Berkeley's Philosophy of Religion
For *The Continuum Companion to Berkeley*[*]

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Like most of the great early modern philosophers, George Berkeley was not a university professor. He pursued, instead, a career in the clergy of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Berkeley was ordained in 1710, the same year he published his *Treatise on the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Berman 1994, 17). His first clerical post was as chaplain to Lord Peterborough from 1713-1714 (80). From here, Berkeley climbed the ranks of Irish clergy to become Dean of the cathedral at Derry beginning in 1724 and Bishop of Cloyne beginning in 1734 (97).[1]

Berkeley's concerns as a philosopher were closely tied to his concerns as a clergyman. The *Principles* bears the subtitle, "Wherein the Chief Causes of Error and Difficulty in the Sciences, with the grounds of Scepticism, Atheism, and Irreligion, are inquired into," and the *Dialogues* were subtitled, "In opposition to sceptics and atheists."[2] To an even greater degree than the early works, late works such as *Alciphron* and *The Analyst* are explicitly framed as works of Christian apologetics.

The defense of traditional, Christian religion was clearly one of Berkeley's central philosophical concerns. However, the defense of religion, for Berkeley, does not consist solely in the defense of religious *doctrine*; Berkeley consistently insists that it is "no less than the design of nature and providence, that the end of speculation be practice, or the improvement and regulation of our lives and actions" (DHP, 167). For this reason, Berkeley is hopeful that his philosophy may not only promote religious belief, but also "have a gradual influence in

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1. For a detailed biography of Berkeley, see ch. ? of this volume.
2. The first two editions bore the longer subtitle:

   The Design of which is plainly to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge, the incorporeal nature of the soul, and the immediate providence of a Deity: In opposition to sceptics and theists. Also, to open a method for rendering the sciences more easy, useful, and compendious.

repairing the too much defaced sense of virtue in the world" (DHP, 168), that is, that it will promote religious and moral *practice*.

Religion can be thought of as having two components, the *doctrinal* and the *practical*, where, at least in Berkeley's Christian context, the doctrinal component consists in some set of beliefs about God and his relation to humanity, and the practical component is concerned with satisfying human obligations to God.[3] Human obligations to God are thought to include both general moral behavior and more specifically religious actions (worship). When religious doctrines and practices purport to be justified by natural reason alone, they are said to be part of *natural religion*. Doctrines and practices which purport to be justified only by appeal to supernatural revelation are said to be part of *revealed religion*.

Berkeley is concerned to understand and defend both the doctrines and the practices of both natural and revealed (Christian) religion. This chapter will provide a comprehensive survey of this aspect of Berkeley's thought.

Part I
Natural Religion

Berkeley, like many of his contemporaries, holds that natural religion is founded upon two principal doctrines, the existence of God and the natural immortality of the soul. These doctrines together provide the foundation for moral motivation, and the moral actions thus motivated form the heart of the practice of natural religion (cf. Leibniz 1710, 50-51). The first five sections of this chapter will examine Berkeley's defense of these two doctrines, and his account of their role in moral motivation.

1   Berkeley's Arguments for the Existence of a Super-Mind

According to Jonathan Bennett, Berkeley's early works contain two distinct arguments for the existence of God, which Bennett calls the 'Passivity Argument' and the 'Continuity Argument' (Bennett 1971, ch. 7). Additionally, an argument for the existence of God from Berkeley's theory of visual language is hinted at in the *New Theory of Vision* and developed in the fourth dialogue of *Alciphron*.[4] There is considerable scholarly dispute as to whether each of the relevant passages is meant to offer a serious argument for the existence of

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3. Although, as has already been mentioned, resistance to the separation of the doctrinal from the practical runs deep in Berkeley's thought, he nevertheless recognizes that a distinction can be drawn. See the discussion of the respective roles of the 'light' of the understanding and the 'heat' of the affections in religion in Berkeley's 1741 letter to Sir John James (BW, 7:146-147).

