Spiritual substance in the philosophy of George Berkeley.

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SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GEORGE BERKELEY

Submitted to the Department of Philosophy of Assumption University of Windsor in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts by Edward G. King B.A.

Faculty of Graduate Studies 1961
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ABSTRACT

Most books and articles written on the philosophy of George Berkeley have treated his empiricism. Yet he himself explicitly states that his principal concern is with spiritual substance. The purpose of this thesis is to consider his doctrine on spiritual substance in relation to his empiricism and to try to determine whether or not these two parts of his philosophy do fit together.

In the introductory chapter the basic tenets of his empiricism; namely, the rejection of abstract ideas, the *esse est percipi* principle, and the rejection of material substance, are analysed. These three tenets are presupposed in his discussion of spiritual substance and hence are a necessary preliminary. Although the arguments advanced to prove these teachings are not satisfactory, nevertheless these three tenets do blend into one harmonious position.

The existence of spiritual substances is considered next. Berkeley merely asserts the existence of self as a spiritual substance without proving it. The existence of other finite spirits is dependent on this assertion and consequently is not proven. Finally, the existence of God depends on the *esse est percipi* principle which in turn depends on the existence of God.
Then the activities of spiritual substances, namely, sensing, imagining, thinking and willing are treated. Here there are many inconsistencies, Berkeley does not make clear the precise nature of each faculty nor whether the faculties are to be distinguished from the substance in which they reside.

It would appear that Berkeley's empiricism and his doctrine on spiritual substance, which derives from his Christian faith, are not compatible. Following the basic tenets of his empirical philosophy, Berkeley should logically have rejected spiritual substance. Since he did not he is faced with problems which his philosophy cannot resolve. As a result his empiricism and his Christian doctrine on spiritual substance remain as separate parts in a philosophy without unity.
The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the notion of spiritual substance in the philosophy of George Berkeley. In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the meaning of spiritual substance for Berkeley, it will be necessary first to explain certain basic tenets of his philosophy. Accordingly the initial chapter deals with the rejection of abstract ideas and of material substance as well as the development of the esse est percipi. This serves to introduce the more positive aspects of his thought having to do with the existence and nature of spiritual substance, self as opposed to other finite spirits, and God the infinite Spirit. Following this is a study of the Berkeleyan psychology and epistemology of the operations which spiritual substances are said to possess.

Is this doctrine at home in the philosophy of Berkeley? Does it not seem paradoxical that an empiricist, who rejects material substance, should at the same time maintain a doctrine of spiritual substance? This is the problem which is at the heart of this thesis. Although it pervades the entire thesis, this problem is considered formally in the concluding chapter. The critics have not dealt very extensively with the doctrine on spiritual substance, even though it is of prime importance to the Anglican Bishop of Cloyne, an avowed enemy of skeptics and atheists.
In dealing with this problem, recourse has been made primarily to Berkeley's own text. The pertinent doctrines are contained chiefly in the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) and the *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713). Considerable relevant material is to be found also in the *Philosophical Commentaries* (1707-8) and *Siris* (1744). Other works, such as *Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher* (1732), *De Motu* (1721), the *Essay Toward a New Theory of Vision* (1709), and his private correspondence and sermons, have been used only to a very minor extent because they contain very little matter germane to this topic. Unfortunately an intended work on spiritual substance, which was to have been Part II of the *Principles*, was lost in manuscript form by Berkeley himself. And as Berkeley wrote in his second letter to Samuel Johnson, the American Philosopher, "I never had leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing as writing twice on the same subject." There is then a difficulty, arising from this regrettable paucity of material, in being certain of Berkeley's exact position on some issues.

Secondary sources have provided some illuminating suggestions, as well as a better general understanding of Berkeley's philosophy. For the most part material from the secondary sources has not been included in the body of the dissertation, but rather has been restricted to the footnotes. The standard works on Berkeley have been consulted, as have

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more specialized studies pertaining to the present topic. Such specialized studies are, however, not very plentiful. Finally the more recent periodical articles on Berkeley have been employed.

All references to the writings of Bishop Berkeley are from *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1948-1957). Berkeley almost invariably followed the practice of numbering his paragraphs, and accordingly references have been given first to his own paragraph number and then in brackets to the volume and page of the Luce-Jessop edition, e.g. *Princ.*, Part I, par. 10, (II, 45) refers to paragraph 10 of Part I of the *Principles*, which appears on page 45 of Volume II of the Luce-Jessop edition.

The Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous do not have any paragraph division, and only the reference to the Luce Jessop edition has been given, e.g. *Dial.*, II, 233, refers to page 233 of Volume II of this edition. The *Philosophical Commentaries* are referred to as *P.C.* and *Alciphron* as *Alc.* In reference to the letters or sermons, the number of the letter or sermon is given, and then the volume and page of the Luce-Jessop edition in brackets.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. John Deck who has very carefully examined my manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. My thanks are due also to Mr. Patrick Flood who has been instrumental in imparting to me the background.
knowledge of modern philosophy without which I could not have undertaken this dissertation. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness also to the members of the Philosophy Departments of the University of St. Michael's College and of Assumption University of Windsor, who have been responsible for my philosophical instruction. Finally a word of appreciation to Miss Pauline Stellman and Mrs. Helen Haberer for the many hours they have spent in typing this dissertation.
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BASIC TENETS OF BERKELEY'S PHILOSOPHY

To begin in medias res may indeed be admirable in the epic but it is hardly to be recommended in a philosophical dissertation. Accordingly the discussion shall begin with certain basic positions in the philosophy of Berkeley, which must be understood before spiritual substance can be treated. The rejection of abstract ideas must be taken as the starting point in any consideration of Berkeley's thought. For he invokes this doctrine, which he believes he has firmly established, throughout the whole gamut of his work. Appropriately then, he deals with the problem of abstract ideas in the "Introduction" to his major philosophical work, The Principles of Human Knowledge.¹

Berkeley begins by observing that abstract ideas occupy a considerable amount of time and writings among philosophers. These philosophers among whom "the scholastics"

and Locke\textsuperscript{2} are mentioned, tell us we can form abstract ideas of qualities such as extension, colour etc., even of man, body and "more compound beings" of this sort. But Berkeley sardonically adds, "Whether others have this wonderful faculty of abstracting their ideas they best can tell; for myself I find indeed I have a faculty of imagining, or representing to myself the ideas of those particular things I have perceived and of variously compounding and dividing them."\textsuperscript{3}

Here we have a lucid statement of Berkeley's own position on forming abstract ideas. He only knows, or has ideas of, concrete things which he perceived through his senses. He can combine these ideas and form ideas of such things as phoenix or unicorn of which he actually has no sense impression. But he denies that he can form an idea of colour, man, etc., which abstracts from all particulars. The idea of man must be of some colour, size, age, etc. Berkeley seems to make no distinction between an idea and a sense image. He does, it is true, distinguish objects of sense and objects of imagination, which we shall treat at length in the third chapter, but this distinction is not relevant to our present discussion. A sense image of man perspicuously must be of a certain

\textsuperscript{2} Berkeley usually calls them "the Schoolmen" and refers to their abstraction in the \textit{Princ.}, Introd. par. 17, (II, 35); to Locke, \textit{ibid.}, par. 11-17, (II, 30-33).

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Princ.}, Introd., par. 10, (II, 29), cf. N.T.V. par. 122, (I, 220).
colour, size, shape, etc., but it might be argued that an intellectual idea can prescind from these sense impressions and form an abstract idea. Berkeley does not have an answer to an objection based on this distinction of sense image and idea because he appears to be completely unaware of such a distinction.  

He does, however, admit that we can abstract in one sense, that is, we can separate some particular parts or qualities from others with which they are united in some object. But this is only possible if they may really exist thus separated. Such a form of abstraction, as is patent, is not really a concession on Berkeley's part, for it does not in any way involve the forming of abstract ideas.

In direct refutation of Locke, Berkeley challenges the reader to try and form an idea of a triangle which is "neither oblique, nor rectangle, equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once." Clearly

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5 *Princ., Introd.*, par. 10, (II, 29).

6 This is what is called abstraction in some intelligence tests.

7 *Princ., Introd.*, par. 13, (II, 32f). The Text in Locke reads as follows: "Does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle? (Which is
Berkeley confuses idea in this case with visual image which obviously cannot abstract from the particulars enumerated. Looked at, however, from the point of view of Locke who admits the difficulty of framing abstract ideas, and who states that this process involves the putting together of inconsistent parts, Berkeley's criticism is indeed telling. Locke, it is true, remains vague on the meaning of framing an abstract idea, but unless he too confuses image and concept, then it is difficult to make any sense of his doctrine of abstract ideas.

An obvious objection to this rejection of abstract ideas is the assertion that it would destroy all science. When, for example, you take a particular triangle in Geometry and prove some theorem using it, you would not be able to generalize and make a universal judgment. Berkeley parries this attack by saying that when we use a particular triangle, it is used as an example; we do not attend to the particulars of the triangle in the proof, and hence the proof will stand for all triangles. For we can consider a figure merely as triangular without considering the size of the angles or lines.

yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive and difficult.) For it must be neither oblique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all or none of these at once. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Oxford, Clarendon, 1894) A. C. Frazer ed., Bk. IV, Ch. 7, sec. 9, (Vol. II, p. 274).

Ibid.

Princ., Introd., par. 16, (II, 35).
We can abstract thus far, Berkeley admits, but this is not to frame "an abstract general inconsistent idea of a triangle". But what, one may ask, is the difference between considering a figure as triangular and framing an abstract idea of a triangle? Surely to consider a figure as triangular is to abstract from the particulars of shape, size, colour, etc., and hence to frame an abstract idea.¹⁰

The source of the prevailing notion of abstract ideas, Berkeley thinks, is language. Each word is said to have one precise and settled signification and the only purpose of language is the communication of ideas.¹¹ But as Berkeley points out,¹² it is not necessary that significant names excite in the understanding the ideas for which they stand

¹⁰ Warnock agrees with Berkeley on this issue "We may agree with him [Berkeley] that a general discourse about lines may refer to a particular line used as an example, and need not be conceived to be about some entity other than actual lines, an 'abstract line' or the 'abstract idea' of line." p. 71, What Warnock says is quite true, but he misses the point to some extent. Abstract ideas are a means of knowing things, but not what we know. Science does deal with real things but this does not exclude the employment of abstract ideas.

¹¹ Locke, Essay, Bk. III, Ch. 10, sec. 23, (Vol. II, p. 142), "...the ends of language in our discourse with others, being chiefly these three: First, to make known one man's thought or ideas to another: Secondly, to do it with as much ease and quickness as is possible: and, Thirdly, thereby to convey the knowledge of things."

¹² Princ., Introd., par. 20, (II, 37).
every time they are used. For example, in Algebra, we do not always need to advert to the particular quantity marked by a certain letter used as a symbol.

Moreover, for Berkeley, the communication of ideas is not the chief nor the only end of language. Other ends would include the raising of some passion or emotion, the exciting to or deterring from an action, the putting of the mind in some particular disposition. In such cases there is no need for abstract ideas. In this argument, Berkeley has only tried to show that abstract ideas are not as important as some thinkers would have us believe. It is not, nor is it intended to be, an apodictic demonstration that there are no abstract ideas.

"What created intelligence will pretend to conceive that which God cannot cause to be? Now it is on all hands agreed, that nothing abstract or general can be made really to exist, whence it should seem to follow, that it cannot have so much as an ideal existence in the understanding." This argument of Berkeley against abstract idea manifests a rather confused idea of being. When he speaks of God causing something to be, Berkeley seems to mean to be a particular concrete thing. Consequently, to say that God cannot cause it to be in this sense, is no argument against

13 "First Draft of the Introduction", II, 125,
Vide supra, note 1, page 1.
the reality of abstract ideas. Against the ideal existence of abstract ideas in the mind, Berkeley does not seem to give any reason in this passage, although perhaps his equating of thing and idea is foreshadowed. In that case, the real existence of the concrete thing and its ideal existence in the mind would be identical. But more of this identity later.

"I approve of this axiom of the schoolemen nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu. I wish they had stuck to it it had never taught them the Doctrine of Abstract Ideas."

The way in which this axiom is understood by Berkeley constitutes an objection to the doctrine of abstract ideas. Once again this is due to having the product of the intellect identical with the sense image. The intellect does not go beyond this image to a concept which is free of such sense limitations; hence the axiom thus interpreted supports Berkeley's rejection of abstract ideas.

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14 P.C. par. 779, (I, 94). The punctuation, capitalization etc. are irregular in this early fragmentary work. Wild points out that we cannot quote isolated sections of the P.C. as representing Berkeley's views. John Wild, George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 14. A. A. Luce also gives this warning, although he points out that "the final views expressed in these notebooks are, I think in entire agreement with the published doctrine of the Principles". A. A. Luce, Berkeley's Immaterialism, (Nelson and Sons, London, 1945), p. 6.
Berkeley also claims the common man to his side.
"The generality of men which are simple and illiterate never pretend to abstract notions." He does not make any effort to back up this statement except in terms of Locke's thought. For Locke had said that abstract ideas are difficult to frame and require study and effort, so, as Berkeley puts it, "We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that if such there be [that is, abstract ideas] they are altogether confin'd to the learned." But this is hardly to be urged against Locke since his very characterization of abstract ideas would make the opinion of the generality of men irrelevant. Surely if abstract ideas are very difficult and require study, then the claim that the common man does not have them, does not constitute any objection to their existence. On the other hand, against those who do not accept Locke's version of abstract ideas as being so difficult to frame, Berkeley's claim remains an unsupported assumption. In this argument Berkeley seems to be trying,

15 "First Draft of the Introd.", II, 125.

