

## NEW BOOKS

necessary consequence of the Fatherhood of God, that in his sympathy for us he *wishes* evil removed from the world. Now even if his omnipotence were not contradicted by his inability to *remove* the evil (and McTaggart holds that it is), surely it *is* contradicted by his *having wished* there were done something that remains undone—or, by his *having wished* that he himself *could* do something which he *cannot* do, and knows that he cannot do. That logical impossibility prevents God from doing what he *wishes* he could do (though he knows he cannot) seems to me plainly to show one limitation of his nature—one imposed *on* it and not *by* it—for his nature is *to wish* something impossible of realization. Dr. Broad does not meet this difficulty by pointing out that a more interesting or plausible sense of omnipotence than unlimited powerfulness is that of powerfulness limited only by logical possibility. The suggestion seems to *ignore* the difficulty and is therefore irrelevant.

To-day greater interest will probably centre in the next chapter, wherein McTaggart considers the existence of a God who, though not omnipotent, is yet very powerful. The possibility of such a God being creative or non-creative raises issues which most theists should find important, since few of them seem still to insist on omnipotence. (We cannot, of course, be sure that omnipotence may not come into favour again, so it is well to have had it threshed out.) The last chapter, on "Theism and Happiness," maintains that there is no reason for supposing our condition worse than it would be were Theism true. All his results, McTaggart points out, are negative, as they must be when not deduced from some positive metaphysical theory. (This positive supplementation came later, of course, in the *Nature of Existence*.)

With this book, in which the reasoning is so thorough and compact, its material of such absorbing interest, and the writing so simple and smooth, it is only too easy for a reader unwarned to let the eye pass from page to page without appreciating the full force, or the just point, of the arguments.

S. V. KEELING.

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*J. McT. E. McTaggart.* By G. LOWES DICKINSON. With chapters by BASIL WILLIAMS and S. V. KEELING. (Cambridge: at the University Press. 1931. Pp. viii + 160. Price 6s.

This very attractive memoir of McTaggart by one of his oldest friends will be read with pleasure by all who are interested in McTaggart's philosophy and by many besides. It presents a picture of an extremely original and lovable man, who devoted his amazing intellectual powers to the attempt to establish by rigid deduction from self-evident premises a theory of the universe peculiarly characteristic of his own intellectual and emotional nature.

Much new and interesting information is given of McTaggart's early childhood, of his unique career as a schoolboy at Clifton, and of the two visits to New Zealand as a young man which played so important a part in his emotional life. Professor Basil Williams contributes a chapter on McTaggart's friendships, a vitally important factor in the life of a man for whom love was the fundamental link which binds the parts of the universe together. Mr. Keeling, who has the perhaps unique distinction of being a disciple of McTaggart, provides a brief exposition of the outlines of his philosophical system.

Speaking for myself, one new feature that emerges in McTaggart's character

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As against such a view as this it seems necessary to emphasize the tolerably obvious fact that if there is anything which God could not do *if he wished*, he is not omnipotent" (p. 217) (my italics).

## PHILOSOPHY

is his great physical and moral courage. He was either naturally devoid of fear, or he had it completely under control from early boyhood. And he had an immense admiration for courage in others. "The best thing about Christ" (whom McTaggart admits that he "doesn't like much") "was his pluck at the Crucifixion" (p. 88). McTaggart's own last illness was an instance of cheerful and serene fortitude which impressed all those who beheld it. Another feature in his character which was unknown to me was his power of getting on friendly terms, without effort or condescension, with people of widely different social and intellectual status from himself.

There are two mistakes which I have noticed, and there is one supplementary remark that seems worth making. (1) On page 63 McTaggart is reported, on my authority, as having said that "every undergraduate should be compelled to satisfy his tutor that he has been drunk at least once a week as a guarantee of good faith that he is not a teetotaler." In this sentence the word *term* should be substituted for the word *week*, thereby converting a rather stupid and shocking remark into a characteristic bit of McTaggartian wit and wisdom. (2) On page 120, in the quotation from the letter of 1910 about creating doctors, the name *Lapsley* must be wrong. Mr. Lapsley, never having troubled to take a doctor's degree, is (and was *a fortiori* in 1910) incapable of playing the part assigned to him. I suggest that the late Professor *Langley* may be the person referred to in the letter. (3) On page 102 it is said that McTaggart "was particularly intrigued by Garnet's *Lady into Fox*, while frankly confessing his inability to understand what the author would be at." To this I can add the following odd bit of information: McTaggart, who was the least "shockable" of men, told me that he was profoundly shocked and disgusted by *Lady into Fox*, because of the suggestion of bestiality which seemed to him to run through it. One wonders whether many other readers put this interpretation on the story, and what proportion of those who did experienced the strong feeling of disgust which McTaggart confessed to have felt.

C. D. BROAD.

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*Is Divine Existence Credible?* By NORMAN KEMP SMITH, Fellow of the Academy. Annual Philosophical Lecture. Henriette Hertz Trust. British Academy. 1931. (London: Humphrey Milford. 1931. Pp. 28. Price 1s. 6d.)

There is a sort of unwritten canon of reviewing, that the length of the review should be in some measure proportioned to the length of the book. In this case, however, it would result in small notice being given to a most valuable and interesting piece of reasoning. One may read 500 pages of solid argument on the subject of this lecture, and end with far less than Professor Kemp Smith has compressed into 28 pages. He has managed to deal in an original manner with a well-worn topic, to put his conclusions in an admirably clear and unambiguous way, and to pack all in tabloid form. For this, every student of philosophy owes him thanks mixed with wonder. *Si sic omnes!*

The earlier part of Professor Kemp Smith's argument deals with the Design argument, which is the most formidable of the theistic "proofs." He advances two objections to it. First, that it ignores the difference between the natural and the artificial, and secondly, that it leads to an anthropomorphic conception of God, in terms of attributes appropriate only to a created being. But "we do not possess even the beginnings of an understanding of creative activity." It defies any analogy drawn from the sort of