrive at his conclusion merely from the Statement advanced by Coleridge in these texts is beyond our ken. In fact, his conclusion does not seem to be drawn from the above statements. It is based much more on some (to our mind) far-fetched external evidence of negligible weight. Because Coleridge sympathised with some of Giordano Bruno's views and "found it possible to reconcile Bruno's speculations as to the birth of man, which were not less heretical than Darwin's, with the divine origin of the whole choir of Heaven and the furniture of the Earth:..... and to attribute to him" a Principle, a Spirit, and eloquence of Piety and Pure Morality not surpassed by Fénelon "- suggests that he would have had the insight to see the distinction between a biological account of the process in time, and the inner Law or Idea of the Universe as a Spiritual Whole, of which the process is only the outward manifestation, and which is the proper subject of a philosophy of Nature" ³⁸.

It is undeniably true that Coleridge admired Bruno, and we have already referred to two of the latter's works with which Coleridge was familiar. It is with a certain

³⁷ Muirhead, op. cit. 132-134. British Museum MS. Egerton 2801.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 134-135.

note of ironical sadness that he remarks how the Philosopher of Nola was burnt as an atheist by the 'idolators of Rome' ³⁹. The reason why we prefer to think that Coleridge would not admit a theory of Evolution, however, even if his master the "Nolan" maintained one is this: Coleridge according to all reliable critics was the propounder of a system of thought which excluded the possibility of admitting Materialistic Pantheism ⁴⁰. Now Giordano Bruno most certainly was a Materialistic Pantheist. According to the latter, the world is merely an evolution of the great monad which is God, and this to such an extent that God and the world are really one. The basis of this doctrine is the Copernican theory which for Bruno became a fixed idea, and his very determined purpose was to establish a scientific unity or continuity in the phenomena of the Universe. In establishing this link however, he identified as one substance, matter and spirit, body and soul. He went as far as to claim that the Holy Ghost was the soul of the world ⁴¹.

Now it seems to us quite evident that this philosophy is in direct contradiction with that of Coleridge, at least on the fundamental point of the distinction between Nature

³⁹ Biog. Lit., Works, 3, 249.

⁴⁰ We lay great stress on the word Materialistic Pantheism. Pantheism alone will not do.

⁴¹ Cf. Ency. Brit. and Catholic Ency. article Giordano Bruno.

(which is identical to what Giordano Bruno calls matter, body, phenomena), and Spirit (which for Bruno is soul and spirit). For with Bruno there is no such distinction possible, there is no difference in kind, but only one of degree, depending on how far the reality in question is from its source, the Great Monad from which all evolve, God.

We admit that Coleridge was taken in by the idea of continuity in the order of Nature, and he must have admired Bruno for the center of unity which he provided for his Philosophy of Nature, but we fail to see how Coleridge could have admitted any evolution of man from inferior species in time, unless we are ready to admit that Coleridge would have deliberately contradicted himself. This must never be supposed, but proved definitely. Nor does Dr. Muirhead's distinction between a 'biological account of the process in time, and the inner Law or Idea of the Universe as a Spiritual Whole', render the problem any easier of solution. It is not a controversy to be settled by biological arguments, or again 'experimental evidence', it is a point to be made, primarily, by sound metaphysics. There is place for a biological discussion which we may admit (although the hypothesis has never been proved with any amount of certitude, and it remains at the very best a hypothesis), but it must remain within the limits assigned to it by reason, that is, to evolution between beings of

the same species, and not jump from one order to the other, such as would be the case of the evolution of the human soul from a brute ⁴².

Our conclusion would then be that Coleridge never advanced arguments in favour of Evolutionist theories, and we have no reasons to say that he would have favoured Darwinism had it been in vogue in his day ⁴³. On the contrary we find very plainly stated in all of his works a clear and precise distinction between Nature and Spirit which precludes all possibility of an evolution of the one to the other ⁴⁴.

⁴² With regard to this entire problem we would refer to a treatment of the theory of evolution from a scientific point of view by A.W. McCann in "God or Gorilla". He seems to show quite conclusively that the "evidence of the Origin of Species" as Huxley calls it, does not amount to very much. As a matter of fact he rejects the entire scientific proof. Cf. chapter IX, The Swan Song of Darwinism, 116-123.

⁴³ We say if it had been in vogue. It was, but not among the class of people who still called themselves Christians and retained the Supernatural truths contained in Holy Writ. During the period in question there was a wave of German Liberalism and Modernism in England.

⁴⁴ Coleridge has a lovely text in close relation to the subject of the origin of man, which to our mind manifests quite clearly that he was not sympathetic to Evolutionist doctrine.

"Life is one universal soul, which by virtue of the enlivening Breath, and the informing Word, all organized bodies have in common, each after its kind. This, therefore, all animals possess, and man as an animal. But, in addition to this, God transfused into man a higher gift, and specially imbreated; - even a living (that is, self-subsisting) soul, a soul having its life in itself". Introductory Aphorisms, Aphor. IX, Works, I, 119).

§ 2. The Nature of Ideas.

a- Introduction.

We have already seen that Coleridge's first step on the road of Philosophy as regards his query into the mystery of the organism of human cognition, was taken in the direction of Sensism. But he did not remain there long, for he soon realized that the solution offered by the disciples of Locke, Hartley and the Materialist School in general was no solution at all. Indeed he saw that rather than explain the possibility of real intellectual cognition for man (in accordance with his nature), and analyse its intimate operation, it led to a disastrous impasse, namely: that man no more than brutes, possesses intellectual knowledge.

How Coleridge turned to more capable minds to seek the necessary light, we stated summarily. We must now go into the problem thoroughly in order to discover the factors encountered by Coleridge in the genesis of human cognition as he understood it, and the ordination and functioning of the intellectual cognitive apparatus. The question at issue is that revived by the philosophers of the Critical School since the time of Descartes who provided the psychological bent to the scientific angle of philosophy. The origin of this new phase in the metaphysical field finds its upshoot in the Nominalist upheaval and in the sub-

sequent Idealism and Subjectivism.

From Descartes on, the philosophical preoccupation, the Aristotelico-Thomistic excepted, is exclusively towards the origin, conditions, and validity of our knowledge. The all-important queries are: "Can I know? What can I know? What is it to know that I know?". And again: "How do I know? How do I know that I know?". Coleridge, being outside the fold of Aristotelico-Thomistic thought, launched into the inquiry, with an attitude of partial skepticism. But his point of view is not without a certain vantage of relative importance. By his Religious Creed, he holds as irrefutably established, that man is endowed with a spiritual soul destined to an Immortal hereafter. Now this soul is equipped with faculties of the same nature, that is, superior to those of brute animals -- the Will and the Reason. By these faculties, man, Image of his Creator, communes with the Divinity in a twofold activity: knowledge of the Spiritual and the Supreme Spirit, and in consequence, he is principle of his own tendency in the Spiritual Orbit.

But the reach of the human intellect is not confined to these limits. For Coleridge, the existence of spiritual and sensuous knowledge was never at stake. He accepted this knowledge as a fact, and one that demands a rational explanation. There must be a special mechanism with a very specific mode of operation to account for man's

cognition. The inquest then revolves round the problem of the nature and validity of human cognition. The method of procedure is logical, namely, to study the nature of the cause by the nature of the effect, according to the axiom of the Schoolmen, that the former must be at least proportionate to the latter. It is precisely this feature of the Critical Philosophy that we wish to investigate with Coleridge. We do not think it necessary to bring to the fore once again his philosophical meanderings with Locke and Hartley, or on the other hand, with Berkeley, Schelling and Spinoza. Let us rather enter immediately into his treatment of the problem along the lines of Kant and, from a certain angle, Hegel.

b- The Object of our Cognition.

That this be the logical point of departure is patent to anyone in the least way familiar with the methods of philosophical inquiry. In compliance with this fundamental law of method, Coleridge divided the total sum of exstant beings, Uncreated and created, into two classes tabulated Nature and Spirit. The principle of his division is in major part, one of psychological order. That is, it finds the motive of its selection in the purpose which Coleridge has in view, namely, of solving the problem of human knowledge, which is of psychological issue. This reason alone would suffice to

account for his starting point, but there is another which seems to bear more weight. The Universe is no more to us than what we know it to be. It may "de facto" and "in se", be a great deal different, possess many qualities, be populated by many beings of which we are ignorant; all this is hypothetical -- what is, is what we know to be.

Now since all things are not known in the same manner, nor by means of the same faculties, Coleridge divided the beings into two distinct categories, or worlds, to speak more concretely. One pertaining to "Nature" which we contact through the senses, in relation to cause and effect, and represent in the forms of space and time; another, the world of "Spirit" which we cannot perceive with our senses, nor represent in the forms of space and time and which bears no relationship to cause and effect.

This world of "Nature" then, is represented (presented would be more consistent with Coleridgean terminology) by and through the senses, external and internal. It is primarily the object of animal perception, and it is present in man, in the same manner, and in as much as, he is an animal. Consequently, by this knowledge of this world of "phenomena" man is in no wise superior to the brute ⁴⁵. The reason is very simple. The faculty by which knowledge of

⁴⁵ Cf. *infra*. The distinction between Understanding and Reason.

the Natural (phenomenon world) is acquired, is the Understanding, which faculty man and brute have in common due to their convening in a common genus, animal. Now this similarity will be greater or less, according to the perfection with which they realise the plenitude of animal-being. What is of greater interest to us for the moment however, is not precisely this communion between man and the brute, due to a common faculty of sense perception, but the mechanism of that faculty.

How does our knowledge come to us through the senses? There is, says Coleridge, a twofold element involved in the process of acquiring this sensuous knowledge, one external, and one internal. The scruple is in assigning to each of these factors its proper function. May we be permitted to remark that it was not without considerable difficulty that we built up this logical whole presenting the Coleridgean view on the acquisition of knowledge through sense perception, for in his own works, the doctrine is not unified, but is scattered and without any tangible link. Consequently we shall quote quite freely, often times to a considerable length, in order to allow the reader to judge for himself, whether or not our interpretation of the Author's words is correct.

c- The "Presuppositions".