16 Locke, An Essay Conc. Hum. Und., Mk. IV., Ch. 7, sec. 9, (Vol II, p. 274). "Thus particular ideas are first received and distinguished and so knowledge got about them; and next to them the less general or less specific, which are next to particular; for, abstract ideas are not so obvious or easy to children or the yet unexercised mind, as particular ones. If they seem so to grown men, it is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so: for when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves as we are apt to imagine."
as the old cliche puts it, "to eat his cake and have it too".

The appeal to having established definitely and conclusively that there are no abstract ideas will follow through the remainder of Berkeley's philosophy. Although he uses his teaching to prove virtually everything in his thought, yet we could not say that his philosophy stands or falls with the success or failure of his endeavour to substantiate this doctrine. For Berkeley is not merely a man of one argument.

While the rejection of abstract ideas is the most basic position in Berkeley's thought, the esse est percipi is the statement for which the Bishop of Cloyne is best known. "For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percipi, nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds of thinking things which perceive them." Hence we have an account of his most distinctive doctrine.

The existence of sensible things consists in their being perceived, or, in other words, when speaking of sensible things to exist and to be perceived are synonymous. An absolute existence apart from being perceived is flatly denied. Yet it is "an opinion strangely prevailing amongst

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Princ., part I, par. 3, (II, 42).
men", as Berkeley himself admits, that things do have a real existence outside the mind or distinct from being perceived. The root of this opinion is abstract ideas, which were fostered by the schoolmen. But nothing could be more abstract, Berkeley informs us, than to consider the existence of sensible things apart from their being perceived. It is impossible to conceive a sensible thing distinct from our sensation or perception of it. The two cannot exist apart and hence we cannot abstract one from the other. Clearly the force of Berkeley’s argument here depends on the rejection of abstract ideas, the proof of which we have already shown to be doubtful.

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P.C. par. 725, (I, 88). “N.B. That not common usage but the Schools coined the Word existence supposed to stand for an abstract general Idea.”

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Other authors have pointed out Berkeley’s failure to distinguish the act of sensation from its object as an objection to the esse est percipi principle. *Vide* J. J. Laky, p. 121; Warnock, p. 149; A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, (London, MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1947), p. 647. Ayer, although he agrees ultimately with Berkeley, states the objection clearly. “However the philosophers who maintain this distinction between act and object in their analysis of sensation do not, for the most part, desire merely to call attention to an empirical matter of fact. They consider the distinction to be philosophically important because they think they can use it to refute Berkeleyan idealism. For, according to Berkeley, colour and shapes and sound and all other "sensible qualities" are mind-dependent, inasmuch as their existence consists in their being perceived, and since material things are, in his view, nothing but collections of sensible qualities, he concludes that they too cannot exist apart from a perceiving mind. But here, it is argued, he falls into error through failing to distinguish between the object of a sensation and the act. Acts of sensation, it is said, are indeed mind-dependent; but it..."
But Berkeley does not depend on this one argument to support his favourite teaching. He takes the same epistemological point de départ as Locke and Descartes before him, that is, he begins with the knowledge of ideas rather than things. Yet unlike both Locke and Descartes, Berkeley does not try to get out of his mind. He makes no reference to this starting point of Locke and Descartes, which we might call idealist-in-tendency, because he was so imbued with Cartesianism as to be unaware of any other

does not follow their objects are; for there is no good ground for supposing that the object of a sensation cannot exist apart from the act."


21 Locke, *An Essay Conc. Hum. Und.*, Bk. IV, Ch. 1, sec. 1, (II, 167). "Since the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them". Yet Locke does speak of "external sensible objects" which do not exist only in the mind. Logically such objects will have to be unknowable and Berkeley wished to avoid this position. Descartes in his *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*, Oeuvres de Descartes, edited by C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris, Ceri, 1897-1910), notably in Meditatio III, (Vol. VII, p. 34-52) says that he is a thinking thing and then he proceeds from the ideas he has in his mind to prove the existence of God. Then in Meditatio VI, (Vol. VII, p. 71-89) he goes on to prove the existence of the external world. We should note that he looks at his ideas while still in doubt of the existence of any extramental reality. On Berkeley's remaining within his own mind vide Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p.196f.
possible point of departure. But he is more vigorously logical in deriving conclusions from this beginning than were his predecessors. If, originally, we know only our own sensations or ideas, then the so-called external objects would be unknowable; we are involved in skepticism. We are limiting our knowledge to appearances and positing an unknowable something beyond them. Kant admitted the inaccessibility of the thing-in-itself, but developed Locke in a direction which avoided complete skepticism by postulating subjective categories in the mind. Hence what we know are phenomena, a tertium quid, with the matter supplied by the thing and the form by our own understanding.

Such a constructive knowledge, however, would not be satisfactory to Berkeley. He desires something more in line with common sense, more realistic. He brings Locke to a logical conclusion in another direction, which also overcomes the skepticism which Locke had avoided only at the expense of being inconsistent, of failing to carry his principles through to their radical ending. There is, for Berkeley, no unknowable something; things and ideas are equated. When we know our sensations or ideas, we know sensible things, not just their appearances; we know them as they are in themselves.

Hence in the Philosophical Commentaries he writes, "According to my doctrine all things are entia rationis i.e. solum habent esse in Intellectu." And in the next paragraph,
"According to my doctrine all are not entia rationis. The distinction between ens rionis [sic] and ens reale is kept up by it as well as any other Doctrine." At first sight there appears to be a direct contradiction and possibly that is the correct interpretation of these passages. Perhaps Berkeley is correcting the first passage and deliberately contradicting it in the second entry. However it may be merely a carelessness in terminology and possibly we can harmonize the two quotations.

Sensible things do exist only in the mind—on this point Berkeley is most emphatic. But that existence is a real existence and can be distinguished from the purely mental existence of things which cannot exist. Such things are contradictory and although we can speak of them, they can have no existence—the prime example, for Berkeley, being abstract ideas. The entia rationis could also refer to things which are objects of our imagination but not sensible things. It does seem quite possible then that the entia rationis is the

22 P.C., par. 474, 474a (I, 59). The two quotations above constitute two complete successive entries which are not connected with the paragraphs immediately preceding or following them.

23 J. P. de C. Day, "George Berkeley 1685-1753", The Review of Metaphysics, VI, (1952-1953), p. 267, remarks that Berkeley confuses logical impossibility with psychological impossibility, that is, what is inconceivable with what is unimaginable. Such criticism seems to be sound, the confusion being a result of the failure to distinguish adequately between the intellect and the imagination. Cf. Semantics and Necessary Truth: An Inquiry into the Foundation of Analytical Philosophy, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1958), p. 81
second passage (P.C. par. 474a) refers to one of these possibilities or perhaps to both. But if Berkeley is to be entirely consistent he would not even call the contradictions such as abstract ideas, entia rationis for he denied not only real but also ideal existence to them.

In a rather involved debate in the Three Dialogues Between Hylae and Philonous, Berkeley argues against the independent existence of sensible things. The argument is based on the definition of sensible things being those immediately perceived by sense. Such a definition could, as

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Dial., II, 174-189. Warnock describes the two arguments in this portion of the first dialogue very clearly: "He uses arguments of two different kinds. In some cases he tries to show by direct argument that some of what we call 'sensible qualities' actually are sensations; in others, he uses the 'argument from illusion' in an attempt to show that certain qualities are not 'in' objects and so (he assumes) must be 'in the mind'. ... The first group of arguments relies on the point that many qualities of things are often said to be 'pleasant' or 'disagreeable', sometimes even 'painful'. We say that a fire is pleasantly warm; that if one gets too close it feels painfully hot; that vinegar is disagreeably bitter. Berkeley quite wrongfully proceeds to identify the pleasant of painful heat of a fire with the pleasant or painful feelings that people have in its proximity, the bitterness of vinegar with the disagreeable sensations of one who tastes it; and he concludes that these 'sensible qualities' are 'sensations'. But this is obviously a confusion. The fire's 'quality' of being pleasantly warm is not a sensation, but rather what a fire is said to have which does, or would, occasion pleasant feelings of warmth in normally sensitive people who do not get too close to it. The second group of arguments trades on the fact that objects sometimes seem different to different observers in different conditions... He asserts in the course of his arguments that if some property were 'really inherent' in an object, the object would necessarily appear to have that property in all circumstances... unless this fantastic assumption is made, the 'argument from illusion' cannot get started."

pp. 151-153.
is evident, be taken in a realist manner. But for Berkeley it means that the reality of the sensible thing consists in its being perceived. This enables Berkeley to make the seemingly realist statement that we know things—but "things" are ideas. Once this starting point, that is, the definition of sensible things as the Bishop of Cloyne understands it, is accepted, the distinction between thing and idea is impossible to maintain.

We must note, however, that the starting point itself is given an arbitrary interpretation which tends toward idealism. The radical position, that is, the esse est percipi, which is necessary to avoid skepticism, would be enough to render one suspicious of this interpretation of the definition of sensible things. What Berkeley really assumes is that we know our sensations rather than things; he does not actually prove this. Or perhaps we should say that he offers a sophistical argument, namely, that to say that we know things is to say that things are in our mind. But the things in our mind are ideas and it is, therefore, these ideas which we know. One could object that ideas are not what we know but rather the means by which we know things. Berkeley

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25 Princ., Part I, par. 6, (II, 43).

26 Laky, p. 121, observes Berkeley's failure to make this distinction. "For him ideas are the id quod and not the id quo, thus confusing the how of knowing with the what of knowing."
is not actually very concerned with proving this point which he probably did not expect to be questioned, embedded firmly as he was in the Cartesian tradition of his time.

When Berkeley appeals to the reader to consider in his own mind, "the absolute existence of sensible objects in themselves or without the mind," and see if it is not a direct contradiction, his case once again rests on a Cartesian foundation. It is so manifestly a contradiction to himself that he feels any fair-minded reader calmly considering this abstract idea cannot fail to agree with him. The truth of the esse est percipi is so obvious to Berkeley that he scarcely takes any pains to prove it.

For two reasons he prefers the term "idea" to "thing", even though both are used synonymously. First, the term "thing" is more comprehensive and could refer to spirits or thinking things as well as to ideas, the latter being only identical with sensible things. "Idea", then, should have a precise technical meaning in Berkeley, although unfortunately he does not remain faithful to this signification at all.

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28 Warnock, p. 145, is struck by Berkeley's certitude on this issue, "Ideas, he repeatedly insists, exist 'only in the mind'; they exist only when they are actually perceived; 'Their being is to be perceived or known'. This too, at the very outset of his argument, he declares to be 'evident', the contrary 'plainly repugnant'. He seems to think that his assertion stands in no need of explanation or defense."
Closely allied with his esse est percipi principle is the rejection of matter or material substance. In the Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous, commencing with sensible things as those immediately perceived by sense, Berkeley argues, through his spokesman Philonous, that we only know sensible qualities. From which it follows that, "sensible things therefore are nothing else but so many sensible qualities or combinations of sensible qualities." These sensible qualities, whose existence is to-be-perceived, exist in the mind. The material substratum said to underlie these qualities is not itself perceived immediately, and hence is not sensible. Hylas, the straw man, who is in favour of material substance, tries to explain what he means by substance supporting its accidents, but finds that he is unable to do so. In fact, Hylas discovers that even apart

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29 For the most part Berkeley does restrict his use of the word "idea" to his own technical meaning. However, he is a little careless on occasion, e.g. P. C., par. 887, (I, 104); Princ., Part I, par. 140, (II, 105).

30 Dial., II, 175.

31 Hylas represents a point of view which is basically Lockean, thus giving Berkeley an excellent opportunity to develop his thought against the background of a popular philosophy of the day. Moreover because of his empirical idealism, Locke's philosophy furnishes an admirable point of departure for Berkeley. The name Hylas is too similar to the Greek word for matter, hyle, to be a coincidence. There might also be a play on the Greek word, hylao, meaning 'bark' or 'bay'.

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from not having a proper idea of matter, since it is not perceived by senses, we do not have any understanding of matter. We have no idea of it, using the term "idea" in a more general sense. Philonous now charges that the proof should lie with the one who holds the affirmative side. Since Hylas cannot support his position, there is no reason to cling to it.

Moreover matter or material substance is an abstract idea and consequently is to be cast off on this ground also. For the acceptance of matter leads us to posit an unknown and unknowable something which is really what Locke did. But such a position is skeptical and Berkeley wants to avoid skepticism at all costs. To maintain this old idea of the existence of material substance in view of a point of departure which is idealist-in-tendency is indeed difficult to do. Berkeley is once again bringing Locke to a logical conclusion, an extreme one which the moderate Englishman would never

32 M. C. Beardley, "Berkeley on 'Abstract Ideas'", *Mind*, Vol. III, p. 157, does not think that this argument is valid. "The doctrine of abstract ideas furnishes no real support to Berkeley's argument against the existence of material substance independent of perception." The reason for this opinion is not made clear in the article.