4. On the theory of visual language, see ch. ? of this volume.

God, and whether these are all *distinct* arguments. It has also been alleged that a problematic circularity exists between the Passivity Argument and the Continuity Argument, if both are taken seriously.

Each of the arguments under discussion purports to establish the existence of some mind which is in certain respects superior to humans. However, the arguments do not, by themselves, show that that mind has the attributes of the traditional Christian God. Establishing traditional monotheism therefore requires further argument (Olscamp 1970a; Bennett 1971, 165; Grayling 1986, 194-195; Ksenjek and Flage 2012). For this reason, my approach will be to begin by considering each of the three groups of texts as providing an argument for the existence of a 'super-mind,' and postpone to §2 the question of whether the arguments, if successful, would tend to support traditional monotheism.

1.1   The Passivity Argument

The explicitly stated premises and conclusions of the Passivity Argument are these (PHK, §§25-26, 29):

> **(1)** Changes in my ideas occur.

Therefore,

> **(2)** Something causes changes in my ideas.
>
> **(3)** No idea causes anything.

Therefore,

> **(4)** Changes in my ideas are caused by a substance.
>
> **(5)** All substances are spirits.
>
> **(6)** Changes in my ideas of sense do not depend on my will.

Therefore,

> **(7)** Every change in my ideas of sense is caused by some spirit distinct from myself.

The argument as stated requires considerable cleaning up. In particular, in order to render it valid, several suppressed premises must be supplied. However, most scholars agree that *on Berkeley's principles*, an argument of this sort succeeds in establishing that a mind distinct from myself sometimes causes ideas in me. This means that the argument, although in a certain sense successful, has two severe limitations. First, it depends on controversial premises, some of which Berkeley defends elsewhere, and others of which he simply assumes. Second, it establishes a conclusion much weaker than traditional monotheism. Most crucially, this argument, as it stands, gives me no reason for supposing

that all of my sensory perceptions are caused by one and the same mind and not several (Tipton 1974, 299; Pitcher 1977, 133; Grayling 1986, 194-197; Roberts 2007, 159n36; Ksenjek and Flage 2012, 282-285).

Given the theory of ideas, premise (1) is a datum of experience, and so needs no defense. However, this premise alone does not entail Berkeley's first conclusion, (2). The following intuitively plausible and widely accepted principle will render the inference valid:

   (1*) Every change is caused by something.

It is widely held that this is the implicit premise Berkeley employs in the inference from (1) to (2) (Tipton 1974, 302-320; Pitcher 1977, 131; Muehlmann 1992, 249-250; Dicker 2011, 231).

Berkeley supports premise (3) by remarking that ideas "are *visibly* inactive" (PHK, §25, emphasis added). That is, we do not perceive any activity or causal power in our ideas. To support (3), this observation must be combined with Berkeley's claim that "there is nothing in [our ideas] but what is perceived" (§25). One of the fundamental principles of Berkeley's theory of ideas is that ideas have only those features which they are perceived to have. But, he claims, ideas are not perceived to have any causal powers. Therefore, they have none.[5]

An implicit premise is again required to make the inference to (4). Berkeley is however certainly committed to the claim:

   (3*) Everything is either an idea or a substance.

This renders the inference valid.

Berkeley explicitly defends premise (5) near the beginning of the *Principles* (§7). But from (4) and (5) we can conclude:

   (5*) Every change in my ideas is caused by some spirit.

What Berkeley wants to conclude next is that *some* changes in my ideas are caused by a spirit distinct from myself. He does not hold that *all* changes in my ideas are caused by a spirit distinct from myself, for Berkeley believes that it is apparent on introspection that I cause ideas in myself when I imagine things (§28). For this reason he brings in the distinction between the ideas of sense and the ideas of imagination, stating, in premise (6), that changes in the former do not depend on my will. However, this is not enough to entail Berkeley's ultimate conclusion (7). What is needed is some general principle like the following:

   (6*) If a spirit S is the cause of a change c, then c depends on S's will.

In a passage in Berkeley's notebooks which gives an early version of the Passivity Argument, Berkeley explicitly formulates a principle very much like this one.