Coleridge does not begin his criterioloical inquest after the manner of the absolute Skeptics. On the contrary, there are many points taken for granted (praesupposita, consequently the title of this paragraph) at the very outset. In fact it seems that for Coleridge there is no point of departure possible other than this "aprioristic" one. A brief enumeration of these presuppositions will consequently not be vain.

Coleridge, as we have stated, admits not only the possibility of human knowledge but the fact, and he never questions the validity of this knowledge. He admired the amount of science, speculative and practical, accumulated by the metaphysicians and scientists of all times, and to question the wealth of this treasure of knowledge was very remote from his mind. He does not tax all existing systems of metaphysics with debauchery as Kant had done, but his clarion-call, his "reveille", sounds to England especially, and his plea is in favour of a return to the old beaten paths of true speculative science. His mission is not conceived as that of an innovator, of a universal liberator or redeemer, but rather of an evangelist, desirous of announcing to the English people the happy tidings of an ex-tant philosophy capable of liberating them from the shackles

of Materialism. This view is well expressed in the Author's preface to the Aids to Reflection:

" But likewise it is and long has been, my conviction, that in no age since the first dawning of science and philosophy in this island have the truths, interests, and studies which especially belong to the reason, contemplative or practical, sunk into such utter neglect, not to say contempt, as during the last century. It is therefore one main object of this volume to establish the position, that whoever transfers to the understanding the primacy due to reason, loses the one and spoils the other
Reader!- You have been bred in a land abounding with men, able in arts, learning, and knowledges manifold, this man in one, this in another, few in many, none in all" ⁴⁶.

Enough then for Coleridge's general point of departure. Let us now consider another which we dare call the corner-stone of the Coleridgean intellectual edifice. It is to be found in the Moral and Religious Aphorisms and mentioned or recalled several times in his Works.

" The position of the Aristoteleans, nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu, on which Locke's Essay is grounded, is irrefragable: Locke erred only in taking half the

⁴⁶ Works, I, 115-116.

truth for a whole truth. Conception is consequent on perception. What we cannot imagine we cannot in the proper sense of the word conceive" 47.

It is curious to note that Coleridge did not accept this Aristotelean principle, relative to the acquisition of knowledge in the sense intended by its formulator. On the contrary, the use he makes of the axiom thwarts the very purpose for which Aristotle intended it. The truth is that Coleridge gives to this Aristotelean principle a Leibnitsean or Kantian tinge which perverts it. He makes an exception to the universality of the principle, which exception is paramount to an addition. It may be worded thus: There is nothing in the intellect which has not come through the senses, excepting certain forms (e.g. of space and time) which the understanding supplies of itself 48.

47 Works, I, 154.

48 In dealing with the third function of the Understanding, generalization we have:

"It is obvious, that the third function includes the act of comparing one object with another. The act of comparing supposes in the comparing faculty certain inherent forms, that is, modes of reflecting not referable to the object reflected on, but predetermined by the constitution and mechanism of the understanding itself. And under some one or other of these forms, the resemblances and differences must be subsumed in order to be conceivable, and a fortiori therefore in order to be comparable.

Were it not so, how could the first comparison have been possible? It would involve the absurdity of measuring a thing by itself. But if we think on some one thing, the length of our own foot, or of

In other words, whereas spiritual cognition, for Aristotle, is had by the abstracting of a spiritual immaterial form from material determinations and individual characteristics; by a sort of subtraction of qualities from a whole which is material in its constitution, in order to have as a remainder the same being devoid of its material trappings and clothed only in spiritual garb: for Coleridge, the same knowledge is to be had by the addition of universality by the intellect. Briefly, universality is not drawn, abstracted from individual representation present in the phantasm, but added to the sensible picture by the intellect (understanding as a faculty of the intellect in the case of man) ⁴⁹.

Now these forms which are supplied by the understanding have no corresponding reality in the exterior world. The world "perceived" and the world "conceived" constitute an antinomy for Coleridge as for Kant. It is the opposition between the 'noumenal' and 'phenomenal' worlds. But

our hand and arm from the elbow-joint, it is evident that in order to do this, we must have the conception of measure. Now these antecedent and most general conceptions are what is meant by the constituent forms of the understanding; we call them constituent because they are not acquired by the understanding, but are implied in its constitution. As rationally might a circle be said to acquire a centre and circumference, as the understanding to acquire these its inherent forms or ways of conceiving. This is what Leibnitz meant, when to the old adage of the Peripatetics, Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu-- there is nothing in the understanding not derived from the senses, or - there is nothing conceived that was not previously perceived, - he replied - praeter intellectum ipsum, except the (mis) understanding itself." (Aids to Reflex., Aphorisms on

the opposition can be solved by removing the conditions of sense from the things in themselves. Indeed, if the modifications and determinations of space and time necessarily imposed or superposed to reality by the understanding are applicable only to "phenomena", in order to determine the "noumena" we must abstract from these forms of time and space. In other words it is imperative to rise above this subjective element inherent to sensient cognition if we ever intend to settle the difficulty, apparently insurmountable, as to the nature of things ⁵⁰. Now the only possible way of doing this is by establishing the distinction between sense (and the faculty judging according to sense, the understanding), and thought (and the faculty corresponding to it which acts independently of sense, though not always in the same manner). Sense is passive, receptive, and the perception of objects exterior to it, will differ according to the subjective state of the receiver, which as we have stated, infallibly modifies the object perceived. Intelligence on the contrary is active, and its activity is manifested by the representations it creates for itself of exterior objects, external reality, independently of all

Spiritual Religion Indeed, Aphor. VIII, comment, Works, I, 247-248, in note).

⁴⁹ How close is the resemblance of this doctrine to the Kantian. of Caird, I, 164-172.

⁵⁰ Works, I, 248-250.

modifications encountered in sense perception. Consequently these representations are objective, corresponding to reality. In other words, these representations have a "noumenal" and not only a "phenomenal" value; they do not depend upon the conditions (receptive) of the knowing subject, but are the product of the reason exclusively, which reason is the same in all men ⁵¹.

So far we have seen that Coleridge admits the universal fact of human cognition, and merely wishes to bring back to light the true explanation of this knowledge. Again, knowledge begins for us by experience, sense perception, but it does not come in its entirety from or through the senses. This point is capital! To be sure, the understanding supplies an element of cognition in the inherent forms of space and time. But it must be remembered that this knowledge coordinated in the categories of space and time, does not penetrate to the "noumen" of reality, it does not reveal what lies under the surface of things, the substratum, it shows us only the "phenomenal" aspect. In a nut-shell: it puts a veil over the nature of things, so that they are hidden from view, and only their silhouette is perceived. How then do we acquire knowledge of the real nature of reality? Through the operation of another faculty, the reason.

⁵¹ Works, I, 251 in note.

But the reason is not limited to one mode of operation. It has a twofold function. First, a logical use by which, according to the principles of contradiction and identity, ideas general or abstract, are arrived at. These ideas express the common characters of sense experience; all of this process, and its output, pertaining to the order of phenomenon or Nature. Second, a real use of the reason, which consists in the formation of ideas altogether independently from sense perception. These ideas do not pre-exist in the reason, prior to all experience, but are present in the intelligence in a potential, latent form, as laws of activity of our mind ⁵².

d- The Problem.

We have with Coleridge studied an angle of the genesis of human knowledge ⁵³, and we have seen that man, by his reason, performs a twofold operation; one, in relation to the functions of the understanding, and another, altogether independent of this faculty of sense. The product in both cases however, receives the common appellation of "idea". Does the word have an identical sense in both instances, or is it limited in its proper signification to

⁵² Works, I, 484. cf. *ibid.*, 241 where this distinction between speculative and practical reason is developed at length. Here we merely mention in as much as it is necessary for our immediate purpose. We shall deal with the distinction *ex professo* later on.

⁵³ The reader may wonder why we have not treated of the

one of these effects of mental activity (and if so, to which), the other receiving that denomination only by an analogy, and that metaphorical; or again by grammatical abuse? The answer is to be had only by a study of the essence or constitutive elements of ideas.

To Coleridge, the importance of this precision is paramount. He states it thus:

"Let me by all the labours of my life have answered but one end and taught as many as have in themselves the conditions of learning, the true import and legitimate use of the term Idea and the incalculable value of Ideas (and therefore of Philosophy which is but another name for the manifestation and application of Ideas) in all departments of Knowledge and their indispensable presence in the Sciences which have a worth as well as a Value to the Naturalist no less than to the Theologian, to the Statesman no less than to the Moralist" ⁵⁴.

Several times he complains about the abuse of the word "idea", stating that this loose terminology is the cause of so much confusion of thought, and the subsequent

rôle of judgments in the Coleridgean ~~logical~~ structure. It has seemed more logical to reserve this rather complicated "apparatus" till the end of our dissertation. Consequently it will be dealt with in treating of the distinction between Understanding and Reason.

⁵⁴ MS.C, p.33, condensed. Quoted by Cairhead, Coleridge as Philosopher, ch.3, 89.

deplorable abandonings of true metaphysics. In his commentary or rather, "Notes on Waterland", in regard to "Query XVI, p.235".:-

"Let us keep to the terms we began with; lest by the changing of words we make a change of ideas, and alter the very state of the question."

he states:

"This misuse, or rather this omnium-gatherum expansion and consequent extenuation of the word, Idea and Ideas, may be regarded as a calamity inflicted by Mr. Locke on the reigns of William III., Queen Anne, and the first two Georges" ⁵⁵.