33 Locke, *Essay Conc. Hum. Und.*, Mk. II, ch. 23, sec 4, (Vol. I, p. 386). "Yet because we cannot conceive how they [i.e. sensible qualities] should subsist alone, nor one in another, we suppose them existing in, and supported by, some common subject; which support we denote by the name 'substance', though it be certain we have no clear or distinct idea of that thing we suppose a support."
accept. 34

Of course, Berkeley does not feel he is going against common sense or the ordinary people. He is only rejecting the philosophical sense of "material substance", "which in effect is no sense." The ordinary man, who has not been tainted by the abstract jargon of the philosophers, only understands by corporeal substance, "Bulk, Solidity & such like sensible qualities [sic]." In other words, Berkeley claims to be in line with the thinking of the common man with regard to the meaning of material substance. The value of his argument here seems open to question; "material substance" is a technical philosophic term and it seems to be begging the question merely to assert that ordinary men regard things only as so many sensible qualities.

It is doubtful if they have any opinion at all on such a topic. How could an ordinary man who has no philosophical background even discuss this issue? His very use of words will differ from that of philosophers, which if not radically different, will at least be more refined and precise. Therefore it seems necessary that we first express the thoughts of the ordinary man in philosophical language before we can discuss his opinion. The possibility of doing this is certainly open to dispute.

34 Laky, p. 41, notes that Berkeley overcomes the flaws in Locke. "With a keener and more logical mind than Locke's, he successfully opposed the inconsistencies and contradictions in Locke's system."
Again within the Cartesian framework, Berkeley takes up the distinction between primary and secondary qualities to support his case. Locke gives the classical expression for this distinction in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.\(^3^5\) Primary qualities are those "utterly inseparable from the body", that is, in such a manner that they remain in the body in all changes and in every particle of matter. These qualities are extension, solidity, figure, motion, or rest and number. Secondary qualities such as colour, odour, temperature, etc., are themselves nothing in the objects but powers to produce various sensations in us. In brief, the primary qualities really exist in bodies, the secondary do not.

The primary qualities then are said to exist in matter outside of the mind, but not the secondary. They do not exist in matter because of their variability. Hence something at a distance may appear different in colour, or under a microscope or to a person with jaundice it appears different and so on. All colours then are only apparent and none of those we perceive are really inherent in any outward object. The same argument is intended to apply, mutatis mutandis, with regard to odours, sounds, etc.

Thus far Berkeley and Locke are in agreement, but Berkeley is not satisfied to stop here. There is, he claims,
no real basis for the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Berkeley uses the same argument against primary qualities. Thus the extension of a thing appears different at various distances or to take a more extreme example, the extension of a sensible thing would appear must greater to a mite than to a man. "There is no extension or figure in our object because to one eye it shall seem little, smooth and round, when at the same time it appears to the other eye, great uneven and angular."36

This whole line of argumentation may, at first sight, appear weak and even frivolous, but we must try to put ourselves into the whole atmosphere of thought in which Berkeley is immersed. Once you admit sensible qualities are those immediately perceived by sense, according to Berkeley's interpretation of this phrase, then the force of the argument becomes apparent. The application to primary qualities no less than to secondary qualities is equally manifest.

Locke described the primary qualities as those without which we cannot conceive an object. But even this is an abstraction since we cannot, in Berkeley's terms, think of an extended thing which is of no colour, shape, etc. In other words the thing with only its primary qualities is still an abstract idea, and idea which we cannot form.

36 *Dial.*, II, 189.
As has been seen, Berkeley's establishment of this tenet against Locke's doctrine is unanswerable.

But the greatest objection to positing the actual existence of primary qualities in the material substance is that such a position entails the acceptance of the absolute existence of sensible things. "And is not this a direct repugnancy and altogether inconceivable?" Even if it were possible for material substance to exist without the mind, it would be unknowable. By our senses we only know what we perceive and we clearly do not perceive any material substratum. Furthermore, we need not suppose the existence of matter to explain how our ideas are caused. In fact, the "materialist" cannot explain how body can act upon spirit and produce ideas. If matter did exist, then God would have created innumerable beings for no reason at all. Locke's description of the world, in Berkeley's opinion would involve

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37 J. A. Brunton, "Berkeley and the External World", Philosophy 28 (October 1957) p. 325-341, is convinced that the absolute existence of non-thinking things is a contradiction. But he says further that he cannot prove this to anyone who does not see it as a contradiction. A. A. Luce, p. 22 who is a convinced "immaterialist", defends Berkeley and points out that "he so denied matter as to affirm the sensible". Pap, p. 162m writes: "Berkeley only denied a philosophical theory with regard to the nature of material objects not that there are material objects."

38 The problem of the interaction of mind and body was introduced by the dualism of Descartes. He had recourse to the rather facile explanation that the pineal gland was the point of interaction. His successors, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz all struggled with this problem.
needless duplication. In any case we could never know its existence, even if it did exist.

All of Berkeley's arguments involve either the rejection of abstract ideas or the *esse est percipi*, or both. Nevertheless within his own frame of reference and particularly taking up the positions of Locke and thinking them through to their logical though bizarre conclusions, Berkeley does argue cogently. Locke's only possible appeal would be to common sense but such an objection is surely not philosophical, nor could Locke's own thought be aptly called a philosophy of common sense.

In spite of his idealism, Berkeley does still claim to be a realist.\(^39\) "The question between the materialists and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God and exterior to all minds.\(^40\) Sensible things really exist apart from my perceiving them, but still their *esse* is *percipi*; the idealism remains, only very slightly obfuscated. Hence Berkeley can make what appears at first sight to be a straightforward realist statement, e.g., "I question not the

\(^39\) Claude Arnold in an unpublished dissertation *The Notion of Substance in Bishop Berkeley* (The University of Western Ontario, 1953) p. 44, makes the observation that Berkeley's doctrine is analogous to Aristotelian realism because of the identification of "ideas" and "real things".

\(^40\) *Dial.* , II, 235.
existence of anything that we perceive by the senses.1 But since existence is defined as being perceived, any such statements about the real world cannot lose their essentially idealist cast.

Because Berkeley said that things are independent of all finite perceivers and exist in the Divine Mind, he was accused of holding that we see all things in God. He objects to this arraignment and specifically mentions that he is displeased at being ranked with Malebranche on this point.2 Malebranche holds for an absolute external world, but one which is knowable only by revelation. Our senses for him are not reliable and cannot assure us of its existence.3

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1 Letter 12, (VIII, 37). Vide etiam P.C., par. 312, (I, 38); Princ., part I, par. 33, (II, 54).

2 Letter 14, (VIII, 41). J. E. Jessop, "Malebranche and Berkeley", Rêvue Internationale de Philosophie I (1938-1939), p. 138f., agrees with Berkeley's protestations on this point "When system is compared with system, both contents and principles are deeply different. Berkeley was certainly right in repudiating any genuine similarity between his doctrine and Malebranche's". On the specific issue of sense he writes "For Berkeley the veracity of sense is as fundamental as its inveracity for Malebranche". But A. D. Fritz, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley", The Review of Metaphysics III (1949), pp. 59-80, believes that Berkeley is both metaphysically and epistemologically dependent on Malebranche.

3 Nicole Malebranche, Entretiens sur la Metaphysique et sur la Religion, edition critique de Armand Cuviller, (J. Vrin, Paris, 1947) VI, V, (II, 187f.) "Il n'y a donc point d'autre voie que la révélation qui puisse nous assurer, que Dieu a bien voulu créer des corps; supposé néanmoins ce dont vous ne doutez plus, sçavoir qu'ils ne sont point visibles par eux-mêmes, qu'ils ne peuvent agir dans notre esprit, ni se représenter à
on the other hand, taking a more reasonable stand, knows of
the existence of the sensible world and the nature of sensi-
tible things through his perception of this world. It is true
that God constantly affects him with all the sensible impres-
sions he perceives since sensible things themselves are purely
passive and cannot affect him. But this is not to say that we
see all things in the Divine Mind, as Malebranche holds.
Berkeley finds this doctrine incomprehensible.

We have treated three key ideas in the philosophy of
George Berkeley, namely, the rejection of abstract ideas, the
esse est percipi, and the rejection of material substance.
These constitute the backdrop for the main attraction, the
realm of the spirit, God and finite minds. The understanding
of these three basic doctrines is presupposed in the discus-
sion of spiritual substance.

lui; et que notre esprit lui-même ne peut les connaître que
dans les idées qui les représentent, ni les sentir que par
des modalitez ou des sentiments, dont ils ne peuvent être la
cause, qu'en conséquence des loix arbitraires de l'union de
l'âme et du corps."

44 Ibid., VIII, xii, (II, 250f,); Malebranche's own
caption to Entretien II reads "Nous pouvons voir en lui
[Dieu] toutes choses..." (I, 83).
II

THE EXISTENCE OF SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCES

When Berkeley speaks of spiritual substance, soul, mind, or spirit, all of which words he uses synonymously, he introduces a new technical term, "notion". Actually the term does not appear until the second edition of the Principles of Human Knowledge, as is pointed out in the editor's introduction to this work, but only the word itself is new, not that for which it stands.

As we saw, ideas are equated with sensible things, that is, with the things that we perceive with our senses. We do not perceive spiritual substance, neither our own, nor those of other men, nor do we perceive God, and hence the technical term "idea" cannot be properly used in reference to our knowledge of spirits. Berkeley does at times say we have an idea of spirit but only in the sense that we know it.

The term "notion" is used to designate our knowledge of spirits. "In a large sense indeed we may be said to have an idea or rather a notion of spirit, that is, we understand the meaning of the word, otherwise we could not affirm or

1 Princ., Part 1, par. 2, (II, 41f.)

deny any thing of it."³ He desires a different word to indicate our knowledge of a radically different entity. Possibly he does not develop his notion of "notion" because it is only a word, and he is professedly disinterested in mere verbal issues. We have knowledge of spiritual substance; the technical term "idea" cannot be applied to this knowledge, but what it is called is of no great concern. Perhaps this is the way Berkeley would look at the issue. It may well be, however, that he was unable to give an adequate explanation of "notion", and that this is the true reason for his brevity and vagueness with regard to this word.⁴

We might wonder if the notion we have of spiritual substance is not actually an abstract idea. The fact that we can "affirm or deny any thing of it," does not prove we have any understanding of it, for we can do this even with material substance. Is Berkeley's treatment of "notion" condemned to be vague and nebulous because he wants to posit knowledge of an entity which, within his own philosophical world, should remain unknowable? We shall try to keep this question in mind as we consider more fully Berkeley's treatment of spiritual substance.

³ *Princ.* Part 1, par. 140, (II, 105).

⁴ Warnock, p. 205, thinks that Berkeley's explanation of notion was quite unsatisfactory. Likewise N. Baladi, *La pensée religieuse de Berkeley et l'unité de sa philosophie*, (Paris, Vrin, 1945) p. 101 "Par notion, il ne faut entendre autre chose qu'une certaine connaissance—En principe, tout ce dont nous avons une notion, nous la connaissons."
While it appears that Berkeley does not have any predecessor in the use of "notion" as a technical term, at least in the meaning which he gives it, yet a certain similarity with the "intuition" of Descartes can be detected. For Descartes, an intuition was a clear and distinct knowledge by which we could see with certitude such things as our own existence, that a triangle has three sides, that the globe has a single surface and so on. The parallel is not exact for the intuition of Descartes is not restricted to the knowledge of spirits but the manner of knowing bears a marked resemblance. The "inner feeling" of Malebranche is likewise similar to Berkeley's "notion", although Berkeley knows only himself by an immediate non-demonstrative type of knowledge, whereas Malebranche also knows God in this way.

It seems then that "intuition" and "inner feeling" would be satisfactory descriptions of our knowledge of self as a spirit as Berkeley explains it. However, "notion" applies not only to our knowledge of self, but also to our knowledge of other spirits and of God. Here, as we shall see, the manner of our knowledge is not the same as in our knowledge of self. In this way Berkeley's term "notion" has a wider scope than either the "intuition" of Descartes or the "inner feeling" of Malebranche.

In the Principles of Human Knowledge, Berkeley tries to prove the existence of an incorporeal active substance or

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spirit. We perceive a continual succession of ideas which must depend on some cause to produce them. This cause cannot be any quality, or idea, or combination of ideas. Clearly an idea which is purely passive, cannot cause anything. Just look at the ideas in your mind and you will find in them no power or activity. Their being is to be perceived; they are essentially, indeed entirely, passive. Hence an idea or a combination of them cannot be the cause of the successive ideas we perceive.

The cause of our ideas must therefore be a substance. But it has been established already that there is no corporeal active substance. Consequently there must be an incorporeal active substance which is the cause of our ideas.

Such is Berkeley's general argument for the existence of spiritual substance. In terms of his own philosophy he has argued cogently against ideas as causes. But the pure passivity of ideas or sensible things is gratuitous and rests on the esse est percipi principle which Berkeley has failed to establish conclusively. Moreover such a position is hardly in line with common sense or the generality of men—although in itself this is only an indication, not a proof, of its falsity. If we acknowledge his definition of idea, then of course the argument is very solid.

However the claim that the cause of our ideas must be a substance, involves a jump which requires further consider-

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6 *Princ.*, Part I, par. 26, (II, 52).
ation. It seems to imply that things are either ideas or substances and that this is a complete disjunction. But to presuppose these two categories as exhaustive would be begging the question. Berkeley is, in effect, assuming the existence of that which he professes to prove.