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5. As Richard Brook pointed out to me, Berkeley at one point concedes that we are often inclined to "*attribute* power or agency to the ideas themselves, and make one the cause of another" (PHK, §32, emphasis added). Nevertheless, we do not *perceive* any power or agency in our ideas, hence they have none. Berkeley's explanation of our mistaken tendency to attribute causal powers to ideas lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

In that entry, Berkeley says that a cause is "nothing but a Being wch wills wn the Effect follows the volition" (N, §499; see Tipton 1974, 307). In other words, Berkeley takes (6*) to be implicit in the very notion of a cause. Many scholars believe that Berkeley implicitly assumes this principle both here and elsewhere (Tipton 1974, 320; Pitcher 1977, 132-133; Winkler 1989, §7.2; Stoneham 2002, §5.2; Roberts 2007, §4.2).[6]

From (5*), (6), and (6*), we can infer Berkeley's ultimate conclusion, that changes in my ideas of sense are caused by a spirit distinct from myself.

The Passivity Argument is valid, and the premises are among the central commitments of Berkeley's philosophy. The mind (or minds) referred to in the conclusion can properly be described as a 'super-mind' insofar as it has a power which I evidently do not: the power to excite ideas in other minds (PHK, §33). According to some interpretations, Berkeley holds that I do something like this when I move the parts of my body,[7] but I certainly cannot cause in other minds all the sorts of ideas which I receive by sense.

1.2 The Continuity Argument

A second argument for the existence of a super-mind is hinted at in the *Principles* (§48) and developed in the *Dialogues* (DHP, 211-213, 230-231). Bennett dubbed this argument 'the Continuity Argument' because he held that in these passages Berkeley was arguing from the premise that objects exist when not perceived by any human (and so have continuous existence despite gaps in human perception) to the conclusion that "there is an omnipresent eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things" (DHP, 231; Bennett 1971, §37).

The interpretation of this argument is considerably more controversial than the interpretation of the Passivity Argument. The interpretations can be divided into two main camps: those which take the *continuity* of objects as the central premise (Bennett 1971, §37; Tipton 1974, 320-350; Dicker 2011, §13.3), and those which take the *independence* of objects from human perceivers as the central premise (Ayers 1987; Atherton 1995; Stoneham 2002, §§5.3-5.4).

I will use the phrase 'Continuity Argument' to refer to whatever argument Berkeley is in fact making in the texts in question. I will distinguish between continuity interpretations and independence interpretations of that argument. I do not mean for the label 'Continuity Argument' to privilege continuity *interpretations* in any way; it is simply necessary to have some label or other, and this label is the most widely used in the literature. I will begin by discussing the texts in which the argument appears, and then describe how those texts are interpreted by the advocates of continuity and independence interpretations, respectively.

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6. Berkeley's philosophy of action is treated in detail in ch. ? of this volume.

7. Again, see ch. ? [on Berkeley's philosophy of action].

1.2.1   The Texts

In the *Principles*, Berkeley insists that in denying that objects of sense can exist outside the mind, he "would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but all minds whatsoever." Thus, Berkeley says, it is not a consequence of his theory that bodies "have no existence except only while they are perceived by us" (PHK, §48). In the *Dialogues*, this line of thought becomes an argument for the existence of a super-mind. Berkeley writes:

> To me it is evident . . . that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, there must be some other mind wherein they exist. As sure therefore as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite omnipresent spirit who contains and supports it (DHP, 212).

Hylas points out that Philonous's position sounds like a basic affirmation of Christian orthodoxy: "that there is a God, and that he knows and comprehends all things" (212). However, Philonous notes an important difference between the standard position and his own:

> Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God because all sensible things must be perceived by him (212).

It is clear here that, in order to secure the 'real existence' of sensible things, some super-mind is needed to perceive them, and this is set forth as a reason for believing in such a super-mind, which Berkeley's describes as "an infinite and omnipresent spirit."