With the importance of the incupest in mind, let us come to the point, and confront the difficulty. Why does Coleridge declare the problem in view, of such moment? Why does he deem his life-work an accomplishment if he succeed in putting this one point across? Because it is fundamental to Philosophy that the nature of Ideas be clearly and ever present in one's mind. (We do not use the expressions, understood, or conceived.. they implicate the conclusion).

⁵⁵ Literary Remains, Works, V, 409. cf. Works, III, 212 in note:

"I here use the word idea in Mr. Hume's sense on account of its general currency among the English metaphysicians; though against my own judgment, for I believe that the vague use of this word has been the cause of much error and confusion."

On the other hand, the explanation of the nature of ideas presents a serious difficulty. We shall allow Coleridge to introduce it himself.

"Speak to a young Liberal, fresh from the Edinburg or Hackney or the hospitals, of free-will as implied in free-agency, he will perhaps confess with a smile that he is a necessitarian, - proceed to assure his hearer that the liberty of the will is an impossible conception, a contradiction in terms, and finish by recommending a perusal of the works of Jonathan Edwards or Dr. Crombie". And in the note he adds:

"In fact, this is one of the distinguishing characters of ideas, and marks at once the difference between an idea (a truth-power of the reason) and a conception of the understanding; namely, that the former as expressed in words, is always, and necessarily, a contradiction in terms" 56.

The same idea is expressed in the Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion Indeed, and this time the statement is accompanied with a summary explanation.

"Yea, this is the test and character of a truth so affirmed, (in the Reason; consequently an idea), that in its own proper form it is unconceivable. For to conceive is a func-

⁵⁶ Works, VI, 33. "On the Constitution of the Church and State".

tion of the understanding, which can be exercised only on subjects subordinate thereto. And yet to the forms of the understanding, all truths must be reduced, that is to be fixed as an object of reflection, and to be rendered expressible. And here we have a second test and sign of a truth so affirmed, that it can come forth out of the moulds of the understanding only in the guise of two contradictory conceptions, each of which is partially true, and the conjunction of both conceptions becomes the representative or expression (the exponent) of a truth beyond conception and inexpressible. Examples: before Abraham was, I am. "God is a circle, the centre of which is everywhere, and circumference nowhere. The soul is all in every part" ⁵⁷.

The difficulty is indeed great, at first sight it even appears insurmountable, for ideas (according to the substance of these quotations) imply an incapacity of being defined. Nevertheless, Coleridge himself insists on the fact that the nature of things (the truth, the noumenon) is to be expressed only by a notion or a definition; by a conception of the understanding; consequently the antinomy that arises between an idea and the definition of the same.

⁵⁷ Works, I, 252.

The solution of this contradiction now solicits our attention.

The total sum of Being in the universe, we have seen, is divided into two classes, Nature and Spirit. Corresponding exactly to these two worlds "ad extra" there are in man two faculties, the understanding and the reason. Now the functions of the understanding are the perception, reproduction, discernment, and combination of phenomena of Nature. It operates as follows: the first phase is one of sensation, occasioned by impressions of external objects, in the senses. Follows the embodying of these perceptions (perception is sensation referred to an object) in the forms of space and time producing an image of the phenomenon perceived. Third in order is the formation of a notion or conception by generalization or abstraction⁵⁸. Finally there is the notion of the notion already formed, this lat-

⁵⁸ Let us again remark that abstraction in the Coleridgean sense of the word differs "toto coelo" from the Scholastic. With Coleridge it means a fixing of the attention upon an object, a concentration on one feature which it has in common with other objects, from which is made the generalization or universal concept. This view is well presented in the *Aids to Reflection* in describing the mechanism of understanding: "Thus the whole process may be reduced to three acts, all depending on and supposing a previous impression on the senses: first, the appropriation of our attention; second (and in order of the continuation of the first) abstraction, or the voluntary withholding of the attention; and, third, generalization." Works, I, 247, in note.

ter is reflection ⁵⁹.

The reason, in opposition to this, is the faculty by which we know the world of Spirit, the Noumenon or essence of things, and not only their external manifestation. Moreover, in its operation the reason is essentially independent of Nature and external phenomena. It is an active, creative faculty, and it is precisely because reason produces its representations of reality by itself, and is not affected in their production by the subjective conditions of the understanding which modify reality, because of this, the knowledge acquired through the reason is objective, and it is to this latter that the term "Idea" is strictly applicable.

Hence the disparity between a notion (a conception), which is a representation of reality, altered by subjective elements in such a manner that the truth behind the screen cannot appear, and an idea which is a replica (better an identification) of the exterior reality, in the reason.

We shall now endeavour to evolve this description of ideas. We shall proceed by defining them negatively (saying what they are not), and then affirmatively (stating what they are, in as much as this is possible due to their very nature), finally we shall quote a few examples from Coleridge.

⁵⁹ Biographia Literaria, Works, III, 234, 333-334.

1 - Negatively.

The happiest way of presenting the distinction between ideas and other mediums of knowledge is hinted at by Coleridge himself in Appendix E to the Statesman's Manual, it is by supplying a glossary containing the terms at Stake and establishing their meaning. This he does, and our intention is to present the same definitions or descriptions, with this difference, that we shall present them in chart-form ⁶⁰.

Representation (Presentation is better). is most general term of speculative intell.

:a- Sensation-conscious presentation as refering to subj. exclusively.

-:

:b- Perception - The same if refers to object

: If this latter is immediate and individual--Intuition

:
: If this latter is mediate and by means of a common character--Conception.

: If conception is external and sensuous--Fact or Cognition.

-:

: If mental and free from forms of the understanding--Notion (if realized-Cognition).

Now an idea is neither+ + Sensation, nor Perception.

And consequently since these two terms include all the others,

⁶⁰ Works, I, 484.

it naturally follows that it is none of the other modes of cognition here named.

Nor is an idea a series of organised conceptions such as a theory. Granted that a theory may bear the closest resemblance to an idea of all presentations acquired through the senses, yet because it is a cognition acquired through experience, consequently phenomenal, subject to change with the mutation of the phenomena on which it is based, it cannot be an idea. But if the theory contains an idea, that is, if instead of repeating to satiety the same phenomena, the theorist puts aside all the generalisations (features common to, and involved in all the experiments) and gives the law formulated either in terms of a power (such as the law of polarity), or again in terms of mathematical symbols, he will soon have a theory which harbours a law, not only regulative, but constitutive. The example which Coleridge gives of this is the theory of electricity.

"Compare the interval with the progress made within less than a century, after the discovery of the phenomena that led immediately to the theory of electricity. That here as in many other instances, the theory was supported by insecure hypotheses; that by one theorist two heterogeneous fluids are assumed, the vitrious and the resinous; by another, a plus and a minus of the same fluid; that a

third considers it a mere modification of light; while a fourth composes the electrical aura of oxygen, hydrogen, and caloric; - this does but place the truth we have been evolving in a stronger and clearer light. For abstract from all these suppositions, or rather imaginations, that which is common to, and involved in, them all; and we shall have neither notional fluid or fluids, nor chemical compounds, nor elementary matter, - but the idea of two - opposite - forces - tending to rest by equilibrium.... These give the law..."⁶¹.

Now to understand the meaning, to grasp the full significance of this distinction between theory and idea, it is necessary to consider the positive side of the question.

2 - Positively.

To the attentive reader, the scrutiny of the chart in the preceeding section must have occasioned an impasse in our inquiry. We have stated that the Coleridgean idea is neither individual (particular), an Intuition (sensuous of course, since we were dealing with sense perception), nor general (universal or abstract), a Conception or Notion. Logically then the reader may ask himself; what can it be if it is neither particular nor universal?

⁶¹ The Friend, Second Section, Essay VII, Works, 11, 434-436.

The fact is that, for Coleridge, ideas are neither the one nor the other, or rather neither one as exclusive of the other, but they are both at the same time. Nor is this statement contradictory in his sense, albeit such a proposition is not easy to grasp. This however was to be expected from what had preceded. Nevertheless, we shall attempt an explanation.

A.- Identity of Subjective and Objective Reality.

We shall begin by saying that an idea is that which is at the same time subjectively and objectively real. This is a mere repetition of the above-stated opinion that ideas are particular-universal, the point of view accounting for the difference in the phraseology. Indeed what is present in our mind (reason) is necessarily there in a non-material state, spiritual in fact because of the very make-up of that faculty, consequently universal. Notwithstanding this universality, there is a particularity, and there needs be one if ideas are to be replicas of things as they exist in themselves. By this particularity, singularity, we do not refer to the condition of objects such as we perceive them ~~about us~~ as we go about the streets. No! We must not forget that this sensuous perception is false, more precisely, inadequate; for it does not afford us a knowledge of things as they are in themselves, but as we picture them to be. It

is not noumenal knowledge, but phenomenal. We repeat this to boredom, but we deem it necessary. The particular is precisely that principle which informs, animates, gives reality to specific beings. Ideas in their aspect of "particularity" are individualized forms.

The distinguishing trait of an idea is that it is identical to something else. In other words, there is a perfect identity between something in our reason and something outside of our reason. The similarity is so perfect in all respects that whether we consider the one or the other is perfectly indifferent. In fact however, we must consider it in one or the other. If this identical reality is considered as existing in an object, it becomes a subject, and performs the functions of a subject; it unites, coordinates, gives the essence and constitution and individuality to the object in which it is found. Considered in this respect it is called, says Coleridge, a Law. If, on the contrary, it is considered as existing in a subject, as a presentation, a duplicate, a double of an exterior reality, then, it becomes an object and possesses objective reality. It is called an Idea ⁶².

Of this correlativity of Law and Idea Coleridge provides many examples. One which is a favourite with Co-

⁶² Works, I, 219; II, 418 in note; VI, 31; V, 38.

leridge is that gleaned from the Constitution of a State.