Moreover the very term substance may be an abstract idea since we do not perceive substances. We perceive sensible things, and, as Hume asserts, the same difficulties with regard to material substance also apply to spiritual substance along with additional ones peculiar to it. But Hume's arguments prove that we cannot have an idea of spirit since to have an idea we must have a sensation. As we have seen, Berkeley does not claim that we have an idea of spirit, so that Hume's criticism is not entirely germane, and does not prove we do not know spiritual substance.

Both Hume and Berkeley accept the Lockean position that we know our own sensations, and their disagreement seems to revolve on the issue of whether we can argue back from our sensations to a spiritual substance presupposed by the exist-

David Hume, A Treatise on Human Nature, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1889) edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, Bk. I, part IV, sec. 5, (p. 232f.). "This question [the meaning of substance] we have found impossible to be answer'd with regard to matter and body: But besides that in the case of the mind, it labours under all the same difficulties, 'tis burthen'd with some additional ones, which are peculiar to that subject. As every idea is deriv'd from a precedent impression, had we any idea of the substance of our minds, we must also have an impression of it; which is very difficult, if not impossible, to be conceived. For how can an impression represent a substance, otherwise than by resembling it? And how can an impression resemble a substance, since, according to this philosophy, it is not a substance, and has none of the peculiar qualities or characteristics of a substance?"
ence of these sensations. Hume denies the efficacy of rea-
son to do so; for this would involve a causal argument end-
ing with the existence of spiritual substance. Berkeley has
merely assumed the causal principle which Hume attacked and
in no way has foreseen the objections Hume presented. Al-
though Berkeley is more confident in the power of reason, he
has not sought to justify this confidence.

In treating spiritual substance, Berkeley divides
his consideration into three parts: self, other finite spirits,
and God. The existence of each of these three is not known in
the same way. We have looked at Berkeley's general argument
which does not distinguish between God and finite spirits (al-
though strictly speaking Berkeley should have presented it
only as an argument for the existence of God). But let us now
treat each separately. How do we know, first of all, of our
own existence as a spiritual being?

"We comprehend our own being by inward feeling or re-
fection." And a clearer statement, "I do nevertheless know
that I who am a spirit or thinking substance, exist as cer-
tainly as I know my ideas exist. Farther I know what I mean
by the terms I and myself; and I know this immediately and in-
tuitively, though I do not perceive it, as I perceive a triangle,

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8 Ibid. Bk. I, Part III, sec. 6, (p. 86) "Tis there-
lore by EXPERIENCE only, that we can infer the existence of
one object from that of another." Vide etiam sec. 2-5 for
Hume's views on causality.

9 Princ., Part I, par. 89, (II, 80).
a colour or a sound. Berkeley knows himself intuitively to be a spiritual substance; he appears to have no hesitation or difficulty on this point. But we can easily object that we do not have such an intuition. Did not Berkeley himself make a similar objection with regard to abstract ideas? Berkeley does not seem to have any other refuge than to reaffirm his position, since he has made an assertion for which he has no arguments.

We perceive a succession of ideas. But how do we know that our inward being is any more than this succession? If all our knowledge begins with our senses, how is this intuition of self as a spiritual being to be explained? It does not seem consonant with Berkeley's epistemology. He also mentions reflection as a means of knowing self as a spiritual substance, but no specific argument is developed to support this contention. The general argument we have considered above does not apply because it would mean that we are the cause of our own ideas. But as we shall see when we treat of God's existence, Berkeley rejects self as an adequate explanation of the continual succession of ideas which we perceive. In view then of his theory of knowledge, it appears that Berkeley has no justification for saying that self is any more than a flux of perceptions. To posit self as a spiritual substance

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10 Dial. II, 231.
is gratuitous.

In proving the existence of God, Berkeley argues from the mind-dependent nature of sensible things. "Sensible things do really exist; and if they really exist, they are necessarily perceived by an infinite mind; therefore there is an infinite mind or God. This furnishes you with a direct and immediate demonstration from a most evident principle; of the being of God." Berkeley's argument clearly hangs on the validity of the esse est percipi principle. Unless the existence of sensible things consists in being perceived, the proof collapses. It is to be noted that the proof as presented here is rather elliptical. The necessity of sensible things being perceived by an infinite mind is not evident because Berkeley has omitted the step which would refer to the inadequacy of appealing to the perception of finite perceivers to account for the existence of sensible things.

C. R. Morris, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, (London, Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 100, also points out that Berkeley gives no adequate justification of the immediate knowledge he claims the mind has of itself. Lacy, p. 83 writes: "It must immediately be pointed out that he fails to give a rational explanation of his knowledge of, and belief in, the existence of his own mind, as a spiritual substance". The objection of Lacy that if spiritual substance has no percipi, it has no esse or reality seems unsatisfactory since Berkeley refers the esse est percipi only to sensible things. Luce p. 146-148, defends Berkeley's intuitive knowledge of self but merely gives Berkeley's own view without answering any objections, or offering any new arguments to support this position.

12 Dial., II, 212.
Although Berkeley uses the *esse est percipi* to prove the existence of God, he conversely requires the existence of God to maintain the reality of sensible things. In terms of his thought if God were not perceiving things then they would only exist when some finite perceiver is actually perceiving them. In the latter case there would be no "external" world, no sensible things which are independent of the mind even in the sense which Berkeley allows. There is then a circularity in Berkeley's argument since he has proven the existence of God from the reality of sensible things whose existence consists in being perceived. Yet he also needs the existence of God before he can assert the reality of sensible things.  

Berkeley presents another argument for the existence of God. Beginning with the succession of ideas we have, he argues to God as their cause. These ideas which we have are vivid, orderly, coherent and are not caused by ourselves. They are external to us, and not subject to our control:

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13 Vide infra, p. 35 for Berkeley's meaning of "external".

14 J. Collins, p. 393, notes this circularity "The capital distinction between what is strictly perceivable and what is only imaginable by us, is secured only by measuring the humanly perceivable by the implicit standard of what God actually perceives. But this means that the New Principle itself *esse est percipi*, both serves as the basis for the proof of God's existence and stands in need of His existence for its own foundation."
The things perceived by sense may be termed external, with regard to their origin, in that they are not generated from within, by the mind itself, but imprinted by a spirit distinct from that which perceives them. Sensible objects may likewise be said to be without the mind, in another sense, namely when they exist in some other mind. Thus when I shut my eyes, the things I saw may still exist, but it must be in another mind.\footnote{Princ., Part I, par. 90, (II, 80).}

Berkeley, the friend of common sense, does not claim to control the idea of sense which he has in his mind. They are independent of his mind and hence require some active being as their efficient cause. The sensible things themselves cannot be the cause since they are purely passive. Only an infinite mind or God have caused this marvellous harmony of ideas which we experience.

This argument is basically the same as the previous one. In the former, we begin with sensible things, in the latter with the ideas in the mind, but both are identical. Likewise the \textit{esse est percipi} principle is invoked in each argument. Finally God is the cause who accounts for the reality of sensible things or the vividness and order of the ideas.

We might also note that God is the immediate cause of all things. "One idea not the cause of another, one power not the cause of another. The cause of all natural things is only God. Hence trifling to enquire after second Causes."\footnote{P. C., par. 443, (I, 54).} Because he holds for the pure passivity of sensible things, Berkeley is forced to take this radical position.
Descartes had argued to the existence of sensible things or the corporeal word on the basis that a position such as that which Berkeley has embraced would make God a deceiver.\footnote{Descartes, Meditationes de prima philosophia, Meditation VI, (Vol. VIII, p. 79f).} We have the impression, Descartes argues, that sensible things are causes e.g. fire causes pain. We have no means of knowing that this pain is caused directly by God rather than by the fire itself and in fact are inclined to believe it is the fire which is the cause.

Although Berkeley does not give an explicit answer to Descartes on this point, it is easy to provide the answer he might have made. Descartes is deceived when he thinks that corporeal objects act on us, or are in any way causes, but the deception is not the fault of God. What Descartes has failed to realize is the pure passivity of ideas. Once we recognize the true nature of ideas, then it is evident that God caused all things, and hence the delusion to which we are inclined can be avoided.

"The connexion of ideas does not imply the relation of cause and effect but only of a mark or sign with the thing signified. The fire which I see is not the cause of
the pain I suffer upon my approaching it but the mark that
forewarns me of it."\(^{18}\) But if there is no causal relationship among sensible things or ideas then it seems we could
not come to know causality. Not by an idea for it is not
a sensible thing and not by a notion unless some intuition
of it is to be claimed. Moreover, in the Philosophical
Commentaries, Berkeley writes, "Nihil dat quod non habet or
the effect is contained in the cause is an axiom I do not
understand or believe to be true."\(^{19}\) Here he takes the posi­
tion with regard to causality which is more in harmony with
his thought. Yet his argument for the existence of God in­
volves causality. It proceeds on the assumption that the
sensible things we perceive must have a cause. However to
reject secondary causality seems to involve the rejection of,
or at least a skeptical position with regard to, all causal­
ity. It seems to lead to a doctrine like Hume's.

\(^{18}\) Princ., Part I, par. 65, (II, 69). A. J. Ayer,
p. 225, shows the influence of Berkeley on his own understand­
ing of cause. "Now it is quite true that what Berkeley meant
by "power or activity" is not anywhere to be detected in the
objects that we perceive; but the inference I draw from this
is not that such objects cannot have causal properties, but
rather the term "cause" must, in the context, be divorced from
the animistic notions of power and activity if it is to have
any significant application and indeed, in the sense in which
I am interpreting "causality", Berkeley himself agreed that
"ideas" could cause one another for he regarded the "laws of
nature" as de facto correlations of "ideas". A. A. Luce, p.91,
gives a helpful summary of Berkeley's view on causality.

\(^{19}\) P. C., par. 780, (I, 94).
At first sight Berkeley's proof for the existence of God looks more like those of St. Thomas Aquinas than like the ontological proof of Descartes. For Berkeley proceeds from sensible things rather than from the idea of God in the mind. But since these sensible things do not have an absolute "external" existence in as much as their esse is percipi, Berkeley is beginning like Descartes, and unlike Aquinas, in the mind. The order is similar to that of Descartes, commencing with the thinking thing and its ideas and proceeding to God, although Berkeley does not go on to prove the existence of the extramental world.

Berkeley argues from ideas to God as their cause. But the ideas are the real things, that is, the real and the ideal are identical and the argument should end with God as an idea. However Berkeley does not accept this conclusion. He desires to go beyond the limits which his own thought allows. Thus he attempts to give a cosmological argument but starting as he does from within his own mind, such an essay is doomed to fail.

Descartes, Meditationes. In Med. III, (Vol. VII, p. 34-52) the existence of God is proved by considering the idea of God, as eternal, infinite, all powerful etc. and arguing from this idea to God as the cause of this idea. In Med. V. (Vol. VII, p. 63-71) he argues from the impossibility of conceiving God except as existing to the fact that he exists. In both cases Descartes begins in the mind with an idea and in fact, both arguments are basically the same. Only after establishing God's existence does he attempt to prove the existence of the world in Med. VI, (Vol. VII, p. 71-80).
How does Berkeley deal with other spirits besides ourselves and God? First, we might point out that he makes no explicit mention of angels, although much of his treatment of finite spirits could apply equally well to angels and men. Moreover we should remember that in the Cartesian tradition, the distinction between men and angels narrows; their mode of knowledge particularly is more alike than in Thomistic thought.

We cannot know the existence of other spirits, otherwise than by their operations or the ideas of them excited in us. I perceive notions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like my self, which accompany them, and concur in their production. Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to agents or spirits distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.21

This argument clearly presupposes the questionable statements which Berkeley used to establish "myself" as a spiritual substance. Moreover he appeals to a causal principle when he uses the words "effects or concomitant signs". He appears to use "effects" and "concomitant signs" synonymously in the quotation, but clearly the words have different meanings. "Effects" imply causality; "concomitant signs" do not. If intermediary ideas are effects then spirits can

21 Princ., Part I, par, 145, (II, 107). Berkeley does not give any examples of the ideas excited in us by which we come to know the existence of other spirits. Probably he means the talking, walking, eating, etc., which we observe other men doing.
be argued to as their cause, although we might question Berkeley's consistency in doing so. He would be holding both that God is the only cause and that there are secondary spiritual beings, other human minds, which are also causes. If he means that these ideas are merely concomitant signs by which we know spirits — how is this possible? In this case there is no reason to sustain the existence of finite spirits at all, since everything can be explained directly by the first cause, God. The argument for the existence of other finite spirits does not stand up under close scrutiny.

Berkeley does admit that, "we do not see a man if by man is meant that which moves, perceives and thinks as we do; but only such a certain collection of ideas."22 How can we know that man is any more than this combination of ideas or sensations which are caused by God and which really exist only in God? What further explanation than this is required by Berkeley's thought?

In this third dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, Berkeley pursues this issue further.23 His spokesman Philonous points out that the existence of other finite spirits


23 Dial., II, 233f. J. P. deG. Day, p. 96f., thinks that Berkeley anticipates the objection of Hume that we know ourselves only as a bundle of perceptions and satisfactorily answers it.
is know neither by an immediate evidence nor by a demonstrative knowledge. Nevertheless such spirits are not to be put on an equal footing with matter because there is no repugnancy in a spirit being the subject of ideas. The exposition ends, "I have a notion of spirit, though I have not strictly speaking, an idea of it. I do not perceive it as an idea or by means of an idea, but know it by reflexion."

