

**AN ESSAY ON THE PHILOSOPHY
OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.
CONTAINING AN ANALYSIS OF
REASON AND THE RATIONALE OF
LOVE**

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An Essay on the Philosophy of Self-Consciousness. Containing an Analysis of Reason and the Rationale of Love by P. F. Fitzgerald

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P. F. FITZGERALD

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ESSAY ON THE PHILOSOPHY
OF
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BY
P. F. FITZGERALD.

"The logical formulæ are the real predicates of God."—HAGEL.

"The confidence of reason give,
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!"
—WORDSWORTH, *Ode to Duty*.

"'Tis a base abandonment of reason to resign our right of thought,
our last and only place of refuge."
—LOCKE BAKER.

"Unless we see that God is involved in our Self-Consciousness, His
existence must be for us ever contingent and unnecessary."



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PREFACE.

As the author is suffering from weakness of sight, is engaged in preparing other essays for publication, is in delicate health, and dreads any further delay in giving to the public what is felt to be an important truth, I am intrusted to prepare this essay for the press. What the important truth referred to is I give in the author's own words.

“Of the three discoveries to which I pretend, and which are the motive of this work, the first regards the intellectual nature of man, the second his affectional nature, and the third his moral nature. The objection to metaphysics that has hitherto been deemed unanswerable is, that the primary fundamental beliefs of reason have themselves no foundation in actual fact, but are mere philosophical assumptions. Now what I have endeavoured to show is, that the substance or hypostasis of thought is Being—the Being of the individual Ego being in every case the standpoint of rational

judgment. The necessary conception of the subjective facts of feeling, thought, and will are thus seen to be the *à priori* grounds of the inferences or general ideas of reason—ratiocination being always in the ratio of Being. The above-mentioned objection not having taken account of this has led to the primary fundamental beliefs of reason being considered as having no foundation in actual fact, the diversity of judgment which has appeared to render absolute truth unattainable. Still it must be remembered that the normal person or Ego, not the idiatic or isolated being, is alone accepted as a standpoint of humanity. The degree, relative and abstract, of emotional, intellectual, and moral development varies even in the cases of typical or representative men, but using history and biography as well as individual experience to help us to arrive at a correct conception of normal humanity, a generally admitted standard has been arrived at, and it is the elementary constituents of this standard of humanity upon which reason takes her stand and argues to Being universal, which cannot conceivably be a contradiction of our own Being, which is the subject of mental representation in the idea of Being.

“The new view to which I pretend on the subject of the affections or emotions is the essential correlative reciprocity of their nature, whatever fancies we may make to ourselves concerning them; such, for instance,

as I have often heard expressed in the case of married people, where one will state that though their husband or wife, as the case may be, is not truly companionable, and so satisfactory to them, yet that they are themselves quite satisfying or satisfactory to their husband or wife. Now the law of the material universe is that action and reaction are equal and opposite, and the law corresponding to this in the spiritual world is that attraction is reciprocal and complementary. The closer we look into the relativity of Being or the adaptation of beings to each other, the more we realise that the necessary imperfection of every finite being, so far from being a cause of distress to us, is the source of our greatest joy, for what is love but the clinging sense of mutual correlation for dependence? Love is both the condition of our highest joy and the great aid to the fulfilment of the moral law, inasmuch as love or sympathy is the only real key to our duty to God and to our neighbour.

“The third novelty I profess to have given is the answer to the great question of the day, which Mr. Mallock has put in these words, ‘Is life worth living?’ And to the complaint, continued from Greville to Mr. Punnett in ‘Mind,’ July number, that we are entirely without scientific guidance in regard to the agencies contributory to happiness, I reply: It is obvious, with regard even to the lower animals, that the recognised end of action is avoid-

ance of pain and endeavour after pleasure; but in the rational being, joy of life is only completely attained through realisation of the ideals of feeling, thought, and will. That happiness does consist in the realisation of ideals is practically recognised even by the least reflective of mankind, only that by them it is made to consist of mere conformity to the conventions of the particular country or time to which they belong with regard to rank, dress, or sensuous beauty of form, all which things are quite inadequate to ontological satisfaction. 'Heaven,' says a great Persian poet, 'is the vision of fulfilled desire;' but this desire is spiritual according to the nature of the soul. It is the satisfaction of self-love, of social love, and of divine love. These are the essential desires that require fulfilment, as they alone give the satisfaction of Being which constitutes happiness." "The crowning principle of thought which emerges from these felt needs is the principle of Sufficient reason—the satisfaction of Being a happiness of the rational God conceiving Being, who alone is through reflective reason constituted capable of communion with his Creator, is necessarily regarded in reflective reason as the '*Raison Suffesante*' for the existence of the material Cosmos, which, as Berkeley taught, has its rationale or *raison d'être* in its subserving the purposes and exercising the intelligence of spiritual beings, for matter, if it exist, cannot be regarded as

an end in itself and for itself by a creature whose understanding is of pure or real (noumenal) Being. Everything is explainable to us, constituted as we are, only on this principle of Sufficient reason, the ultimate good for Being; as the *means to this end* present suffering and even permitted sin are conceivably good as assisting through intellectual, emotional, and moral development a thorough realisation of the order of the universe."

The author also adds, "I have to apologise for having presented quotations in verse in the form of rugged prose to back out my arguments; but as it has been said that 'It is the audible where the value of measured verse is alone of value,' I must beg my readers to remember that it is simply as bearing logical testimony to the emotional nature of man, or to the principle of relativity, to the supremacy of its joys and to the bottomless depths of its anguish, that I have inserted these quotations from the poets."

The original essay was written three years ago, and a few copies printed for private circulation. My work has been to draw out a scheme, rearrange the matter so as to bring under general heads those parts which treated of the same subject, to give form to thoughts expressed *vivâ voce*, and combine with the printed text such new matter, together with that given me in notes by the author. I have striven as far as possible to give the author's own words, and as to the