Later in the *Dialogues*, Berkeley repeats this reasoning. This second passage is important to the scholarly dispute because it appeals explicitly to both the continuity of objects and their independence from individual finite minds:

> When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it. There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them, as likewise they did before my birth and would do after my supposed annihilation. And as the same is true with regard to all other finite created spirits, it necessarily follows, there is an omnipresent eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things and exhibits them to our view in such a manner, and according to such rules as he himself has ordained, and are by us terms the 'laws of nature' (230-231).

It is worth noting that the super-mind in the stated conclusion of both versions of the Continuity Argument is rather more impressive, rather closer to the traditional God, than the super-mind of the Passivity Argument. The super-mind of the Continuity Argument is omnipresent and eternal. This follows because the argument is precisely an argument for an all-perceiving mind and, given Berkeley's idealistic account of time and space,[8] such a mind will necessarily count as existing at every time and in every place. The first version of the argument further states that the super-mind is 'infinite,' and the second version states that the super-mind is the cause of our sensory perceptions. Whether the argument can in fact deliver these conclusions will be examined in our survey of interpretations, to which we now turn.

1.2.2   Continuity Interpretations

Bennett formulates the Continuity Argument quite simply, as follows:

> **(a)** No collection of ideas can exist when not perceived by some spirit;
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> **(b)** Objects are collections of ideas;
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> **(c)** Objects sometimes exist when not perceived by any human spirit;

therefore

> **(d)** There is a non-human spirit which sometimes perceives objects (Bennett 1971, 169).

It is a matter of controversy whether Berkeley is committed to premise (b),[9] but the argument can clearly be adapted to other interpretations of Berkeley's account of physical objects. Subject to this caveat, most interpreters agree that Berkeley accepts all of the premises. Furthermore, the argument is clearly valid. However, two difficulties remain: first, there is a problem about the status of premise (c); second, the conclusion of the argument is weaker than Berkeley's stated conclusion in the text.

Most interpreters, both before and after Bennett, agree that Berkeley endorsed premise (c). What is not clear, however, is whether Berkeley is entitled to use it as a premise in this context. As Bennett points out, premise (b) casts doubt on the commonsense principle that objects exist when no human perceives them (170). According to Bennett, Berkeley has done nothing to dispel this doubt because Berkeley was 'indifferent' to continuity: although he wishes to show that the continuity of objects is compatible with his system, he has no interest in showing that objects actually exist when humans do not perceive them (§38).

Most scholars have found this last claim of Bennett's, that Berkeley was indifferent to continuity, incredible (see, e.g., Tipton 1974, 320-350; Dicker 2011,

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8. On Berkeley's theory of time and space, see ch. ? of this volume.
9. On Berkeley's theory of bodies, see ch. ? of this volume.

253-254). These scholars have wished to take Berkeley's claim to be a defender of commonsense more seriously, and have, plausibly enough, regarded the existence of objects when unperceived by humans as a central principle of commonsense. According to Ian Tipton and Georges Dicker, Berkeley does in fact defend continuity in other contexts. However, the Continuity Argument must still, according to Tipton, be regarded as a 'momentary aberration' (Bennett 1971, 171; Tipton 1974, 323), for in the Continuity Argument continuity is an assumption which Berkeley takes for granted, whereas he usually takes it as a thesis in need of defense. Dicker states the difficulty more clearly and explicitly:

> Berkeley cannot even legitimately use the continuity argument as a supplementary argument for the existence of God. For in his system the key premise of the continuity argument – the premise that objects continue to exist when no finite minds are perceiving them – rests solely on the existence of an all-perceiving God (Dicker 2011, 261).

The Continuity Argument is, therefore, problematically circular.