Berkeley admits that we do not have "immediate evidence" of other finite spirits. This means we do not perceive them as we do sensible things or ideas, nor do we have an intuitive knowledge of them as we do of ourselves as spiritual beings. Likewise we are unable to demonstrate the existence of other finite spirits. Unless Berkeley is not being entirely consistent, and this is a distinct possibility, he must mean some particular type of proof by the phrase "demonstrative knowledge". However, since he does not elucidate his meaning, it is impossible to ascertain the exact significance of this phrase. The knowledge by "reflexion" seems to refer to the proof which argues from ideas as effects back to their cause, in this instance, other finite spirits. Would this not mean that we know spirits by means of ideas? Yet Berkeley took the contrary opinion in the question above, "I have not strictly speaking an idea of it [spirit]". Perhaps he means that even though it is from ideas that we come to know spirits, the actual knowledge itself is not an idea.
Thus far in the Dialogue Berkeley has only argued that the existence of other finite spirits does not involve a contradiction and he refers to this existence as "a probability". Hylas now objects that there is no need in Philonous' philosophy to posit any type of substance but "a system of floating ideas" will suffice. Philonous replies that he himself is a thinking active principle that knows ideas and he knows what he means when he affirms that spiritual substance supports ideas. This is the whole answer given; it does not seem entirely germane to the objection. The existence of self as a spiritual substance which does not involve a contradiction has been asserted. But no satisfac-

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24 Dial., II, 233f. "HYLAS. Notwithstanding all you have said, to me it seems that according to your way of thinking, and in consequence of your own principles, it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas, without any substance to support them. Words are not to be used without a meaning. And as there is no more meaning in spiritual substance than in material substance, the one is to be exploded as well as the other.

PHILONOUS. How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I my self am not my ideas, but somewhat else; a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills; and operates about ideas. I know that I, one and the same self, perceive both colours and sounds; that a colour cannot perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour; that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound; and, for the same reason, from all other sensible things and inert ideas. But I am not in like manner conscious either of the existence or essence of matter. On the contrary, I know that nothing inconsistent can exist; and that the existence of matter implies an inconsistency. Farther, I know what I mean, when I affirm there is a spiritual substance or support of ideas, that is, that a spirit knows and perceives ideas. But I do not know what is meant, when it is said, that an imperceiving substance hath inherent in it and supports either ideas or the archetypes of ideas. There is therefore upon the whole no parity of case between spirit and matter.

HYLAS. I own my self satisfied in this point."
tory proof of other finite spirits has actually been given. The existence of God, the infinite perceiver, sufficiently explains the existence of sensible things, leaving the existence of other finite spirits superfluous.

Berkeley makes the claim in his dialogue with which we have been dealing, that he understands what he means when he says a spiritual substance supports ideas. We should recall that this very point had been made against material substance. The opponent, Hylas, had been unable to explain what he meant by matter supporting its accidents. Since he could not do so, this was taken as an argument against the existence of matter. Yet Philonous here asserts that he knows the meaning of spiritual substance supporting ideas. Conveniently however, he is not challenged to explain his meaning and he does not volunteer the information.

This line of thought leads up to some very significant inquiries. How do sensible things exist in the minds of finite spirits? Moreover, if sensible things are independent of finite perceivers with regard to their existence, what is the difference between their existence in finite perceivers and in God? Indeed, how can ideas which are purely passive be in God at all since he is pure act? Berkeley does not say that ideas are not in God, but he fails to explain his position suffi-

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Dial., II, 213f. "I do not understand how our ideas, which are things altogether passive and inert, can be the essence, or any part (or like any part) of the essence or substance of God, who is an impassive, indivisible, purely active being."
ciently. God causes the things we perceive to exist but since their very existence consists in being perceived, then how can we say they are not part of God? In other words, his *esse est percipi* principle seems to involve an implicit pantheism which the Anglican Bishop would certainly reject. In fact, he seems completely unaware of any such taint in his thought.

Berkeley does at least distinguish the way things are perceived by men and the way they are perceived by God. We are affected by impressions of sense, and gain our knowledge through sensation. But this is an imperfection, and God, who is pure spirit, cannot be subject to any imperfections. God knows all things but not through sensation.

C. Arnold, p. 119f., also points out that pantheism seems to be the logical result of Berkeley's system. Luce, p. 22, writes: "Berkeley was a theist, loyal to his creed, and pantheism was not in him. He believed in the world of sense which is other than God; he believed in the society of finite spirits, which is other than God" cf. *ibid.*, p. 73. There is no doubt that Berkeley was not a pantheist, but what Luce, as well as Berkeley, fail to show is how he can logically and consistently avoid a pantheistic position.

Dial., II, 240f. "PHILONOUS. That God knows or understands all things, but that he knows among other things what pain is, even every sort of painful sensation, and what it is for His creatures to suffer pain, I make no question. But that God, though He knows and sometimes causes painful sensations in us, can Himself suffer pain, I positively deny. We who are limited and dependent spirits, are liable to impressions of sense, the effects of an external agent, which being produced against our wills, are sometimes painful and uneasy. But God, whom no external being can affect, who perceives nothing by sense as we do, whose will is absolute and independent, causing all things, and liable to be thwarted or resisted by nothing; it is evident, such a being as this can
We still have not been told how the ideas exist either in us or in God. Moreover unless the Divine Ideas are identical with the Divine Essence, then God would be imperfect, since any real distinction would imply composition of parts. It seems then that Berkeley should logically equate the Divine Ideas with the real existence of sensible things. But since this pantheistic position conflicts with his Christian theism, we cannot expect a satisfactory explanation of how things exist in God.

Without discussing at this point the various faculties of the mind, let us consider at great length the meaning of mind or spirit for Berkeley. "A spirit is one simple undivided active being." The key word in the above description is active. This characteristic of activity sets spirit in direct contrast to ideas or sensible things whose passivity has been so vehemently stressed.

However, on the distinction between the mind and its ideas, Berkeley does not maintain a consistent opinion. In the Philosophical Commentaries he indites, "The very exist-

...suffer nothing, nor be affected with any painful sensation or indeed any sensation at all....To know everything is certainly a perfection; but to enture, to suffer, or feel any thing by sense, is an imperfection. The former, I say, agrees to God, but not the latter. God knows or hath ideas; but His ideas are not convey'd to Him by sense, as ours are."

28 Princ., Part I, par. 27, (II, 52).
ence of Ideas constitutes the soul" and again in this same work, "Take away Perceptions & you take away the Mind" and even more forcefully, "Say you the Mind is not the Perception's but that thing which perceives. I answer you are abus'd by the words that & thing these are vague empty words without a meaning." The mind is identified with its ideas, in a position which sounds very much like that of Hume. But since ideas are passive, and the mind active, how can the mind be a mass of ideas any more than it can be one idea?

In the third and final dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, Berkeley's spokesman gives this reverse view, "I my self am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills and operates about ideas." Here we have a complete volte-face. The two

29 P.C., par. 580, 581, (I, 72). Although we cannot always take positions out of the P.C. and attribute them to Berkeley, yet it is clear here that he endorses this position, and moreover, it does fit in with his thought at least as well as the contrary position that ideas are distinct from the spirit in which they reside.

30 Hume, A Treatise on Hum. Und., Bk. I, Part IV, sec. 6, (p. 253). The mind is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. ...There are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind." Hume seems to mean that the self is always changing, so that there is really no personal identity. Berkeley uses the word "congeries", (P.C. par. 580), which stresses the combination of all our perceptions rather than their mutability.

31 Dial., II, 233. The first edition was published in 1713. The Philosophical Commentaries were written in 1707-8 although published only posthumously.
positions are quite clearly opposed and cannot be harmonized.

But this later position involves a difficulty which Berkeley himself pointed out in the third text from the *Philosophical Commentaries* quoted above. "That thing which perceives" is an abstraction, "vague empty words." If the being of the mind consists in perceiving, which is an activity, then how could Berkeley speak of it as a substance? That which acts should be distinguished from its activity, although there is no such distinction in Descartes, who may have influenced Berkeley on this point. But if the perceiving thing or thinking thing is identified with the substance, then other activities should be excluded. To say that activities such as imagining, willing etc., are merely forms of thought is arbitrary and dodges the problem. Berkeley is caught either way; if he abstracts the substance from its activity he is violating one of his own tenets; if he identifies the substance with its perception he cannot explain the various activities observable in man.

Warnock, p. 205f., criticizes Berkeley on this same point "Surely to speak of something as a substance is to claim that it can somehow be distinguished from what it does."

If we return to the description of mind as the "congeries of Ideas", we can discover another obstacle. Unity and simplicity would be lacking. And following from this, immortality, which is of great importance to Berkeley. He is most emphatic in his affirmations on the continued existence of the soul after death. For if the mind is merely the gathered mass of ideas then there is patently no real unity. Without unity the soul is divisible, composed of parts and hence there would be no immortality by nature. Moreover, if the mind is merely a bundle of perceptions, then each mind would be essentially different; there would be no human nature. Such a position contradicts very strikingly the tenor of Berkeley's thought. On this count therefore and also because of the meaning of idea for Berkeley, it seems necessary for the Bishop of Cloyne to reject this earlier position. But the later position which distinguishes the perceiver from his ideas does not, as we have seen, fit his thought either, clashing as it does with his stand on abstract ideas.

In the Principles of Human Knowledge, Berkeley says that spirit does signify a "real thing", but once again he merely refers to it as "that which perceives ideas." It


35 Princ., Part I, par. 139, (II, 104). This work was first published in 1710.
seems that Berkeley was unable to solve the problem himself; he could not give a clear and consistent meaning to spiritual substance but was unwilling to discard this notion. His failure was due not to any lack of intellectual acumen, but rather to his doctrine on abstract ideas which should logically exclude all substance whether spiritual or material as an empty, unknowable abstraction.

If we recall Berkeley's general proof for the existence of spiritual substance which was presented above, we shall note that it implies a distinction between spirit and the ideas which inhere in it. For in this argument, spirit is presented as an active being which causes ideas. Such a being is manifestly distinct from the ideas it causes and its existence consists in perceiving. "The existence of Active things is to act, of inactive to be perceived." 37

Perhaps if we pursue this basic distinction between the existence of spirits and that of ideas, it will help us to penetrate deeper into Berkeley's understanding of spirit. First of all, we might point out that, in his phenomenological approach to philosophy, Berkeley is not aiming at a philosophy of being. He is not concerned with the existence of things as such, "the Schools coined the word Existence supposed to stand for an abstract general Idea." To say merely

36 Vide supra, p. 28f.

37 P.C., par. 673, (I, 82).
that a thing exists is meaningless for Berkeley; existence as a predicate tells us nothing. The term "existence" as applied to active and passive things is, moreover equivocal.\(^{38}\) For "to act" and "to be perceived" are distinct and to some extent contraries, since being perceived is one way of being acted upon. Even though existence is always considered in terms of perception, whether perceiving or being perceived, the equivocation does not seem to be avoided, although it is perhaps not as readily noticed.

It would seem more appropriate to say that the essence of active things is to act, since Berkeley is interested, not in the act of existing but in what things are. Berkeley, however, is not much concerned with a distinction between the essence and the act of existing. His treatment of existence does tend to treat existence itself as an essence. However, to say that he is dealing with the essence rather than the existence of active things would be an oversimplification. His philosophy does not seem to lend itself to a transposition into the language of essence and esse.

If the existence of spirits is to act, how are God and man to be distinguished in this respect? Berkeley does say that

the scholastic teaching on analogy is a "good notion" and defends it in relation to our knowledge of God. 39 In this case our activity could be considered limited and finite whereas the activity of God is infinite, or God is said to be actus purus. Berkeley also speaks of God as the only being whose existence is necessary, while the existence of men is only contingent.

However, Berkeley also said that there were no degrees of existence. In his fourth letter to Samuel Johnson, the American philosopher, 40 he states that to speak of existing "more" makes no sense; such talk is the result of an abstract idea of existence. But since existence follows from being perceived and something is either perceived or it is not perceived, then there is no room for degrees of existence. Here Berkeley seems to be thinking along the lines that a thing either exists or it does not exist. This is an employment in the order of metaphysics of the principle of demonstration, which is a logical principle. In logic this is certainly a basic principle and its validity is manifest. But to use it as a metaphysical principle is disastrous. This means that you would say of a particular existing thing, that either it exists or it does not exist. This is not in accord with one who purportedly accepts the evidence of the senses. It should

39 Alc., V, 17, 18, (III, 163-165).

40 Vol. II, p. 293.
be clear that the particular existing thing does exist. Otherwise you will be tending toward an idealist position.

The example used by the Bishop of Cloyne refers to the existence of sensible things but there is no indication that the position of no degrees of existence is to be thus restricted. Would he not also agree that a spiritual being either perceives or it does not perceive and that there is similarly no place for degrees of existence in this case?

The notion of analogy as applied to active beings would certainly clash with this position, since if there are no degrees of being, then being is univocal. There can be analogy without degrees as when we speak of being as it is realized in two men, but when analogy is used in reward to God and man, there must be degrees of existence admitted. A univocal understanding of being is in line with the Cartesian tradition, whereas the doctrine of analogy does not fit very well into Berkeley's thought, jarring particularly with his rejection of abstract ideas. For if we used words such as existence in an analogous sense, we would have to prescind

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41 Baladi explains Berkeley's use of analogy, p. 140. "Berkeley distingue entre une perfection prise formellement et en elle-même, et le mode d'être ou d'exercice de cette perfection. Et bien qu'il y ait une distance infinie entre les modes d'être divin et humain, la perfection, formellement parlant, est la même; mais parce qu'elle comporte en fait des modes d'être essentiellement différents, elle est dit plutôt analogue qu'identique."

