

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

La Philosophie Bergsonienne. J. MARITAIN. Paris: Marcel Rivière et Cie. 1914. Pp. 477.

Even to a reviewer whose prejudices are unsympathetic with those of the author, this work is impressive in its just comprehension of the difficult and uncongenial conceptions which it discusses, impressive, too, in its elegant and powerful analysis. These peculiarly critical virtues are the more impressive, at least if the reader's prejudices are against supernaturalism, because they are exhibited in a work whose primary motive is avowedly vindication of the orthodox supernaturalist account of truth. In fact, since, in this account, the church is the exclusive repository and dispenser of ultimate truth, and human obtainment of truth is conditioned exclusively on a prescribed attitude toward the church, an attitude irrelevant to any specifically critical virtues, the latter are more than impressive when displayed in the course of such an apology; they are anomalous, implicitly repudiated by the motive of such an apology.

Consider the following passage: "The most general cause of philosophic errors consists in a certain inversion of the order of intelligence at its limit, by which, instead of trying to conform to reality, it does its utmost to conform reality to itself. At this point it will admit no reality but such as it already knows; it rejects all proofs but familiar ones; it declares everything to be explicable by those data alone which it has in its possession. And thus it reduces immeasurable truth to a miserable 'reservation' of the already known" (p. 463). This repudiation of judgment "at the limit" of intelligence, to state it more baldly, condemns the disposition to admit no reality but such as intelligence is constitutionally capable of admitting, to reject all proofs that are unintelligible, to believe that being "had" is common to all that is had—how little related otherwise, is immaterial, to this discussion of supernaturalism, since the author rightly distinguishes orthodox supernaturalism from natural, or human, or secular, intellectualism just by denial *categorical* (in which there is no degree) of discursive attainment of revealed truth through any community with data of experience ("possessions" which we "have"). Experience is one thing, it seems; revelation so completely another that the meaning of possessing it differs *absolutely* from the meaning of "having" any datum of experience. If one says "possess" in one case, one should eschew the word in the other case.

Why, then, supernaturalist apologetics? For, apologetics are rebuttal of critical attack, and must, somehow, *apply* to it. If they apply, they are therein intelligible; if not intelligible, their applying is a vain thing. Now, one can not intelligibly relate the absolutely sundered, not even by antagonism. More than once our author holds Bergson assiduously to recognition that "truth is one" and one the way of truth; and that way, in page after page of vigorous Thomism, is maintained to be the way of intelligent understanding. The question is, why should such gallant, straightforward effort of intellect end in surrender to an ancient superstition essentially subservient to an ancient tyranny.

To show that Bergsonism is radically incompatible with the articles of creed essential to true and spiritual membership in the Roman Catholic Church—this object is never detached for a moment from the author's intention, and he who reads the book with an eye single to its light on the obscurities of Bergsonism will pass through many shades of amusement and impatience at the diligence of the arraignment of Bergsonism before the bar of Thomism. Certainly the arraignment is efficient. And at the same time, be it said, full justice is done to the distinction between "the Bergsonism of fact and the Bergsonism of intention." Part III. concludes the work with a studied elaboration of this distinction, and confesses that "if we take the doctrine not by itself, but in relation to the particular and contingent conditions of its conception, its truly fundamental principles appear rather as results, external necessities, dominations, to which the philosopher felt bound to submit; and from this point of view the main features of the doctrine become a very clear intuition of the vanity of mechanistic materialism and a determined disposition toward the philosophy of life and spirit" (p. 441). While the two Bergsonisms are "not absolutely incompatible so long as the second remains mere intention," they are, however, truly different, and in reality contrary to each other, the first destroying what the second would fain establish" (p. 442).

Whatever offense the secular-minded student of Bergson may take either at the pretensions of this book to limit human aptness naturally to "have" its data, or at the erection of scholasticism as the arbiter of truth, he must be grateful, in spite of all, for so discerning an exposition of the difficult and original doctrines of Bergson.

There are three independent studies, the first consisting of seven lectures delivered at the Catholic Institute of Paris, also published serially in the *Revue de Philosophie*, and treating Bergsonism in its *ensemble* from its own strategic viewpoints—its conception of philosophic method, its critique of intelligence, its conceptions of intuition and duration, of God, human nature, and freedom. The seventh and last chapter of this part throws upon all this darkness "*la lumière thomiste*." The first part is two thirds of the book. The second (published formerly in the *Revue de Philosophie*) is devoted to Bergson's evolutionism. The third part, on "The Two Bergsonisms," is an article published formerly in the *Revue Thomiste*.

The book commences with a sympathetic account of Bergson's outlook upon philosophy and the manner of his induction into his problem. Modern philosophy is product of the "rationalist" method, which the author explains to mean the pretension of individual reason to judge everything, irrespective of theological authority or philosophic tradition, or even technical competence, and to conform reality to itself instead of itself to reality. It is such a conception of philosophic method against which Bergson has reacted. His reaction has misled him into confusing an abuse of intelligence with its legitimate function of analysis.