"No nobler or clearer example than this could be given of what an idea is as contradistinguished from a conception of the understanding, correspondent to some fact or facts, *quorum notae communes concipiuntur*, - the common characters of which are taken together under one distinct exponent, hence named a conception; and conceptions are internal subjective words. Reflect on an original social contract, as an event or historical fact; and its gross improbability, not to say impossibility, will stare you in the face. But an ever originating social contract as an idea, which exists and works continually and efficaciously in the moral being of every free citizen, though in the greater number unconsciously, or with a dim or confused consciousness, - what a power it is! As the vital power compared with the mechanic; as a father compared with a mould in wax or clay, such is the power of ideas compared with the influence of conceptions and notions" ⁶³.

If laws and ideas are one and the same thing considered from a different standpoint, the question will necessarily arise; what is their interdependence? Do they always coexist? Is there any priority of time between them or only

⁶³ Notes on Hooker, Literary Remains. Works, V, 38. Cf. Church and State, VI, 32.

one of nature? We know for example, that abstract notions of a thing presuppose the thing as existing from which they can be abstracted. How then does the case stand when we deal with ideas as understood in the Coleridgean idiom?

The answer is supplied by our Author himself in several of his Works. Ideas being truth-powers of the reason, not depending upon sense perception for their origin, but spontaneously issuing from the reason, do not suppose an existing object of which they are a mere representation. Not only do they not suppose a pre-existing object, but it is precisely the contrary that occurs. Ideas, being the principle, the Law of reality must, in the order of thought, be conceived as anterior to that of which it is principle. Just as creation supposes the idea of a Creator in the order of existence ⁶⁴.

B- Idea and Law - thesis and antithesis.

This idea of dual relationship of subjective and objective identity, of anteriority and posteriority, is well expressed according to Coleridge in Greek mythology, with regard to the aetiological study of the universe. In philosophical language it would read somewhat as follows:

⁶⁴ Works, VI, 35-36. Cf. I, 151.

a- What is given as belonging to the chaos:-

1- anterior to the chaos;

"materia subjecta et lucis et tenebrarum" which contained the "prothemenon" of the thesis and antithesis.

11- the chaos;

which is a struggle between;
hyperchronia (ideai pronomoi)-- the undeveloped, unproduced, the prothesis, of which:

idea is the thesis.

law (nomos) is the antithesis.

b- The transcendant Monas and likewise individual "Enas"..

or "Theoi athanatoi, to Theion" (harmony), as distinguished from "O Theos". This is to be considered as the Pythagorean "numen numerantis", and contemplated as the identity. Now in this "Identity" there is another conflict or division into:

Thesis- (to Theion) which becomes Law (nomos).

Antithesis - which is Idea.

But what is the difference between idea and law? If there is an identity between them, what makes one what it is rather than being the other?

Coleridge answers in terms to this effect:

The "nomos" or law is essentially idea, with this difference however, that it is idea substans. It is an idea that has substantiated itself, become real, as opposed to idea, consequently " substans in substantiatio ". The first product of its energy is the thing itself: ipsa se posuit et iam facta est ens positum.

From this we must conclude that in this "schism...", the thesis becomes nomos, or law, and the antithesis becomes idea, but so that the nomos is nomos, because and only because, the idea is idea: the nomos is not idea, only because the idea has not become nomos" 65.

65 On the Prometheus of Aeschylus (paper read at the Royal Society of Literature, May 18th., 1825.). Works, IV, 355-358. We think it useful to add here an explanation of the Coleridgean use of this Hegelian finding. Coleridge exemplifies the alleged truth of the position by means of geometry.

A line is the production of a point in space. The two extremes of the line are its poles, and the point itself is represented as the mid-point, the indifference of the two poles. Graphically we have the following:

T I A

(T) Thesis

(A) Antithesis.

(I) Punctum indifference.

The secret of the whole system lies in this; that (I) can be either (T) or (A), not at the same time (for this would mean their identity) but alternatively. [We note here that there is an illogicality to which one must refer if he wishes to refute this system of opposition and resolution.].

Coleridge develops this into a Pentad in the following manner.

- | | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| | I-Prothesis (identity of act and being). | |
| 2-Thesis (being) | 4-Isothesis (indifference) | 3-Antithesis (act) |
| | 5-Synthesis (composition or equilibrium). | |
| | (Works, I, 218-9). Cf. Essay on Faith, Works V, 560 in note. | |

C. Constitutive or Regulative?

Since law and idea are correlative, one being the incarnation of the other, the question that logically follows is in virtue of what intrinsic power do ideas have the quality of realizing themselves, and how is this done effectively? This is the most intimate problem concerning ideas, touching the very core of the question. The problem presents itself to Coleridge in the following manner.

Ideas and laws are reciprocal, laws being but the antithesis of ideas, ideas existing in reality outside the reason. They supply reality with its animation, its substance, to which they give life in its principle. But this may be done in two ways says Coleridge, depending on the nature of ideas, to wit: by regulating the agency of external being, or, by producing this same reality as a formal constitutive element.

This then is the problem on hand, and in affording a solution to the same, the world is necessarily divided into two camps, and two only. (We speak of course for Coleridge). In philosophy, the point of separation or divergence is the origin of ideas. On this issue two plausible positions are possible. They are not admitted to be both correct but Coleridge will at least tolerate the false one in as much as it safeguards in its conclusion, if not in its principle, the spirituality of knowledge. They are the Platonic theory and

the Aristotelean. Plato with whom Coleridge coincides substantially on this theory, maintains ideas to be in the reason as powers thereof independantly of sense perception ⁶⁶. Aristotle, on the other hand, explains the doctrine of ideas by recourse to the process of abstraction, which process finds its incipience in sense perception. Ideas, then, for Aristotle are products of the understanding ⁶⁷.

From this statement of the principal tenets of the two great Greek Philosophers it is easy to see that the identity that will exist between idea and reality will not be the same in their respective schools of thought. To discern the true system is no easy task, but the most sublime problem of metaphysics.

However the problem demands a solution because its consequences are dire. Strange as it may seem, it appears that the quest of a solution is futile, for we are born either Aristotelean or Platonist, and Aristoteleans cannot understand Platonists, they cannot raise themselves to the

⁶⁷ The only reason why the Aristotelian opinion is taken into consideration is because it concludes to the spirituality of ideas (although the term in its present meaning was never used by Aristotle -- consequently we speak of the doctrine "quoad rem, non quoad nomen"); on the other hand the Hartleian and Lockian Schools are ostracized because they deny the very possibility of such knowledge. All schools must therefore be reduced to two, for only two contend for the legitimate explanation of spiritual knowledge.

sublime heights of the pure reason, and consequently, they can never become Platonists. The reason is obvious. Aristoteleans are men who are limited in the acquisition of their knowledge to concepts acquired through the understanding. They try to explain ideas adequately by these conceptions, and consequently they have not a proper idea of what an "idea" is. All this is clearly expressed by Coleridge himself, but in various parts of his works. We shall endeavour to quote textually, manipulating the quotations only to put them in order. Having spoken of the Idea as a power of the reason exclusively, and its subsequent capacity of producing itself into being he states:

"Whether this be true philosophy, is not the question. The school of Aristotle would, of course, deny, the Platonic affirm it; for in this consists the difference of the two schools. Both acknowledge ideas as distinct from the mere generalizations from objects of sense; both would define an idea as an ens rationale, to which there can be no adequate correspondent in sensible experience. But according to Aristotle, ideas are regulative only, and exist only as functions of the mind: - according to Plato, they are constitutive likewise, and one in essence with the power and life of nature:..."⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ Prometheus of Aeschylus, Works, IV, 358-359.

"There are, and can be, only two schools of philosophy, differing in kind and in source. Differences in degree and in accident, there may be many; but these constitute schools kept by different teachers with different degrees of genius, talent, and learning; - auditors of philosophers, not different philosophies. Schools of psilology (the love of empty noise) and misosophy are here out of the question. Schools of real philosophy there are but two, - best named by the arch-philosopher of each, namely, Plato and Aristotle. Every man capable of philosophy at all (and there are not many such) is a born Platonist or a born Aristotelian" 69.

"I do not think it possible that any one born an Aristotelian can become a Platonist; and I am sure that no born Platonist can ever change into an Aristotelian. They are the two classes of men, besides which it is next to impossible to conceive a third. The one considers reason a quality, or attribute; the other considers it a power. I believe that Aristotle never could get to understand what Plato meant by an idea... With Plato ideas^{are} constitutive in themselves.

Aristotle was, and still is, the sovereign lord of the understanding; - the faculty judging by the senses.

69 Notes on Hooker, Lit. Remains, Works, V, 37.

He was a conceptualist and never could raise himself into that higher state which was natural to Plato, and has been so to others, in which the understanding is distinctly contemplated, and, as it were, looked down upon from the throne of actual ideas, or living, inborn, essential truths" 70.

"All this disquisition on the angels (quoted before and which he is commenting) confirms my remark that our admirable Hooker was a giant of the race Aristotle versus Plato. Hooker was truly judicious, - a consummate synthesis of understanding and sense. An ample and most ordinate conceptualist, to the tranquil empyrean of ideas he had not ascended" 71.

Finally, with regard to the importance of the problem we have:

"Whether ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant; or likewise constitutive, and one with the power and life of nature, according to Plato and Plotinus (...) is the highest problem of philosophy, and not part of its nomenclature" 72.

70 Table Talk, in date of July 2nd., 1830. It is strange to note that Coleridge refers to ideas as inborn truths. Certainly there is not a great deal of discrepancy between inborn and innate.