42 Descartes does not say explicitly that being is univocal. However, his whole philosophy seems to imply this position.
from their concrete realization in particular things. But if being is taken as univocal, Berkeley cannot distinguish God and finite spirits on the level of being.

If, on the other hand, there are degrees of existence among spiritual beings, although not among sensible things, what follows? First of all, existence is an equivocal term which means "to act" or "to be perceived". When it means "to act" it is used analogically and admits of degrees. When it is used to mean "to be perceived" it is univocal, not admitting of more or less. This is hardly a plausible position. Yet the equivocal meaning of existence is clear as also its univocal application in regard to sensible things. The only point which Berkeley does not clarify is the use of existence as predicated of active beings. Whether existence is said to be univocal or analogical in such cases, many questions have been left unanswered.

In the next chapter we shall turn to some of the activities of spiritual beings. This procedure will assist us in elucidating the differences between God and man, between the infinite and the finite. The meaning of spirit itself should come clearer.
III

THE ACTIVITIES OF SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCES

Berkeley speaks of various activities of the mind, although he does not deal with them systematically. In his writings sensing, imagining, thinking and willing could be distinguished, and they would correspond to the senses, imagination, understanding and will, respectively. Each of these shall be treated to see if they represent faculties or powers distinct from a spiritual substance in which they reside.

"Thoughts do most properly signify or are mostly taken for the interior operations of the mind, wherein the mind is active, those that obey not the acts of volition, & in which the mind is passive are more properly call'd sensation or perceptions."¹ Sensation then as distinguished from thought is passive, and hence cannot be really called an operation or activity of the mind. We might also note that perception and sensation are used synonymously. While "there is somewhat active in most perceptions i.e. such as ensue upon our volitions, such as we can prevent & stop v.g. I turn my eyes toward the sun I open them all this is active",²

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¹ P.C., par. 286, (I, 35).
² P.C., par. 67a, (I, 82).
clearly the activity itself is not part of the sensation. In the example given, the seeing of the sun, we can turn towards or away from it but the actual seeing, the sensation involved, is passive. We do not control what we see when our eyes are directed towards a particular object and this holds true mutatis mutandis for all the external senses.

In the First Dialogue, Berkeley develops his reasons for considering perception or sensation to be passive:

PHILONOUS. But doth it... depend on your will, that in looking on this flower, you perceived white rather than any other colour? On directing your open eyes toward yonder part of the heaven, can you avoid seeing the sun? Or is light or darkness the effect of your volition? HYLAS. No certainly.

PHILONOUS. You are then in these respects altogether passive. HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. Tell me now, whether seeing consists in perceiving lights or colours, or in opening and turning the eyes? HYLAS. Without doubt, in the former.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore you are in the very perception of light and colours altogether passive, what is become of that action you were speaking of, as an ingredient of every sensation?

We have no choice then but to see a particular object as white or blue or whatever colour it may be, and similarly with sounds, odours, etc. We receive certain sense impressions from without. As we saw before the things which appear to cause these impressions are not the real causes since they are purely passive but rather God is their cause. "Now the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the Laws of Nature: and

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Dial., II, 196f. Warnock supports Berkeley on this point on page 206. "As he rightly points out in the First Dialogue, perception is not an action at all."
these we learn by experience which teaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such other ideas in the ordinary course of things.\textsuperscript{4}

Since sensation is passive the "experience" referred to in the quotation directly above may imply something more, some active power by which we know these "Laws of Nature". What then do we know by sensation itself? Berkeley does very clearly hold that all knowledge begins with the senses, approving the scholastic axiom "\textit{Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuit in sensu.}\textsuperscript{5}

It appears however that the senses themselves do not know: "sense knows nothing". In the same work, Berkeley further speaks of "the phenomena of nature which strike on the senses and are understood by the mind.\textsuperscript{6} This quotation also implies that the senses know nothing. On the other hand Berkeley does speak of the senses knowing effects or appearances,

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Princ.}, Part I, par. 30, (II, 53f).

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{P.C.}, par. 779, (I, 94). Cf. \textit{P.C.}, par. 539, (I, 67) "foolish \textit{sic} in \textit{Men} to despise the senses, if it were not \ldots the mind could have no knowledge, no thought at all. All\ldots of Introversion, meditation, contemplation & spiritual acts as if these could be exerted before we had ideas from without by the senses are manifestly absurd." \textit{Vide etiam De Motu}, par. 21, (IV, 16).

\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Siris}, par. 254, (V, 121).
whereas reason deals with causes and is the guide to truth.  

This passage from Siris seems to mean that we know ideas by sense and causes such as God and other spirits by reason, which directly contradicts the position that sense knows nothing. Moreover, to speak of knowing "appearances" does not seem consonant with our knowledge of things as they are in themselves, a knowledge which Berkeley has emphasized. The term "appearances" suggests some more basic reality beyond sense qualities, such as material substance. This statement concerning senses dealing with appearances is isolated, and seems to have been made carelessly. Consequently 

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Siris, par. 253, (V, 120): "Strictly the sense knows nothing. We perceive indeed sounds by hearing, and characters [letters] by sight; but we are not therefore said to understand them." Vide etiam par. 264, (V, 124), which has a striking similarity to Plato. "Sense and experience acquaint us with the cause and analogy of appearances or natural effects. Thought, reason, intellect introduce us into the knowledge of their causes. Sensible appearances, though of a flowing, unstable, and uncertain nature, yet having first occupied the mind, they do by an early prevention render the aftertask of thought more difficult; and, as they amuse the eyes and ears, and are more suited to vulgar uses and the mechanical arts of life, they easily obtain a preference, in the opinion of most men, to those superior principles, which are the later growth of the human mind arrived at maturity and perfection, but, not affecting the corporeal sense, are thought to be so far deficient in point of solidity and reality; sensible and real, to common apprehensions, being the same thing; although it be certain that the principles of science are neither objects of sense nor imagination, and that intellect and reason are alone the sure guides to truth." Cf. A. A. Luce, "The Alleged Development of Berkeley's Philosophy", Mind, Vol. LII, (Jan. 1943). Luce, for one, says on p. 150 that there is no change in Berkeley's thought in Siris. He concludes his article, "The alleged development of Berkeleyian Philosophy has thus been examined and exposed. It is a flight of fancy, comparatively modern, without basis in fact." p. 156.
we should not hold Berkeley to it but must consider senses knowing nothing as his preferred opinion on this subject.

Berkeley even gives the reason himself why we cannot be said to know appearances:

Colour, figure, motion, extension and the like, considered only as so many sensations in the mind, are perfectly known, there being nothing in them which is not perceived. But if they are looked on as notes or images, referred to things or archetypes existing without the mind, then we are involved all in scepticism. We see only the appearances, and not the real qualities of things. ... All this scepticism follows from our supposing a difference between things and ideas, and that the former have a subsistence without the mind or imperceived. It were easy to dilate on this subject, and shew how the arguments urged by sceptics in all ages, depend on the supposition of external objects.

Manifestly in this passage Berkeley rejects the idea that we know only appearances and not the things themselves. What we see are the sensible qualities which make up things and there is nothing beyond this; this is reality. Hence the senses, even though they know nothing, are struck by phenomena which should not be called appearances. To say the senses know only appearances involves us in skepticism. Rather the senses come in contact with sensible things or ideas which in Berkeley's philosophy constitute reality.

In fact there is no distinction between sensation and its object. For the object is that which is immediately perceived, which is also the definition of a sensation. The

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Princ., Part I, par. 87, (II, 78f.) The position attacked in this quotation is that held by Locke. Vide An Essay Conc. Hum. Und., Bk. IV, Ch. IV, Sec. 8, 12 (Vol. II, p. 236f, 242f).

Dial., II, 194-196.
only remaining basis for distinguishing sensation and its object would be to predicate activity of sensation, but we have already seen that for Berkeley sensation is passive.

The trustworthiness of the senses is very emphatically stated by Berkeley although for the unusual reason that the sensation and its object are identical. "We must with the Mob place certainty in the senses"\(^\text{10}\) and again, "Let me be represented as one who trusts his senses, who thinks he knows the things he sees and feels and entertains no doubts of their existence."\(^\text{11}\)

The senses do provide us with material, so to speak. They are the starting-point in any knowledge. Therefore, even though they themselves do not, strictly speaking know, yet they do seem to be powers or faculties which enable us to receive sense impressions. The fact that the senses do not have a choice when they perceive a particular thing does not necessarily imply they are completely passive as Berkeley maintains.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^\text{10}\) P.C., par. 740, (I, 90).


\(^\text{12}\) St. Thomas Aquinas appears to hold for the passivity of the external senses. Summa Theologiae, (cura et studio Instituti Studiorum Mediaevalium, Ottaviensis, Ottawa, Canada, 1941), I pars. ou. 78, art. 3, (Vol. I, p. 475b). "Est autem sensus quaedam potentia passiva, que nata est immutari ab exteriori sensibili. Exterius ergo immutativum est quod per se a sensu percipitur et secundum cuius diversitatem sensitatae potentiae distinguuntur." It could, however, be argued that the very power to receive sensations is itself a type of activity. If all our knowledge depends on sense to provide material for the understanding, then it seems that sense is doing something, that it is, to some extent, active.
So far we have only considered sense in man. Does sense exist also in God? On this point Berkeley is most explicit, "There is no sense nor sensory, nor anything like sense or sensory in God. Sense implies an impression from some other being and denotes a dependence in the soul which hath it. Sense is a passion and passions imply imperfection. God knoweth all things as pure mind or intellect but nothing by sense nor in nor through a sensory."\(^{13}\)

On this issue of sensation the Infinite Spirit is radically different from all finite spirits. Man cannot know anything without sense; God has no senses since they imply passivity and imperfection. Moreover, the things we sense are external to us, but not to God, for the reality of their existence consists in being perceived by God.\(^{14}\) The word "perceived" cannot be identical with "sensed" in this context since God does not in any way sense. It must refer to His knowledge of things. Even when "perception" is used in regard to us, that is, in regard to finite spirits, more than sensation is at times implied, since the senses do not precisely know and in some instances perception appears to mean knowledge. Yet as we have already seen, Berkeley generally identifies perception and sensation. In at least one place, perception, sensation and thought are all lumped together as

\(^{13}\) *Siris*, par. 289, (V, 134).

\(^{14}\) *Vide supra*, p. 34.
meaning the same thing. 15 Naturally then we will have diffi-
culty in deciding whether perception means sensation or
thought, and can only attempt to interpret as accurately as
the context allows. 16 The distinction between sensation and
thought will also present difficulty. Such verbal imprecision
is, as we have already observed, not rare in the writings of
Berkeley.

Are the senses faculties distinct from the soul or
mind in which they reside? Berkeley does speak, although he
is somewhat obscure, of the external senses as distinct facul-
ties or powers. 17 Moreover as we have tried to bring out, his

15 P.C. par. 299, (I, 37), "But say you the thought or
perception I call extension is not itself in an unthinking
thing or matter. But it is like something which is in matter.
Well, say I, do you apprehend or conceive what you say extension
is like unto or do you not. If the latter, how know you they
are alike, how can you compare any things besides your own
ideas. if the former it must be an idea i.e perception thought,
or sensation which to be in an imperceiving thing is a Contra-
diction."

16 Cf. Willis Doney, "Two Questions About Berkeley",
The Philosophical Review, LXI, (1952) p. 388f. Doney points
out that Berkeley is not consistent on the activity or passivity
of perceptions. Doney does not give reasons for this inconsis-
tency but perhaps it is due to Berkeley's use of the word "percep-
tion" to mean "sensation" in some instances and "knowledge"in
others.

17 Siris, par. 303, (V, 140) "Though harmony and propor-
tion are not objects of sense, yet the eye and the ear are
organs which offer to the mind such materials by means whereof
she may apprehend both the one and the other. By experiments
of sense we become acquainted with the lower faculties of the
soul; and from them, whether by a gradual evolution or ascent,
we arrive at the highest."
whole line of thought on the senses seems to indicate that they are powers or faculties. Berkeley himself, however, has not argued to this conclusion. We shall have to look at the other powers before we can answer this question more definitely. Then we shall be in a better position to ascertain whether the soul or mind is distinguished from its faculties, whether the faculties are distinguished among themselves and finally whether powers are distinguished from operations. We might note that Berkeley does at least have a tendency to maintain these distinctions, as his writings on the external senses indicate. But these distinctions are not made in the Cartesian tradition in which he is situated. Accordingly we can expect some confusion in his thought on the mind and its powers.

The only internal sense which is given any treatment by Berkeley is imagination, or "fancy", as he frequently calls it, and even here the amount of space devoted is relatively slight. In fact, Berkeley does not seem to be interested in imagination for its own sake; rather he wishes to explain how real and imaginary things are still distinguished within the framework of his thought.

"I find that I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by the same power it is obliterated, and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very
properly denominate the mind active." When we imagine ideas we are active but is this activity purely volitional or is the imagination itself an active power?