His philosophic method arises from a radically original notion, that man's characteristic function is not knowledge, but physical construction. Knowing, for man, is painful and unnatural. An atrophied rudiment of this faculty is discoverable in us, however; by a strenuous "dilatation" of this "inner sense" we *can* achieve a very poor and elusive, but, so far as it goes, a true, immediate perception of one sample of reality, oneself, to wit. In such a performance there is sensible contact with what traditional philosophy calls our substance. What is thus seized is a "lived," a completely personal, private, unique bit of knowledge, nothing that, to speak strictly, is *statable*. One has to resort to metaphoric adumbrations contained in such images as "flux," "current," "duration," in order to suggest the nature of it. Bergson proposes to call this (avowedly unnatural) state of consciousness "intuition." Instead of substance, it reveals the nature of reality to be *pure becoming* or transition. Now, every statement, strictly speaking, falsifies this fundamental truth; for every statement is a judgment, postulating the law of identity, a law without valid meaning, for lack of static or substantial *being*. The "being" of intelligence is an illusion brought to pass in human consciousness through its domination by intelligence. A whiff of true knowledge by intuition shows reality becoming, never being. Becoming, then, is the source and essence of reality—creature, creation, and creator. And so the fact of intelligence and its illusion of stability in matter will have to be explained by this creative evolution of universal becoming. Well, the feature of this process that accounts for them is simply its interruption or inversion by an antagonistic principle which, somehow, is not antagonistic in the sense of being an independent opponent, but—in short, in some other sense! By this inverse process one phase of the universal onrush becomes more or less statically related to another: thus the illusion of rest and solidity in what is truly universal movement and flow.

"Aristotle's luminous and fecund distinction between potential and actual being" the author finds solvent to every dialectical difficulty with problems of becoming and motion. For instance: "All the argumentation of Zeno rests on the hypothesis that between two points there are an infinity of *actual* points," that space, that every continuum, is infinitely *divided*. But certainly not! Divisible, yes; not divided. Confusing the potential and the actual is the crux of the paradoxes of Zeno. But Bergson's answer to Zeno, that "all real change is indivisible change," makes the same confusion, supposing that, to say a continuum is undivided is the same as to say it is indivisible. Could not Achilles, if he wished, make two steps, or three, etc., *ad infinitum*, where in fact he made one? Does one reply that no such steps are the step which they are alleged to divide? Of course they are not! What of it? If you divide an apple into halves you annihilate the undividedness of the apple: is this supposed to prove that it was indivisible? It proves, on the contrary, that its undividedness was just the potentiality of its division.

The same Aristotelism overcomes the enigma of relativity. Being is not derivable from becoming; hence, precisely, the nihilism and bank-

ruptcy of a metaphysic of "absolute" becoming. But becoming, movement, change, passage from one to another state of *being*, one the potentiality of the other, derives, from the being of the states themselves, precisely the reality of these.

And by the same principle intelligence knows without deterministic paradox the freedom of the will. The free act "matures," in Bergson's own account, by the evolution of a process. Bergsonian "intuition" can see in this nothing but a *spontaneity*, which levels down human "freedom" into a character belonging even to inanimate nature, not to speak of the lower animals. But see in the willed act the actualization of prior intelligent potencies, and freedom becomes *undetermined by any particular good*, determined only by that absolute and universal good for which human nature, and human nature alone of all nature, is formed (formed in the strict Aristotelian sense, as well as any other sense: *i. e.*, the absolute and universal good is the "form" of human nature, its true actualized being). Sensible intuition knows the particular only. Intelligence alone knows universal good, and the intelligent will of man is, therefore, unique in the indetermination of its genuine freedom.

Such are fair samples of the author's vindication of legitimate intellectual analysis in the realm of life and motion. That the philosophy of intelligence is not characterized by disability in this realm, especially that it has not, as historic fact, been characteristically "fascinated by inert matter," that it does not run naturally to a geometric and materialist conception of reality—a universal mathematic—is sufficiently attested by the greatest of intellectualist philosophies. "Is not the philosophy of Aristotle and of Saint Thomas before all a philosophy of life, motion, becoming (albeit a philosophy of being), in so much that the doctrine of potentiality and actuality, which dominates it throughout, is born of the intellectual apprehension of motion; in so much that this philosophy has been charged with deriving its concepts too much from the things of life, and with exaggerating the importance of *spontaneity* and production of the *new* in the universe; in so much that its deepest analyses are applied to change, in its eyes the essential characteristic of our world" (pp. 46, 47) ? It is characteristic of Bergsonism, on the other hand, to regard an abused or difficult instrument as worthless or as meant for a use other than its own.

This is seen in Bergson's regarding products of analysis as alien or "external" to that which is analyzed. As if, even if the *idea* is external to the object, it follows that the element of the object known by the idea is likewise external. As if the Parthenon were external to Athens! Bergson's critique applies not in the least to analysis, but to the absurd metaphysic which denies either the substantial *unity* of an *essential whole* or the *reality* of the relations between distinct parts forming an *accidental whole*.