71 Works, V, 36.

72 Works, I, 484.

To conclude this inquiry into the nature of ideas in the Coleridgean sense of the word, we would like to refer^c to a final question which merits our attention due to the importance it bears in the proof of the existence of God. We have pointed out that according to Coleridge ideas do not originate in sense perception, nor in the generalizations made by the understanding. Whence then, do they have their origin? Two possible solutions remain -- either they are innate as the Platonists affirm; or else, they are partly innate partly derived from external reality. To determine the Coleridgean view is decidedly difficult. The task is rendered the more arduous for us by the lack of manuscripts which other writers have had at hand in treating the subject. Although these disciples of the English Philosopher quote the manuscripts to substantiate their statements and conclusions, we cannot acquire from these fragmentary documents a substantial and complete comprehension of the whole. Nevertheless we shall discuss the point as it appears to us from the materials at hand, admitting that a more comprehensive study of the marginal notes left by Coleridge might necessitate a modification in our position ⁷³.

The first text in which an allusion to innate ideas

⁷³ Muirhead, Coleridge as Philosopher, Ch.3, § 3 The Meaning of Ideas, 96-102.

has been seen, and that, in favour of the repudiation of the system, is found in the *Biographia Literaria* where Coleridge traces the evolution of the Associationist theory from Aristotle to Hartley. Referring to the contribution made by Descartes in falsifying the sense of the word "ideas", Coleridge affirms:

"Des Cartes (sic) having introduced into his philosophy the fanciful hypothesis of material ideas, - or certain configurations of the brain, which were as so many moulds to the influxes of the external world, - Locke adopted the term but expended its signification to whatever is the immediate object of the mind's attention or consciousness" ⁷⁴.

Dr. Muirhead weaves this text into the tissue of his argument to confirm his assertion that Coleridge was not a follower of Plato and Descartes in as much as they adhered to the 'Innateness' of ideas ⁷⁵.

In our estimation this application of the text in question is far-fetched. The context is in no manner related to the subject of ideas in the strict sense of the word.

⁷⁴ Works, III, 214 in note.

⁷⁵ Muirhead, op. cit. 101. "So far from being established by Descartes, he held that it had been reduced to absurdity, by being connected with the "fanciful hypothesis" of "configurations of the brain which were as so many moulds to the influxes of the external world."

On the contrary the very purpose of the note is to explain that, contrary to his conviction, the Author is using the word idea to designate the image of sense perception. Nor do we find anything in Coleridge's text which suggests that Coleridge is insinuating that the only ideas admitted as existent by Descartes are these material ones, these "configurations of the brain". As a matter of fact we can find nothing in Descartes which justifies Muirhead in his supposition. The issue at stake is whether or not ideas, as truth-powers of the reason, are innate in the Coleridgean system. To prove the negative answer to this query, Dr. Muirhead quotes Coleridge as rejecting Descartes' "innate material ideas". In answer to this we say that either Coleridge did not understand the very fundamental position of Cartesian philosophy, that is, the meaning of an innate idea in this system; or else Dr. Muirhead has abandoned the line of logical argumentation. Let us then examine the two hypotheses in turn to see the result.

1st. Coleridge does not understand Descartes.

Not only it is possible but probable, however we have nothing to substantiate the suspicion, that Coleridge did not grasp the entire meaning of Cartesian philosophy. Nor do we say this in a disparaging manner. We readily admit that many angles of the Cartesian system of thought are absolutely beyond our grasp, they just do not

make sense! And this seems but logical, because any system of thought starting from premises of the nature of Descartes', using a vocabulary replete with newly coined words, containing contradictory statements, will baffle even the specialist. M. Maritain for example, confesses that at times he cannot determine precisely what Descartes means by an idea ⁷⁶.

With this in mind, we are willing to allow a certain amount of latitude for interpretation of a loose text, but where there is clarity, where the language is precise, then the words must be taken at face value.

Let us consequently ask Descartes just what he means by an idea, and if he holds that these are several in kind, we shall see if he has any that coincide with the Coleridgean in general; finally we shall see to what class of ideas the above reported quotation from Coleridge can be applied. From all this we will draw a legitimate conclusion.

The first item to be noted is that the word idea in the Cartesian idiom is analogous, it is applied to sense perception as well as concepts (we use these terms for the moment in their widest acceptance).

⁷⁶ "Quant aux textes du philosophe (Descartes) portant sur la nature même de la pensée et des idées, ils sont souvent équivoques, certains cependant expriment nettement cette théorie". J. Maritain, *Trois Réformateurs*, 261, note 30.

The root of this tree of knowledge that is the Cartesian idea, is to be found in his "Cogito ergo sum". In expounding the hidden signification of this his fundamental doctrine, he tells us that thought includes in its comprehension all that is within us of which we are immediately aware, consequently, all the workings of the will, the intellect, the imagination and the senses, are entailed. It is not surprising then to find that ideas, which are but a kind of thought, should be the medium, the immediate perception of which renders our thoughts conscious. Consequently ideas are to be found in the sensuous domain as well as in the strictly intellectual field. If we wished to delve deeper into their nature we should say that under the common heading of ideas must be classified all immediate conceptions of the mind, all pictures of things such as that of man, of an angel or still of God.

Now according to Descartes, these ideas are three in species: productive (fictives) which are arbitrary concoctions of the imagination, and are types on which external reality is modelled. (We note the resemblance with a quality assigned to ideas by Coleridge); adventive (adventices) which we gather from without, and are foreign to us; innate which we possess from our birth ⁷⁷.

⁷⁷ The names which we have given to these ideas in English are of our own coining consequently we added the French

This division of ideas is based on their origin. If we consider them from the point of view of internal constitution we have ideas that are not images, or spiritual ideas, and image or material ideas (?). Our present research has to do primarily with these image ideas. Some of these images or figures, says Descartes are impressed in our external senses, others have their outline printed on the surface of a gland which is the seat of the imagination and common sense. However, they are not ideas in as much as they are modifications of the brain but in as much as the mind will consider them immediately when it imagines or feels. 'Ideas nomine intelligo cujuslibet cogitationis formam illam, per cujus immediatam perceptionem ipsius ejusdem cogitationis conscius sum; adeo ut nihil possim verbis exprimere, intelligendo id quod dico, quin ex hoc ipsum certum sit, in me esse ideam ejus quod verbis illis significatur. Atque ita non solum imagines in phantasia depictas ideas voco; imo ipsas hic nullo modo voco ideas, quatenus sunt in phantasia corporea, hoc est

word in parentheses. In the Meditations, the distinction is thus expressed: "Or, entre ces idées, les unes ne semblent être nées avec moi, les autres être étrangères et venir du dehors, et les autres être faites et inventées par moi-même." 3ème Méditation, Méditations Métaphysiques, Paul Lemaire, Paris, Librairie Hatier, p. 39. Cf. René Descartes, Discours de la Méthode, Etienne Gilson, 316, p.34, l.3. "...hors de moi..." Etudes sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système Cartésien, E. Gilson, 206.

in parte aliqua, celebri depictae, sed tantum quatenus mentem ipsam in illam cerebri conversam informant" 78.

It seems well established in the text, that, for Descartes, it is not strictly speaking, the idea that is material, "configurations of the brain", but these configurations, in as much as they supply the mind with an object of reflection, of immediate perception. We should therefore conclude that Coleridge did not grasp the Cartesian meaning behind the "image-idea" theory. But we have no reason to say that he did not distinguish, with Descartes, between these image ideas, acquired through the senses, and their direct opposites - the innate. For with the philosopher of Port-Royal, innate ideas are definitely not configurations of the brain". They are pure spiritual ideas, just as they are in the Coleridgean scheme 79.

78 Gilson, Discours de la Méthode, 318-319, P.34, l.3... "... de l'idée...". Cf. Maritain, Le Songe de Descartes, 326, note 138.

"Quelques-unes (de mes pensées) sont comme les images des choses, et c'est à celles-là seules que convient proprement le nom d'idées..." (Trois. Méd., § 5).

"Entre ces figures... ce ne sont pas celles qui s'impriment dans les organes des sens extérieurs... mais seulement celles qui se tracent sur la superficie de la glande H, où est le siège de l'imagination et du sens commun, qui doivent être prises pour les idées, c'est-à-dire pour les formes ou images que l'âme raisonnable considérera immédiatement lorsque, étant unie à cette machine, elle imaginera ou sentira quelque objet". (Traité de l'Homme, § 70).

79 Gilson, Discours de la Méthode, 327, P.34, l.20. It is worthy of note however, that the reason for this fact is different in the two cases. With Descartes, as Gilson says, the thing is necessitated by the real distinction between

Moreover innate ideas in the Cartesian sense are not infused in a state of full perfection. They are present in the soul only in an abortive state. "Virtually", to use the language of metaphysics, in as much as they imply an independence from exterior reality for their production, and arise exclusively from the reason, or faculty of thought. Descartes in his quaint language puts it so:

"...je n'ai jamais écrit ni jugé que l'esprit ait besoin d'idées naturelles (innées) qui soient quelque chose de différent de la faculté qu'il a de penser; mais reconnaissant qu'il y avait certaines pensées qui ne procédaient ni des objets du dehors, ni de la détermination de ma volonté, mais seulement de la faculté que j'ai de penser...." 80

From this summary of the Cartesian doctrine of ideas (which is by no means adequate, yet it suits our purpose), we opine that two conclusions follow quite obviously.

First: that Coleridge did not esteem Descartes' appellation of "material ideas" to be in accordance with the strict meaning of the term, and rightly so. On the other hand Coleridge does not see Descartes' point in its true

body and soul. With Coleridge it is the distinction in kind between understanding and reason.

80 Lettre XCIX: in Marechal, Histoire de la Philosophie Moderne, Tome Ier., Descartes, P.67.

light, for the word idea does not refer to the brain impression as such, but only in as much as it provides the object of immediate perception to the thought ⁸¹.

Second: that innate ideas are in both systems practically identical, for as we shall show later in the proof of the existence of God, Coleridge certainly maintained the existence of ideas very similar to those which Descartes calls innate. (Cf. note 102). Whatever be the case on this point, what remains certain is that Coleridge cannot be said to have rejected innate ideas, because he repudiated Descartes' material ideas, for they are in no way connected.