In *Siris*, Berkeley writes, "Sense supplies images to memory. These become subjects for fancy to work upon," By fancy he is very clearly referring to imagination but what does "work upon" imply? Although Berkeley does not develop the point any further on this occasion, it does appear that the work done by the imagination is to frame ideas which are of our own choosing rather than imposed upon us by an external agent. Consequently we could say that the imagination is an active power. The ideas which are summoned up by imagination are not however entirely new, but must have first been in sensation. They are new to the extent that we are not now sensing the idea invoked and indeed we may never have sensed this idea as such. Berkeley would probably say, for example, that we can have an image of a centaur or a phoenix by combining sensations in a way in which we have never experi-

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18 *Princ.*, Part I, par. 28, (II, 53).
19 *Siris*, par. 303, (V, 140).
20 Cf. J. W. Davis, "Berkeley's Doctrine of the Notion", *Review of Metaphysics*, 12, (Mar. 1959) p. 379. Davis feels that the ideas of imagination do manifest the activity of the mind, although he does not make clear whether the imagination itself is an active distinct faculty in Berkeley. "Ideas of imagination are evidence of the activity of the mind in the sense that the mind is capable of compounding, dividing or barely representing those ideas originally received from sense."
rienced them. But the imagination is nevertheless always dependent on previous sensation for its materials. 21

"The ideas imprinted on the senses by the Author of Nature are called real things: and those excited in the imagination being less vivid and constant, are more properly termed ideas or images of things, which they copy or represent" 22 The imagination depends on the senses which have as their object real things. Without this material from the senses the imagination cannot function. But it takes their material and frames at will new ideas which copy the old ideas and which are not so vivid or coherent, since there is no necessary order or structure among them. They are subject to our own caprice.

The point which Berkeley wishes to make clear in his whole treatment of the distinction between objects of sense and objects of imagination is that, although both are ideas, the distinction between real things and things which are the product of our own fancy remains: "There is a rerum naturae and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its

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21 C. Arnold observes that the imagination can only "compound and divide" what it has already received from sense, "the data of sense" as he puts it. p. 82.

22 Princ., Part I, par. 33, (II, 54).
full force."23

In reference to God, Berkeley makes no mention of imagination, not even to deny its existence in Him. To try and deduce what Berkeley's position should be in terms of his overall philosophy seems pointless for we surely cannot ascribe to Berkeley all that he ought to hold in the light of his principles. Whatever the merit of such a procedure, it would not be a treatment of his philosophy and accordingly we shall not attempt it.

We have seen that imagination and sensation are treated as two separate powers with distinct objects, namely images of things and real things. The further problem of distinguishing imagination from spiritual substance, we shall postpone until after we have dealt with understanding and will.

Since Berkeley's remarks on understanding and will are so interlaced, we shall treat both together where it is expedient to do so. "A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the understanding, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them, it is called the will."24 The understanding is presented here as the

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23 Princ., Part I, par. 34, (I, 55). In a parody of this Warnock writes; "the distinction between realities and chimeras has not quite vanished, but it does not retain its full force." Warnock quotes correctly criticizes the inadequacy of Berkeley's use of the vividness, coherence and order of ideas, as a criterion for distinguishing ideas of sense from those of imagination.

24 Princ., Part I, par. 27, (II, 52).
power by which we perceive or know ideas. The word "perception" in this context clearly means knowledge. This process of knowledge is described by the Irish Bishop when he speaks of "the phenomena of nature which strike on the senses and are understood by the mind." The understanding then must be active; it operates on the sense impressions and knows them.

The will on the other hand causes ideas, as God causes our ideas, or as we cause our own ideas of imagination. All our ideas of sense would be caused by God, and not by our own will. What is meant by "otherwise operating on ideas", is not made explicit by Berkeley. He could mean the combining of ideas or the abstracting of some quality and its separate consideration. But since there is no distinction between an image and a concept as we saw in the first chapter, it is difficult to see how this combining and abstracting could be distinguished from the work of the imagination. It can be said at least that the will is active and its activity differs from that of the intellect, since it produces rather than perceives ideas.

On the distinction of the intellect from its ideas and the will from its volitions, Berkeley is not consistent. In the Philosophical Commentaries he speaks of "The understanding not distinct from particular volitions"[25] Yet later in the same work he writes, "I must not say that the understanding differs not from the particular Ideas, or the will from partic-

ular Ideas, or the will from particular volitions.\[26\] The inconsistency cannot be explained away by having recourse to the disparity in earlier and later works. It involves the discussion of the spirit and its ideas; we shall return to it after we have treated the understanding and will in relation to spirit.

In *Siris*, Berkeley says the intellect is distinguished from the will by operation.\[27\] Neither the intellect wills nor the will understands, although the will is conducted or applied by the intellect. This alone would seem to demand that the intellect and will are two distinct powers. For each performs a different operation and both are expressly said to be active.\[28\]

Moreover error is not said to be in the intellect but in the will, a position which is seemingly taken over from Descartes.\[29\] Berkeley offers no explanation why error is in the will rather than in the intellect. It is quite possible

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\[26\] P.C., par. 848, (I, 101) This may represent a very early development within this one work.

\[27\] *Siris*, par. 253, (V, 120).

\[28\] *Vide* P.C., par. 821, (I, 98) for understanding as active; par. 621, (I, 76) for will as active.


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that Berkeley has been taught this Cartesian position and never bothered to question the point. However, it may well be that Berkeley's connection of error and abstract ideas and error and will are related. Abstract ideas are a major source of confusion and error according to Berkeley. All skepticism and atheism would be shattered if they were rejected. But the mind cannot actually frame an abstract idea; this is an impossibility. Berkeley might mean that to try to use abstract ideas is an act of the will, not of the intellect. As in Descartes' explanation, the will would be going beyond its competence; it would be acting blindly. We cannot be certain of this relation between error and abstract ideas and error and will because Berkeley does not sufficiently develop his position. We can see in any case that the distinction between intellect and will is supported further by his remarks on the source of error.

But this distinction is not always maintained. Even in the Philosophical Commentaries Berkeley can say: "The understanding, desire, Hatred etc. so far forth as they are acts or active differ not, all their difference consists in their objects, circumstances, etc."30 Since the objects of the intellect and will are different, will not their acts also be different and hence are they not distinct powers? In Siris, Berkeley does mention that philosophers commonly distinguish

30 P.C., par. 614a (I, 76); par. 854, (I, 101).
faculties according to their operations, but he fails to make clear whether or not he shares in this opinion. Since he says that the intellect and will do not differ as active, it would seem that they could not be distinguished according to their operations. Yet he offers no explanation as to why intellect and will do not differ as active or as powers when they have different objects.

The consideration of intellect and will in God may shed some light on our problem. "There is in the Deity understanding as well as will." In the case of God there is no real distinction between his essence and his faculties. To speak of intellect and will in God is anthropomorphic and cannot be understood in the strict literal sense. The distinction is supposedly made to enable us to understand God better with our limited language and intelligence. Although Berkeley does not spell out such a doctrine in so many words, he would undoubtedly agree. But does he go farther and apply this to finite spirits? Is there no real distinction for Berkeley between essence and faculties in all spirits, whether finite or infinite?

In the text which we used to introduce this portion of the chapter, Berkeley spoke of the spirit as it perceives ideas and as it produces them. This could be a hint, an

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31 *Siris*, par. 254, (V, 121).

32 *P.C.*, par. 812, (I, 97).

33 *Princ.*, Part I, par. 27, (II, 52).
indication, that Berkeley does not make any real distinc-
tion between the spirit and its faculties, although it
could merely mean that the active being perceives or pro-
duces ideas through its powers which are really distinct.
However Berkeley is more explicit elsewhere, "I must not
mention the Understanding as a faculty or part of the Mind,
I must include Understanding & Will etc. in the word spirit
by which I mean all that is active." Earlier in this same
work he writes: "The soul is the will properly speaking & as
it is distinct from ideas."

There is no interpretation of Berkeley's remarks on
intellect and will as distinct, or not distinct, from one
another and as distinct, or not distinct, from spirit which
can harmonize all the texts. However it does seem that his
preferred opinion is to deny any real distinction either
between intellect and will or between intellect and will and
spirit. Besides the explicit statements noted above, this
interpretation is further supported by Berkeley's referring
to understanding and will as abstract ideas, "I must not say
Will and Understanding are all one but that they are both
Abstract Ideas i.e. none at all. they not being even ratione
different from the Spirit, Qua faculties, or Active."36

34 P.C., par. 848, (I, 101).

35 P.C., par. 478a, (I, 50).

36 P.C., par. 871, (I, 103). C. Arnold, commenting
on this text and referring to Princ., Part I, par. 27,
If they are to be considered ideas at all, then surely intellect and will are abstract ideas according to Berkeley's understanding of the words. For we do not perceive intellect and will by the senses, and can form no image of them. Consequently they would be for Berkeley abstract ideas. But since they are active, it would seem that we should not speak of having ideas of them at all, whether abstract or otherwise. Ideas apply only to passive things, but intellect and will do not belong to this category.

Following Berkeley's terminology we can strictly speaking only have "notions" of intellect and will, that is, we can know them from the effects we observe. This is the way we know the existence of other finite spirits. We observe activities and argue back to a spiritual substance which causes them. Could we analyse this activity and argue further that there are different faculties in spiritual beings each corresponding to a different mode of activity? Berkeley himself does not do so, although when he speaks of the various powers of spirits it does appear that he distinguishes them because he has experienced various activities in men. In summary we might observe that when Berkeley explicitly treats of the distinction between intellect and will, and intellect

(II, 52), also thinks that the soul and its faculties cannot be considered distinct in Berkeley. "Substance is only logically distinct from its accidents". p. 99. This statement also supports the view that there is no real distinction between the spirit and its faculties. p. 119d.
and will and spirit he tends to deny any real distinction. Yet when his whole treatment of spirit, intellect and will seems to imply that there are real distinctions. The former position would be a reflection of his Cartesianism, the latter a more independent and more reasonable stand.

But if Berkeley really does identify spirit with its intellectual and volitional activities, and as we have seen that he probably does so, then it seems that his remarks on intellect and will are just so much idle verbiage. Did not he himself call these words abstract ideas? For Berkeley what could be a more devastating criticism? And still he has not even taken the pains to explain, as he might, that these distinctions are made merely to facilitate our understanding and are not to be applied literally to reality. Of course, if intellect and will are abstract ideas, they will not even serve to help our understanding but would only add error and confusion.

There is another possibility offered by Berkeley although it does not actually solve any problems. It is to identify the spirit with the will; the intellect with its ideas. There are indications in Berkeley that all activity involves the will and he says explicitly, "the soul is will". This would entail admitting that none of the other powers are

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Vide, P.C., par. 712, (I, 87) "The spirit the Active Thing that which is Soul & God is the Will alone The Ideas are effects impotent things."
active and that the essence of spirit or will is to be active. Such a position is consistent with Berkeley's remarks on spiritual substance which stresses activity as the key note. However, the other powers, at least the imagination and understanding, seem to involve activity and to be an essential part of spirit.

Furthermore to identify the intellect with its ideas would seem to reduce intellect to the level of the external senses which are merely acted upon but do not themselves know or act in any way. Such a reduction does not harmonize with Berkeley's treatment of understanding, although in one way the understanding is a sort of sense power. For the understanding knows sense impressions and would be traditionally called a sense power because of this. Looked at from this point of view, sensation would be both passive and active; passive in the case of the external senses, active in the case of the understanding. Even so understanding is still active and cannot therefore be identified with its ideas which are purely passive. 

Sensation in its passive phase also seems to be distinct from the spirit or mind since it enables the mind to

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38 Luce thinks that Berkeley very emphatically distinguishes mind and ideas, "Mind is mind, for him, and ideas are ideas, and the twain never merge. Mind is mind, for him, and ideas are not-mind. Mind and ideas, being intirely [sic] distinct, the two are two and are never one. Berkeley's declaration is coupled with his first allusion to existence in the mind, and is all the more impressive on that account. It is as if he meant to warn his readers that they are bound to misunderstand him unless they keep what is in the mind intirely distinct from the mind itself." p. 51. W. Doney believes that
receive something. We can prescind at this point from the dispute over the activity or passivity of such a receptive power. Whether or not we call sensation, or rather the external senses, powers appears to be merely a verbal issue, but the distinction of these senses from the spiritual substance is, in terms of Berkeley's own thought, necessary.

To be more exact we should say, although this would not be according to Berkeley's mode of expression, that man acts through his senses. But man could not do so if he were pure will.

The intellect and will must also be distinguished from spirit or mind. For if the will is identified with spirit, with the essence of man, then clearly there is no room for any other type of activity in man. For if spirit is will then it must be always willing and could do nothing else. Similarly with intellect, and when Berkeley says the man is always thinking, he seems to be defending the position that man is a thinking thing. This radical view is dogmatically asserted, unverified by experience or by any form of argumentation and seems strange for an empiricist.

"Whether the Humeian passages in the Philosophical Commentaries can be adequately accounted for on the basis of a change of terminology or whether they express an earlier opinion that was discarded, there is no doubt that when Berkeley wrote the Principles, he meant to distinguish the mind and its ideas."

p. 384.