The alleged immobilization and breaking up of the real by the concept is met by the scholastic distinction between the order of knowledge and the order of being. The simplicity and fluidity of an object can lay no conceivable constraint upon the states of mind by which they are known,

such that these must, also, *in their being*, partake of a corresponding simplicity or fluidity. Nominalism and radical empiricism are at the bottom of Bergson's critique of the concept. The concept for Bergson is an imaginative schema, an impoverished sensible percept stripped, so to speak, to its fighting weight ("*affectée à un usage pratique*") and attached to a name. Bergsonism regularly confuses imagination and thought. Its critique of intelligence applies to imagination. Thus it accuses thought of seeing everything in space—which imagination does, but thought does not.

Bergson's "genesis" of intelligence could not be true, since the subject-matter is thus falsely conceived. An organ, a "thing" subsisting in a living being, may be accounted for by a process of evolution. Any such organic product of evolution moves in the concrete and particular, it deals with objects of sense and imagination. The function of intelligence is not action on matter, but knowledge of the formal essence of being. Thereby it were impossible that it should be true in one order of being and in another false. It is either universally true or universally false. We have, in this genesis of intelligence, and its restriction to an exclusive realm of being, an example of a characteristic vice of Bergsonism, to "hedge" between any yes and no, to try to save them both by an apparent yes together with a real no. Generally there is transition so subtle and agile that yes and no seem reconciled.

Intelligence is as essentially intuitive, in the proper meaning of the term, as Bergsonian "intuition." For the proper meaning of the term is immediate knowledge. As a fact, all we know is expressible, somehow or other, intelligibly. Of course, to admit this, Bergsonism would be required to maintain that all we know is false. If I conclude, "Man is free," from a rational demonstration, intelligence alone is concerned, not "intuition." But either the judgment expresses an intuition, and then the latter is just an intellectual perception, like the rational conclusion; or else it does not; but then the contradictory judgment, "Man is not free," is equally false because equally conceptual. The truth, that is, lies between—between yes and no.

Bergson's essential departure from traditional intellectualist philosophy is in the denial of being, the affirmation that fundamental reality is not, but becomes. And this spells bankruptcy. Hegel recognized that it is to conceive of the intimate nature of things as a realized contradiction. To deny the principle of identity as a fundamental law of reality is evidently to affirm that contradiction is the very heart of reality, since the principle of non-contradiction is only the obverse of the principle of identity.

The search for God by means of the intuition of becoming ends, whatever the will of the searcher, in pantheistic atheism. The creation of human souls is a subdividing, into individuals, of the vital impetus, due to the antagonism of matter. Thus, in a sense, are souls ever being created which yet, in a sense, preexisted. And thus Bergsonism is a monism in which there is no *radical* distinction between spirituality and materiality.

Such persistence after death as Bergson attributes to the soul is nothing more than the physical inertia of an impulsive force in which souls, no longer individuated by material bodies, flow together into the totality of that impulse. A miserable counterfeit of Christian immortality!

Bergson approves of the distinction, by the philosophical systems, between soul and body, of their belief in the reality of the human person, the privileged place of this creature in nature, and his survival of death. But the attempt by intuition to establish these truths results only in words. Of the spiritualism of this philosophy all truth has evaporated; there remains only the monism of pure change.

ARTHUR MITCHELL.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS.

The Unconscious: The Fundamentals of Human Personality, Normal and Abnormal. MORTON PRINCE. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1914. Pp. xii + 549.

This work represents Dr. Prince's latest views in the field of psychopathology, a field in which he has done so many years of able work in America, despite indifference and adverse criticism. The book, which is written in a clear and careful manner, is designed to be an introduction to psychopathology, and, naturally, as such, deals almost entirely with the phenomena of unconscious mental processes. This is as it should be, for the unconscious is not only an important problem of abnormal psychology, but is preeminently *the* problem. Any discussion of the unconscious must necessarily lead into ramifications where elementary principles are bound to be abandoned. The book is based upon Dr. Prince's previous contributions to the subject, particularly his papers in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, and it presents in an exceedingly lucid and well-ordered manner his own views on the mechanisms and functions of the unconscious. These views reveal a strong leaning to the French school of psychopathology, particularly as exemplified by Janet. As those who are familiar with the literature, and the active workers in the field can readily see, such views differ essentially and fundamentally from the conception of the unconscious as given by Freud and which has dominated the valuable and important psychoanalytic movement. Thus any criticism of the unconscious as given in this book must of necessity be compared with the psychoanalytic conception.

This difference can be summed up in a few words—namely, that while Dr. Prince's conception is broad, it is not deep enough; it does not take into complete consideration the profoundest wishes and desires of human personality. There is too much stress laid upon the unconscious as a distinctly neural process and not sufficient upon its psychic character,—too much upon the individual as a clear-cut entity, and too little upon the development of the individual, and the formation of adult characters from infantile mental processes. Such a conception as Dr. Prince gives, for instance, could be useful only to a limited degree in such universal applications on which the Freudian view lays so much stress, such as, for instance, the psychology of childhood, myths, folk-lore, literature, wit, etc.