§ 3. Understanding and Reason.

a- Introduction.

In speaking of Reason and Understanding, we must mention at the very outset, that no problem meets with more consideration, stress and development in the entire Coleridgean synthesis, if the word may be used. How it really forms the crown-head of Coleridge's philosophical thought as a means to an effective defence of the Christian Economy, more qualified critics have explained ⁸². If

⁸¹ It does not follow that we adopt Descartes' view on this point. We only infer that Coleridge lends to Descartes' words an extension which the latter did not give to them himself. Cf. note 78.

⁸² Marsh, Preliminary Essay, Works I, 95-99.

our reconstruction of the Author's intellectual edifice is to be adequate, and faithful to the plans traced by the architect, the point will require attentive consideration.

Coleridge in the *Aids to Reflection*, opens the *ex professo* discussion of the problem in a commentary on one of Leighton's Aphorisms. 'Faith', says the Anglican divine, "elevates the soul not only above sense and sensible things, but above reason itself. As reason corrects the errors which sense might occasion, so supernatural faith corrects the errors of natural reason judging according to sense".⁸³ We ask the reader to note well this last sentence, later on it will afford a clearer understanding of the doctrine we are studying.

To introduce the dissertation proper, on the distinction between the Understanding and Reason, we can find no happier, no more concise expression than that used by Coleridge himself, and taken from Harrington. We shall be content with a verbatim reproduction:

"The definition and proper character of an - that, namely, which should contra-distinguish him from other animals - is to be taken from his reason rather than

⁸³ Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion Indeed, Aphor. VIII; *Aids to Reflection*, Works, 336 sq. Cf. Essay on Faith, Literary Remains, Works, 7, 561.

from his understanding: in regard that in other creatures there may be something of understanding, but there is nothing of reason" 84.

However, in the preceding words there might be room for equivocation, the words understanding and reason, not having a sufficiently specific determination. The possibility of ambiguity will be removed by the following:

"Man may rather be defined a rational than an intelligent creature, in regard that in other creatures there may be something of understanding, but there is nothing of reason" 85.

From these quotations, we think that at the very outset the proposition at stake may be stated briefly as reads: That by which man is a man, in contradistinction to intelligent animals that do not possess a human nature, is reason, not understanding. For that which distinguishes a man from a brute is not intelligence, but reason. How this can be so, is easy enough to grasp when we understand the mechanism of the faculties of human knowledge as described above in expounding the difference between Nature and Spirit. Nature, we saw, was the sum of all that is perceived by the understanding. Remains now to deter-

84 Works, I, 236.

85 The Friend, The Landing Place, Essay V. Works, II, 143.

mine more minutely the nature of this faculty.

b- Understanding.

The simplest definition is that which describes it as "the faculty judging according to sense"⁸⁶. To conclude then that this faculty is common to man and brute is logical, because both possess senses through which the phenomena of the external world become known to them, and this by means of real judgments. To confirm this statement Coleridge describes two experiments taken from Huber's 'Natural History of Ants'. May we be permitted to reproduce one of these masterpieces of animal intellectual activity that have been observed not only by Huber, but by many learned scientists, French, Swiss, English, German and Italian.

"I - Huber put a dozen humble-bees under a bell-glass along with a comb of about ten silken cocoons so unequal in height as not to be capable of standing steadily. To remedy this two or three of the humble-bees got upon the comb, stretched themselves over its edge, and with their heads downwards fixed their forefeet on the table on which the comb stood, and so with their

⁸⁶ Aids to Reflection, Works, I, 242. The definition is originally from Kant whence Leighton received it.

hind feet kept the comb from falling. Then these were weary others took their places. In this constrained and painful posture, fresh bees relieved their comrades at intervals, and each working in its turn, did these affectionate little insects support the comb for nearly three days: at the end of which they had prepared sufficient wax to build pillars with. But these pillars having accidentally got displaced, the bees had recourse again to the same manoeuvre, till Hüber pitying their hard case, etc.

II. ' I shall at present describe the operations of a single ant that I observed sufficiently long to satisfy my curiosity.

' One rainy day I observed a laborer digging the ground near the aperture which gave entrance to an ant-hill. It placed in a heap the several fragments it had scraped up, and formed them into small pellets, which it deposited here and there upon the nest. It returned constantly to the same place, and appeared to have a marked design, for it labored with ardor and perseverance. I marked a slight furrow, excavated in the ground in a straight line, represented in the plan of a path or gallery. The laborer, the whole of whose movements fell under my immediate observation, gave it a greater depth and breadth, and cleared out its

borders: and I saw at length, in which I could not be deceived, that it had the intention of establishing an avenue which was to lead from one of the stories to the underground chambers. This path, which was about two or three inches in length, and formed by a single ant, was opened above and bordered on each side by a buttress of earth; its cavity en forme de gouttière was of the most perfect regularity, for the architect had not left an atom too much. The work of this ant was so well followed and understood, that I could almost to a certainty guess its next proceeding, and the very fragment it was about to remove. At the side of the opening where this path terminated, was a second opening to which it was necessary to arrive by some road. The same ant engaged in and executed alone this undertaking. It furrowed out and opened another path, parallel to the first, leaving between each a little wall of three or four lines in height. Those ants who lay the foundation of a wall, chamber, or gallery, from working separately, occasion, now and then, a want of coincidence in the parts of the same or different objects. Such examples are of no unfrequent occurrence, but they by no means embarrass them. That follows proves that the workman, on discovering his error, knew how to rectify it. A

wall had been erected with the view of sustaining a vaulted ceiling, still incomplete, that had been projected from the wall of the opposite chamber. The workman who began constructing it, had given it too little elevation to meet the opposite partition upon which it was to rest. Had it been continued on the original plan, it must infallibly have met the wall at about one half its height, and this it was necessary to avoid. This state of things very forcibly claimed my attention, when one of the ants arriving at the place and visiting the works, appeared to be struck by the difficulty which presented itself; but this it as soon obviated, by taking down the ceiling and raising the wall upon which it reposed. It then, in my presence, constructed a new ceiling with the fragments of the former one.' - Huber's Natural History of Ants, pp. 38-41.⁶ 87.

From these experiments Coleridge draw the following conclusion. The facts observed by these scientists, can either be rejected as false or accepted on reliable authority. To reject them however would be to question without reason, the veracity of honest witnesses, and this cannot rightly be done. We must then accept them.

⁸⁷ Aids to Reflection, Works, 243-245.

Now if they are taken as true, they demonstrate clearly the existence in the above-mentioned animals, of a faculty which does not differ in kind from the understanding in man (although it does in degree), but it does differ in kind from reason. And by the understanding Coleridge specifies very explicitly, that he refers to that faculty as exercising intellectual functions (in italics), yet contradistinguishing it from reason. To use the word "human understanding" then is no tautology, indeed it must be used if we wish to distinguish this faculty as existing in man from that existing in the brute. On the contrary to use the expression human reason is a waste of words ⁸⁸.

If we push our inquiry further and try to analyse the technical organization of this faculty, we shall see that it ~~is~~^{is} the faculty or reflection and generalization, in the sense already explained when speaking of notions and conceptions as distinguished from ideas. But to have the full doctrine, we must go on and study the limitation of the understanding to its exercise in the field of Nature (in the Coleridgean sense already explained), consequently, foreign to Spiritual realities, and finally, outside the field of Religion and Faith. This latter point is developed

⁸⁸ Notes on Hooker. Works V, 40.

here and there in the Works, possibly the best explanation of the Author's mind is provided by the article of Faith, along with the Appendix B to the Statesman's Manual. Here is the trend of the thought.

The sphere of the understanding being limited to sense perception, to the knowledge of the phenomenon of reality, to the appearance of things in continual flux, the product of this faculty, due to its subjective element in addition to that already mentioned affords of itself no absolute certitude. The faculty is a subordinate one and depends upon its superior, the reason, for direction and guidance. This is pointed out very tersely in the Aphorism which we quoted at the beginning of this section on reason and understanding: 'As reason corrects the errors which sense might occasion, so supernatural faith corrects the errors of natural reason judging according to sense.' In fact, if reason is necessary to correct the errors of sense-perception, and the faculty which judges according to sense be the understanding, it is logical to argue that the errors of the latter will be remedied by the light of reason also.

But even this is not an adequate picture of our understanding. Since it has as its sole working material the findings of the senses, it can never enter the field of faith. Now, for Coleridge, this field is more extended

than it is in our conception of Revelation. We do not intend to deal with this subject at length, suffice it to say for the moment, that the concept God, in the Coleridgean acceptation, is not acquired by pure intellectual activity, but is necessarily handed down to man by Revelation⁸⁹. To resume the trend of our idea, the ultimate motive for this denial of commpenetration of faith and understanding is the absolute barrier between Nature (the world of sense) and Spirit (the world of whatever is not sense). Now very decidedly, faith and its objects cannot become under any form the objects of the senses consequently of the understanding⁹⁰, because it belongs to the suprasensuous domain, which is perceived immediately in ideas, truth-powers, and not conceptions and notions manufactured by the understanding⁹¹.

⁸⁹ This point of the idea of God and the proof of the existence of God would require a special chapter. Here we shall content ourselves with a few references in which Coleridge's view is clearly stated. *Aids to Reflection*. Works, I, 216-220.

"I am clearly convinced, that the scriptural and only true idea of God will, in its development, be found to involve the idea of the Trinity."

"Now, though it might be sufficient to say, that I regard the very phrase, "revealed Religion", as a pleonasm, inasmuch as a religion not revealed is, in my judgment, no religion at all"...

"The Trinity is the only form in which an idea of God is possible, unless indeed it be a Spinozistic or World-God" Works, V, 36.