39 P.C. par. 651, (I, 79) "Certainly the mind always & constantly thinks." Descartes had also defined man as thinking thing and should logically have held that man is.
In *Siris*, the distinction between the powers, although not clearly delineated, is at least very definitely indicated:

The perceptions of sense are gross; but even in the senses there is a difference. Though harmony and proportion are not objects of sense, yet the eye and the ear are organs which offer to the mind such materials by means whereof she may apprehend both the one and the other. By experiments of sense we become acquainted with the lower faculties of the soul; and from them, whether by a gradual evolution or ascent we arrive at the highest. Sense supplies images to memory. These become subjects for fancy to work upon. Reason considers and judges of the imaginations. And these acts of reason become new objects to understanding. In this scale, each lower faculty naturally leads to the Deity, which is rather the object of intellectual knowledge than even of the discursive faculty, not to mention the sensitive. There runs a chain throughout the whole system of beings.  

This is the only text in which any reference is made to a hierarchy of faculties. The lower faculties are said to assist the higher but the will is not even mentioned. Imagination seems to have a role not elsewhere noted; a role as intermediary between the senses and the intellect even when the objects of sense are involved. The distinction between reason and understanding is not one usually employed by Berkeley. The whole passage suggests the influence of scholastic philosophy, which he does not generally accept. It would not be possible simply from this paragraph to determine with any precision just what each faculty does. The descriptions of their activities are too brief and sketchy to render fruitful


*Siris*, par. 303, (V, 140).
any such attempt.

It is patent that Berkeley has not clearly thought out his position on spiritual substance and its various powers. He could have taken the facile but consistent method of labeling all such discussions as abstract and empty. Such a stand could be justified in terms of his philosophy but he did not choose this escape. He has talked about spirit, will, understanding etc. though in a sporadic manner, with some apparently contradictory statements, with undeveloped assertions and without attempting any overall harmony.

In reading his works an explanation for this confusion suggested itself and we have alluded to it earlier. Berkeley has glossed over the distinction between finite and infinite spirits. In God the distinction between his substance and his powers is not real and often God is equated with his thought or his will etc. When applied to God such identifications cannot be disputed. But it is certainly objectionable to do so with man.

Yet this is what Berkeley has, in effect, done. Not that he explicitly says this, nor would he even accept such an

41 Colin M. Turbayne, "Berkeley's two Concepts of Mind", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XX, (Sept. 1959) presents a very interesting view of two concepts of mind which run through Berkeley's thought. The first is that of mind as active, distinct from ideas, with intellect and will. This concept he feels is inconsistent with the rest of Berkeley's system, p. 85. The second concept would consider the mind as substance to be metaphorical and the distinction of mind and its faculties as an abstract idea. This concept is supposedly latent in Berkeley's thought and the one which he really held. Turbayne refers to P.C., par. 637, 658, 701, 777, 829; Princ., Part I, par. 27; Alc. VIII, 28 to support this position, pp. 90-92.
equation of man and God as spirit. However, if man is con-
sidered in this way, namely, if there is no real distinction
between his substance and his powers, then Berkeley's state-
ments about man being will or ideas etc. make sense. That
Berkeley has, in effect, done so is further supported by the
fact that there is no distinction made between man and God as
spirit, as active, or as will.

Even with this interpretation, all our problems are
not solved. Sensation as well as imagination would remain
unexplained in man. Nevertheless such an approach does appear
to explain more of the numerous inconsistencies in Berkeley's
thought on this issue than any other. Moreover if Berkeley
has unconsciously and unintentionally made man too much like
God then certain insoluble difficulties will arise. For he
does say things about man which will not apply to God; man is
not purely active nor infinite, nor perfect. Hence the whole
treatment of spirit and its powers will be charged with contra-
dictions because of two irreconcilable notions of man, both of
which have influenced his thought.
IV
CONCLUSION

On the basis of the amount of space devoted to it, spiritual substance seems to be of secondary importance in Berkeley's philosophy. Actually, however, spirits, whether infinite or finite, God or man, are of the utmost concern for Berkeley. C. M. Turbayne remarks on this point: "Very little attention has been given to Berkeley's doctrine of mind either by Berkeley himself or by his critics. This is strange, because mind is the central concept in his system." 1

One of the reasons for the lack of material on spirits is, as we mentioned in the Preface, the loss of Part II of the Principles. There is no doubt that Berkeley intended to write this work, but the exact condition of the manuscript at the time of its loss cannot be ascertained. In the second letter to Johnson, Berkeley wrote: "As to the second part of my treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, the fact is I had made considerable progress in it; but the manuscript was lost about fourteen years ago, during my travels in Italy, and

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I never had leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing as writing twice on the same subject. The phrase "considerable progress" is rather indefinite but at least it is clear that Berkeley did not produce a finished work on the subject. It may very well be that such an ex professo work was not produced chiefly because he was unable to resolve the conflicts in his thought.

His interest in spirits is manifested in his own concern to combat skepticism and atheism, not merely for the sake of winning an argument, but to spread the positive doctrines of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul. The "Preface" to the Principles begins, "What I here make public has, after a long and scrupulous inquiry, seem'd to me evidently true, and not unuseful to be known, particularly to those who are tainted with scepticism, or want a demonstration of the existence and immortality of God, or the natural immortality of the soul." It seems patent that his real interest lies in God, and in man as a spiritual being, in spite of the fact that Part I of the Principles, (which is the only part extant), devotes very little space to these subjects.

What Berkeley wishes to do in the Principles and likewise in the Dialogues is to lay the foundation for the knowledge

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2 Vol. II, p. 282. This letter was written in 1729. Vide etiam Diam. II, 167 where he mentions the proposed Part II of the Principles.

of spirits by digging out errors which dispose men toward skepticism and atheism. In his opinion, and it is a reasonable one, unless certain erroneous views are extirpated first, it is futile to proceed to the discussion of spiritual substance. Certainly this is good pedagogy, even if we do not agree with Berkeley on the question of which doctrines lead to skepticism and atheism. In the Principles in the form of a traditional philosophical treatise, and in the Dialogues in a more popular and entertaining manner, Berkeley is chiefly concerned with the rejection of these fallaceous doctrines.

In our first chapter we dealt with these rejections, namely, the rejection of abstract ideas, the rejection of the absolute existence of sensible things apart from their being perceived (that is, of course, the esse est percipi principle), and the rejection of material substance. The rejection of abstract ideas is basic and is used to prove the other two positions. There is a definite development from the rejection of abstract ideas, through the esse est percipi to the rejection of matter. This last rejection is the most important in the fight against atheism. Matter and God are mutually opposed as far as Berkeley is concerned. If you accept matter and are consistent, then according to Berkeley you should be an atheist. But since God exists, (and the Bishop of Cloyne is certain that

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4 The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill, edited by A. Burtt, (Modern Library, New York, 1939), p. xix. "The chief support of atheism and scepticism, he [Berkeley] thought was the current philosophical and scientific belief in a world
he does), matter has to go.

As has been seen the arguments used to establish these basic tenets are not entirely convincing, except perhaps to Hylas. But they do have a greater force when considered against the background of Locke's philosophy. Moreover they are all tied up together and give a very strong coherence to the purgative side of Berkeley's thought. The *esse est percipi* and the rejection of material substance are so closely allied that once you grasp the meaning of *esse est percipi*, the rejection of matter is evident. The rejection of abstract ideas prepares the way for both of these, not in the sense that either position is proved by it alone, but in the sense that both presuppose this basic rejection.

Berkeley intends these initial doctrines as a pro-paedectic to the positive side of his philosophy— the realm of spirit, God and man. How well do these two parts fit together? Is there an overall unity in Berkeley's thought? If we review our treatment of spiritual substance, we should be able to provide an answer to this problem. It is a problem which gets at the very heart of Berkeley's philosophy.

In our second chapter the discussion began with Berkeley's views on "notion", the term he used to designate our knowledge of physical matter independent of mind and moving in accordance with its own mechanical laws". Luce, *Berkeley's Immaterilaism*, p. 71, as usual agrees with Berkeley that God and matter are incompatible. "It is possible to believe both in God and in matter but it is not easy to do so. The two beliefs where they are held together remain in a state of uneasy equilibrium; it is very hard to hold both beliefs together intelligently and firmly."
ledge of spirits as distinct from our knowledge of sensible things which is through "ideas". Notional knowledge is characterized by its objects, rather than by its immediacy. By this type of knowledge we know self, other finite spirits, and God. It might appear that "notion" is merely a verbal subterfuge used by Berkeley to bring into his philosophy something he should reject, namely, spiritual substance. However, such an interpretation is not entirely fair to Berkeley. It is true that "notion" is introduced as a convenient term to distinguish our knowledge of spirits from our knowledge of ideas. We might also note that the "idea" is the object, whereas the "notion" is not. In other words the "idea" is both the _quo_ and _quod_ of knowing, while the "notion" is only the _quo_. Still the term "notion", however unsatisfactory it may be, does not alter Berkeley's position with regard to spirits. He does not need this word. The question of the coherence of spiritual substance with his philosophy as a whole cannot be settled at this level.

The existence of self as a spiritual substance is really asserted, not proved. Berkeley does say, "We have a notion of spirit from thought and action." But he does not actually work

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5 Cf. J. S. Davis, p. 383.

6 Notional knowledge has relations also as its object, but these do not pertain to our topic. Vide Princ., Part I, par. 142, (II, 105).

7 Siris, par. 290, (V, 135). Cf. De Motu par 10 (IV, 15); Sillem p. 110, "Berkeley held that the awareness we have of our own selves is constituted by our experience both of the perceiving activity of our mind and the causal activity of our wills."
out a proof along these lines. The existence of other finite spirits depends on our acceptance of self as a spiritual substance. It would seem more consistent in terms of the rejection of abstract ideas and the **esse est percipi** principle to reject spiritual substance also. This would leave self as a "congeries of perceptions" as Berkeley held earlier.\(^8\) As we indicated in Chapter II, to say any more than this seems inconsistent.

The proof for the existence of God is circular. It depends on the **esse est percipi** and God in turn is needed as a principle to support the **esse est percipi**. In other words, Berkeley has failed to demonstrate the existence of God philosophically. God is, in effect, a postulate in his philosophy. Berkeley needs God to avoid skepticism. For if God does not exist, then only what is actually perceived by finite perceivers here and now, exists. This is an extreme position which Berkeley does not accept, but would it not be more consistent? We will recall that Berkeley did not satisfactorily explain how things exist in God. In fact since he equated sensible things with ideas and ultimately with the ideas in the mind of God, he should logically have been a pantheist. The rejection of God would eliminate this otherwise insoluble difficulty. Berkeley cannot accept God and also adequately distinguish him from the sensible world because of the way in which he interprets the **esse est percipi**.

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\(^8\) P.C., par. 580, (I, 72).
In dealing with the various faculties or powers of spirits, many problems were encountered. The exact function of sense, imagination, understanding and will is difficult to discern. Are these faculties, for Berkeley, distinct from their operations? Are they distinct from one another? Are they distinct from the mind or spirit in which they reside? It seems to be impossible to give a definite answer to any of these problems. Berkeley does not offer a consistent explanation; indeed at times he contradicts himself.

If he followed his own rejection of abstract ideas, he would not even discuss the individual faculties since they are abstract ideas. Berkeley himself says this explicitly not only in the Philosophical Commentaries, but also in the Principles. Berkeley should regard the whole problem of the spirit and its faculties as just so many empty words.

Once he posits the existence of spiritual substance, he is besieged by problems which logically he should not consider. Moreover once he rejects material substance, he cannot consistently hold for the existence of spiritual substance. He held that material substance supporting its accidents did not make sense, yet he was unable to explain that he meant by a spiritual substance supporting its ideas. His attempts to show how the arguments against material substance do not apply to spiritual substance are weak and unconvincing. In terms of his basic

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9 P.C., par. 871, (I, 103); Princ., Part I, par. 27 (II, 52f.); Vide etiam Ale. VIII, 18, (III, 314).
tenets, spiritual substance should also be discarded, as it is by Hume who also accepted these three fundamental positions.

Why it might be asked was Berkeley so inconsistent? Why has he clung to two philosophies which are incompatible? His basic principles are those of an empiricist philosophy.

To a large extent it would be true to describe the philosophy of the Logical Positivists as "Berkeley without God". On the other hand his desire to include God and finite spirits in his philosophy is a result of his Christian faith. There is it seems a conflict between Berkeley, the empiricist, and Berkeley, the Christian. Perhaps he himself was aware of this conflict in his earlier days when he wrote in the Philosophical Commentaries, "to use utmost Caution not to give the least Handle of offense to the Church or Church-men."¹⁰

However, since he did set out to prove the existence of God and to consider man as a spiritual being, it is more probable that he was not conscious of this conflict while writing his major philosophical works. Berkeley does not seem to perceive this dichotomy in his thought. The conflict is there nevertheless, rendering any overall unity in his philo-

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¹⁰ P.C., par. 715, (I, 87). Turbayne, p. 91f, interprets this phrase and also P.⁸, par. 713, (I, 87) to support his contention that Berkeley really was consistent with his basic tenets and did not accept the doctrine of mind which harmonized with the Christian faith. According to Turbayne, Berkeley only presented this doctrine of spiritual substance so as to avoid giving offense to the Church. The evidence for this interpretation is not sufficient to warrant its acceptance. Berkeley seems to have been a sincere Christian all his life.
sophy impossible. His thought can be reduced neither to an empiricism, nor to a doctrine on spirits. Both sides remain isolated in spite of his attempts to integrate them. His bold attempt to fight atheism and skepticism has not succeeded. Only his empiricism left its mark on the future. The real goal of Bishop Berkeley's philosophy has not been attained.


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**Locke:**

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