Of. also the *Biographia Literaria* where Coleridge explains that the existence of God is necessarily the object of faith (assent of intellect actuated by the will) and not the object of rational demonstration. Works III, 295-299.

It is easier to catch the meaning of such phrases as the following, when we bear this in mind: that the understanding is the mediate faculty, the faculty of means to medial terms, (intermediate end, in our language); or again: that Faith asse ts to reason, without or against the understanding ⁹². For we know that the understanding is, for Coleridge, but endowed with the same power of generalizing from particular facts, and that in this generalization not real knowledge of reality is attained, but only a cognition of apparent reality, which is common to man and brute.

e- Reason.

Essentially a supersensuous faculty, it is the untarnishable source of substantial truths, universal, necessary and self-evident. Reason attains reality immediately, in itself, consequently giving true knowledge of it as it is. Not acquiring the matter of its cognition

⁹⁰ Essay on Faith, Works I, 557. Cf. Notes on Donne, Works V, 91.

⁹¹ Works V, 90. For the same reason there is no room for analogy in Faith:

"And in like manner, that is, per intuitum intellectuales, must all the mysteries of faith be contemplated; - they are intelligible per se, not discursively and per analogiam. For the truths are unique, and may have shadows and types, but no analogies." Notes on Sherlock, Works V, 402.

⁹² Idea of a National Church, Works VI, 61-62; Notes on Donne, Works V, 82.

through the senses, reason must have as its object things of the Spiritual world⁹³. Here we come to a capital point. Since the reason, in its operation, is free from the subjective forms of quantity, space, and time etc., which are modifications met with in the science of phenomena provided by the understanding, it will not be surprising to note that, for Coleridge, the supreme faculty called reason, has a tendency to "the comprehension of all as one", it contains ideas on "oneness and allness" as prime factors. Thus reason contemplates infinity as a whole, in opposition to the understanding which cannot conceive a totality without limit, and that is one of the reasons why the understanding can never lead to the knowledge of an infinite God who is one.⁹⁴ Reason then, and reason alone is the faculty of spiritual apprehension, whose objects are consubstantial with itself (ideas and law). This is what is meant when we say that reason is self-contemplative, it is its own object.

Again we must conclude from what has been stated with regard to the independence of the reason from sense perception and the categories of time and space, that the reason is not the faculty of the finite; not in the sense

⁹³ Works I, 241-242.

⁹⁴ Works I, 456.

that it excludes it, but in the sense that it includes it "eminenter". Thus the reason is the judge of the understanding its guide and regulator ⁹⁵.

d. The Dilemma.

We believe that with these preliminary characteristics in mind, it is time to establish with Coleridge that the understanding and the reason, as we have described them, must differ specifically (in kind). We give the substance of the argument.

If two or more subjects have the same essential characters they fall under the same general definition and conversely, whatever subjects fall under the same general definition are of the same kind. Therefore, subjects that do not fall under the same general definition, must differ in kind from those that do.

Now if we compare the definitions (or specific traits) of understanding and reason, we shall find that they differ essentially, specifically. We reproduce verbatim the chart Coleridge presents in the Aids to Reflection.

⁹⁵ Works V, 561-562.

Understanding.

1. Understanding is discursive.
2. The Understanding in all its judgments refers to some other faculty as its ultimate authority.
3. Understanding is the faculty of reflection.

Reason.

1. Reason is fixed.
2. The Reason in all its decisions appeals to itself as the ground and substance of their truth. (Heb. VI. 13.)
3. Reason of contemplation.
Reason indeed is much nearer to Sense than to Understanding: for Reason (says our great Hooker) is a direct aspect of truth, an inward beholding, having a similar relation to the intelligible or spiritual, as Sense has to the material or phenomenal.

The result is that neither falls under the definition of the other, consequently they differ in kind ⁹⁶.

This distinction in kind being established, let us

⁹⁶ Works I, 245-246.

undertake with Coleridge a more subtle inquiry into the mutual relations between understanding and reason. Starting from our ultimate conclusion, that in regard to understanding man and brute do not differ in kind, man being specifically superior only in as much as he is possessed of a reason, let us try to establish the relation that exists, in man, between reason and understanding.

It is certain that at all times the understanding feeds on material supplied by the organs of sense. Now these organs of sense may be outward and inward. The outward organs or, more exactly, the organs of outward sense, nourish themselves with material objects exclusively. Brute animals, we are made to observe, have an understanding which is endowed only with these organs of outward sense. Unfortunately, the proof that would be very à propos, is not found. But let us continue.

Man's understanding much more perfect, has likewise an organ of inward sense, and through the intermediate of this inward sense, his understanding is capable of acquainting itself with the invisible realities which, because of their condition of immateriality, escape the grasp of the senses. These are objects of the Spiritual world, and the organ by which they are known is called reason.

The conclusion is obvious. Understanding, which is a general faculty, may exist without being in its most

perfect state, without having its highest form of perfection, the reason, and then the subject in which it is found is called a brute. It may acquire experience through the outward eye of its understanding, which experience may even entail abstract, general cognitions, but these are never necessary, nor certain, because derived from objects continually in a state of fluctuation, material phenomena. Reason, however, can never exist without understanding, because it is an organ of the latter. Moreover, "it manifests itself but in and through the understanding", it is then called the discursive reason ⁹⁷.

But a difficulty arises immediately. How can the reason which is essentially a suprasensuous faculty, independent of material reality for its cognition reveal itself only by and through the understanding which is by definition the faculty judging according to sense? Coleridge had anticipated the obstacle, and the answer is provided in the Kantian distinction between discursive and pure reason. We have already quoted a text in which Coleridge establishes this distinction but we have not had occasion to stress the point.

First of all we must warn the reader that the distinction between pure and speculative reason does not es-

⁹⁷ "The understanding of the higher brutes has only organ of outward sense,... but man's understanding has likewise an organ of inward sense,.. This organ is his reason." *The Friend*, *The Landing-Place*, Essay V, Works 11, 143-150. Cf. Works 1, 261-262.

establish the existence of two distinct faculties in the reason itself. It merely expresses two aspects, two modes of operation of the same faculty, based on a real difference in the manner of functioning.

The discursive reason is thus called because it considers the superior faculty in man in its relation to the inferior, the understanding. In fact these two powers of cognitive organs are not isolated. On the contrary they are intimately united in hierarchical relationship, the understanding being subordinated and subservient to the reason, serving to bring out necessary and universal truths, contained in the infinite, into distinct light, by representing them in the forms of conscious images. These are the reproductions framed in the categories of space and time, without consideration for material particularities or individual traits ⁹⁸. In this case though, the necessity is conditional, because the truth (absolute) of reason is applied to facts gleaned from daily contact

⁹⁸ Works I, 460. Here Coleridge states: "It must not be overlooked that this insulation of the understanding is our own act and deed. The man of healthful and undivided intellect uses his understanding in this state of abstraction only as a tool or organ;..." Cf. Works V, 562 where the same idea is expressed. The nature of this union is expressed in a much clearer fashion in a letter to Charles Augustus Tulk, dated February 12, 1821.

"From the understanding to the reason, there is no continuous ascent possible; it is a metabasis...even as from the air to the light. The true essential peculiarity

with phenomenal knowledge which is experience. This use of the understanding by the reason (at times it may become an abuse, if the understanding fails to maintain its position of inferior and attempts to dominate the superior faculty ⁹⁹, occasions the distinction in the reason itself,

"accordingly as we consider one and the same gift, now as the ground of formal principles, and now as the origin of ideas. Contemplated distinctively in reference to formal (or abstract) truth, it is the Speculative Reason; but in reference to actual (or moral) truth, as the fountain of ideas and the light of the conscience, we name it the Practical Reason" ¹⁰⁰.

e- The Proof of the Existence of Practical Reason.

Having developed the distinction between Practical and Speculative reason to considerable length in the

of the human understanding consists in its capability of being irradiated by the reason, in its recipiency; and even this is given to it by the presence of a higher power than itself...' Letter CVII, in 'Coleridge, Select Poetry and Prose', Stephen Potter., p. 688-690f

⁹⁹ Works V, 562. 'When this is attempted (the understanding judging the reason), or when the understanding in its synthesis with the personal will, usurps the supremacy of the reason, or affects to supersede the reason, it is then what St. Paul calls the mind of the flesh (...) or the wisdom of the flesh.'

¹⁰⁰ Works I, 241-242; IV, 365; V, 562, 56.

Coleridgean system, we believe that the presentation of the contention for the existence of this Practical Reason will help the reader understand (in as much as it can be understood) the discrepency between these two aspects of the same faculty in man.

In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge tells us quite candidly that he adopted from the writings of Kant his exposition of this distinction between Speculative and Practical Reason, consequently we shall not be surprised at the identity between the doctrines ¹⁰¹. Indeed, whereas according to the philosophy of Aristotle, and today, of the entire Aristotelico-Thomistic School, the existence of a spiritual reason is a conclusion arrived at by an "a posteriori" argumentation, with Coleridge as with his German Masters, it is a starting point incapable of demonstration from effect to cause, but a postulate, imperatively imposed upon us by our conscience. This testimony of conscience with regard to the existence in us of a will, a reason (practical), and the immortal ideas of God, the Soul, and Freedom, must be believed, taken for granted, on the weight of their own necessity. In other words, they must exist, otherwise nothing is possible ¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ The evolution of Coleridge's mind relative to the present subject is given at length in these pages. Works, lll, 256-258. cf. Letter to J. Gooden Esq. dated Jan. 14, 1814 from Highgate, in Works, IV, 309-401. Cf. Potter *op. cit.* 683 (He dates the letter 1820).

¹⁰² This conception of the moral order according to Coler-

The particular passage ~~that~~ in the Aids to Reflection in which Coleridge explains the necessity of the existence of a Practical Reason proposes "to establish a general rule of interpretation and vindication applicable to all doctrinal tenets, and especially to the (so called) mysteries of the Christian Faith: to provide a

idge would require a separate study, for it is altogether different from our own. For our purpose it was sufficient to mention the principal headings of his philosophical creed in this regard. For it is a creed in the strict sense of the word, a belief, as opposed to knowledge. A good resumé of this doctrine can be found in the Professione Fidei of Nov. 3, 1816. It reads thus:

"I believe that I am a free agent, in as much as, and so far as, I have a will, which renders me justly responsible for my actions, omissive as well as commissive. Likewise that I possess reason, or a law of right and wrong, which, uniting with my sense of moral responsibility, constitutes the voice of conscience.

Hence it becomes my absolute duty to believe, and I do believe, that there is a God, that is, a Being, in whom supreme reason and a holy will are one with an infinite power; and that all holy will is coincident with the will of God.....

Corollary.

The wonderful works of God in the sensible world are a perpetual discourse, reminding me of his existence, and shadowing out to me his perfections. But as all languages presupposes in the intelligent reader or hearer those primary notions, which it symbolizes; as well as the power of making these combinations of these primary notions, which it represents and excites us to combine, - even so I believe, that the notion of God is essential to the human mind: that it is called forth into distinct consciousness principally by the conscience, and auxiliarily by the manifest adaptation of means to ends in the outward creation. It is therefore evident to my reason, that the existence of God

safety-lamp for religious inquirers" ¹⁰³. We have already explained how philosophy, according to Coleridge, plays an essentially apologetical role, in the sense that its main function is the rational explanation and defence of the Articles of Revealed Religion. It is in this sense that he calls it a Christian Philosophy. This same, however, can be called Christian (in part),

is absolutely and necessarily insusceptible of a scientific demonstration and that Scripture has so represented it. For it commands us to believe in one God. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me. Now all commandment necessarily relates to the will; whereas all scientific demonstration is independent of the will, and is apodictic or demonstrative only as far as it is compulsory on the mind, volentem, nolentem.

... I believe in the life to come, not through the arguments acquired by my understanding or discursive faculty, but chiefly and effectively, because so to believe is my duty, and in obedience to the commands of my conscience.

Here ends the first table of my creed, which would have been my creed, had I been born with Adam; and which, therefore, constitutes what may in this sense be called a natural religion, that is the religion of all finite beings. The second table contains the creed of revealed religion, my belief as a Christian". Works V, 15-16.

See also Works VI, 54, in note. "...For try to conceive a man without the ideas of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth, of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite. An animal endowed with the memory of appearances and of facts might remain. But the man will have vanished.."

Also Potter, op. cit., Letter CIV, p. 684.

¹⁰³ Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion Indeed, Works I, 215.

in as much as it is limited to the Moral Philosophy, the philosophy that deals with necessary, absolute truths, as opposed to the hypothetical value of assertions made by the speculative intellect which works in the domain of metaphysics. This domain of moral values has a necessary dependance on the will, its knowledge is imparted to us by God, and our adherence to it demands an understanding of its contents, at least in a negative manner. But since the speculative intellect is capable of hypothetical cognition exclusively (and hypothetical knowledge is never sufficient to demand an absolute assent of intellect prompted by the will), there needs be a faculty in man capable of discerning and passing judgment on these truths which have a real existence independent and absolute. This faculty we call the Practical Reason. It is the organ of wisdom and the source of living actual truths,¹⁰⁴. It includes the will, the conscience, and it is through the communication of this reason, or Spirit (in the Pauline sense) that we are able to cry out, Abba, Pater¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁴ Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion Indeed, See also Works I, 241-242.

¹⁰⁵ "And herein consists the mystery of Redemption, that this has been rendered possible for us. And so it is written; the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening Spirit. (I Cor. XV, 45)". Works I, 242.

Compare with the text: 'And man became a living soul. He did not merely possess it he became it. It was his

For the thinking Christian then, there is but one system of philosophy, there is but one guarantee to his Faith, there is but one way to avoid falling into the subtlest of errors; it is by establishing on the unshakable rock of Practical Reason the unconditional knowledge provided him by his Maker, through this Light that lighteth every man, this Spiritual mind of St. Paul: by using this same reason to dominate the understanding, and prevent a rebellion of the senses, a falling-away from the world of the Reason, that is from Religion, occasioned by the seduction of the lusts of the Understanding ¹⁰⁶. In a word it is the distinction between Nature and Spirit, and the corresponding one between Understanding and Reason. It is the communication of God to Man, it is the self-consciousness of our dignity for we are endowed with a participation of divine life, for of us it was said, "Let us make man to our Image, and man became a living soul" ¹⁰⁷. He became another God.

proper being, his truest self, the man in man". Works 1, 119-120. (cf. 1, John, V, 20.).

For the development of this same idea cf. Works 1, 275 where the will is distinguished from the reason, yet remains intimately united to it as a 'sine qua non'. And in the same volume, p. 268 sq. the parallel is made between reason as Spirit in St. Paul, and reason as light in St. John. With regard to the latter the stress is laid on the illumination of our reason by the supreme Reason or Logos. (Works 1, 400, in note).

¹⁰⁶ Aids to Reflection, Works 1, 267-269; Essay on Faith, Works V, 563-565.

Conclusion.

In this paper, it was our purpose to explain the fundamental position in the Coleridgean System of thought. We do not know of any other work in which this has been attempted, if we leave aside the brief survey of Coleridgean philosophy presented by Messrs. Shedd and Marsh at the beginning of the first volume of the Complete Works in the edition compiled by Professor Shedd.

We do not intend to criticize the system of philosophy expounded by Coleridge, reserving this task for a later date. Our sole design was to ordinate and condense in logical fashion a philosophical structure which lays no claim to originality, but which has been declared by competent critics the strongest bulwark erected in defense of the Christian Scheme, at least in the English language ~~108~~.

May we add that though we disagree with this philosophy, we do nevertheless sympathize with the man who spent his whole life, in what appears to us, a futile search after truth. The chase has a pathetic tinge in

¹⁰⁷ Marsh, Preliminary Essay, Works I, 97. Cf. Works I, 119.

¹⁰⁸ Potter, Coleridge, Select Poetry and Prose, p. 519.

this, that, while building up a magnificent wall around his Faith to keep the enemy without, he had the misfortune of letting the latter slip in unawares, to this effect, that while he and his partisans sit back and think they have built up a strong defence, the whole edifice is being mined from within, and it is only a question of time till the entire city falls into ruins.

But we do not wish to overlap the scope of our inquiry. Let us rather give in summary-form, the matter presented in this paper. With Coleridge we have asked ourselves the question: Is there a valid and sufficient justification of the worth^{of} human knowledge? If so, where is it to be found?

Very definitely, it is not to be had in the Materialism of Locke, Hobbes, or Hartley, nor in the equally ridiculous systems of Hylozoism, or Dualism. For all of these destroy the very nature of man, and lower him to the level of an animal, or a pure machine.

Nor is it afforded us in the Idealism of Berkeley having as its foundation the doctrine of Identity, for in this hypothesis all truth is ultimately founded, in the psychological order, on the knowledge (by immediate perception) of God, and culminates in an identification of the knowing subject, man, with the unconditional object of all cognition, God. In other words, Identity leads

to a Pantheistic God, which is no god at all.

The true solution is to be found in the analysis of God, of the universe and all beings contained therein. It becomes evident that the sum of all beings, created and Uncreated, must be divided into two classes, according to the manner in which they appear to us. First, there is that class of beings which we see, touch, hear, or perceive through any of our senses. And all of these we can classify under the common label - the world of Nature. Second, there is another world which does not come within the range of our senses, but the existence of which is no less manifest to us, it is that which we know by immediate intuition, contemplation, intellectual vision, through spiritual images which we call ideas, and are the very counterpart of the things they present to our minds. This is the world of Spirit.

To these two worlds, which are made known to us through different mediums, correspond two faculties very distinct, as distinct as are the two worlds which they make known to us. Between them there exists an unbridgeable chasm, and one can never pass in a continuous line from one to the other. They belong to different orders. It follows from this that man who has knowledge of these two worlds of different order, must be endowed with two faculties of knowing which pertain to the corresponding

species of being which is the object of their knowledge. These we name, the Understanding - the faculty of Nature, of sense, of conditional, phenomenal, general and abstract cognition - and the Reason, - faculty of the Spiritual, the necessary, the absolute, of the noumenal.

It is the failure of philosophers and thinkers in general to distinguish these two faculties, these two fields of knowledge, these two kinds of reality; it is for having established a difference in degree, rather than in kind, between Nature and Spirit, Understanding and Reason, says Coleridge, that the problem of the validity, nature, and scope of human cognition has so long been the object of controversy. This has been the great fault of an entire school of metaphysics having Aristotle as its head and founder. It is again due to the failure of maintaining this fundamental position that Deism has found its way into the otherwise purest systems of thought, witness Aristotle himself, whose God, known by the Understanding must be a part of the Universe of which He is supposed to be the cause.

The true system of philosophy to which we must turn therefore is the one we have profounded. Not because it is original, on the contrary, it is as old as philosophical wisdom itself. It is made up of truths sparsed here and there along the ages of intellectual in-

quiry, and claims no special author as founder. With it, and in it, we are certain of finding truth, all truth. We shall be able to perceive how "noble a creature is man", and perfect the natural powers of our Reason by a rational adherence to the dogmas of the Christian Revelation.

In his Table Talk, Coleridge is reported to have said: "You may not understand my system, or any given part of it, - or by a determined act of willfulness, you may, even though perceiving a ray of light, reject it in anger and disgust. But this I will say, that if you once master it, or any part of it, you cannot hesitate to acknowledge it as the truth. You cannot be skeptical about it." 108.

How true this is, we leave to the reader to decide.

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