Bennett, Tipton, and Dicker all believe that Berkeley has made a serious error in the passages under discussion. One option for those who wish to escape this conclusion is to reject the continuity interpretation in favor of an independence interpretation of the sort to be discussed below. These sorts of considerations of charity are, indeed, among the reasons usually given for favoring an independence interpretation. A second option, which to my knowledge has not previously appeared in the literature, is to appeal to the differences in dialectical situation between the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*. At the beginning of the *Dialogues*, the characters agree "to admit that opinion for true, which upon examination shall appear most agreeable to common sense and remote from scepticism" (DHP, 172). The continuity of objects could be regarded as an anti-skeptical principle and, if it is, then it might be held that, in the context of the *Dialogues*, it is in no need of defense at all. Immaterialism with God preserves continuity and immaterialism without God does not; this makes the former more "agreeable to common sense and remote from skepticism" than the latter and, therefore, according to the rules to which Hylas and Philonous have agreed, immaterialism with God is the opinion that must be 'admitted for true.'[10] If this is correct, then there is no need to worry about any circularity between the Continuity Argument and Berkeley's defenses of continuity elsewhere; the moral of the story would be that one must be careful mixing and matching arguments from such different dialectical contexts as the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*.

Even if this dialectical problem can be solved, the difficulty about the conclusion remains. Berkeley's stated conclusion is much stronger than Bennett's (d). One strategy for getting from (d) to the existence of "an omnipresent eternal Mind" (231) would be to argue that the supposition of one mind which perceives everything is simpler than the supposition of a variety of different minds

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10. The claim that 'Godless immaterialism' has skeptical consequences is defended by Stoneham 2013.

plugging the gaps in human perception to ensure continuity. Since distance is a sensible quality (PHK, §44) and time is merely the succession of ideas (§98), a mind which perceived everything would exist in every time and place. However, the introduction of these simplicity considerations would render the argument less than demonstrative, which means that Philonous's claim that, with this argument, Hylas can "oppose and baffle the most strenuous advocates of atheism" and that by it "the whole system of atheism, is ... entirely overthrown" (DHP, 213) would have to be regarded as quite significantly exaggerated. These issues will be addressed in more detail in §2 when we come to discuss Berkeley's argument that his super-mind has the traditional divine attributes.

1.2.3   Independence Interpretations

On continuity interpretations, the Continuity Argument has two serious difficulties: in the context of Berkeley's system, it is problematically circular, and its conclusion is weaker than Berkeley's stated conclusion. When a philosopher appears to make a serious error of this sort, charity dictates that we should reexamine the relevant texts to see if the error may in fact have arisen from a mistaken interpretation. Such reexamination has led some interpreters to deny that the continuity of objects figures as a premise in the (so-called) Continuity Argument at all.

Michael Ayers points out that both of the texts in question mention the existence of objects *outside my mind.* In the first version of the argument, Berkeley says that "sensible things ... have an existence distinct from being perceived by me" (212), and in the second version he says that "it is plain [that sensible things] have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it" (230). In a later passage, which Ayers takes to be a summary of Berkeley's two arguments for the existence of God (Ayers 1987, 123; cf. Stoneham 2002, 143-144), Berkeley says "the things I perceive must have an existence ... out of my mind" (DHP, 240). Ayers therefore holds that Berkeley's argument proceeds "from causal independence to ontological independence" (Ayers 1987, 120-121). In other words, on Ayers' interpretation, the key premise of the Continuity Argument is also one of the key premises in the Passivity Argument, namely, that sensible ideas do not depend on my will. From this, Berkeley concludes that sensible things exist outside my mind. But (Berkeley has already argued) sensible things can only exist in a mind, so sensible things must exist in some mind distinct from my own.

The step from the claim that sensible ideas do not depend on my will to the claim that sensible things exist outside my mind sounds like an equivocation: Berkeley's premise is that sensible ideas are *causally* independent of me, and his conclusion is that they are *ontologically* independent of me. Bennett has argued that this sort of equivocation is found throughout Berkeley's writings (Bennett 1971, §§35-38). Ayers argues, however, that this is not a simple equivocation between two unrelated meanings of 'independent,' but rather an *inference* from one *species* of independence to another (Ayers 1987, 117-119).

The central question is not whether the uses of 'independent' are related, but

whether the inference is legitimate. Ayers notes that in holding that "the involuntariness or causal independence of my sensation or sensory idea ...implies that it ...has an existence exterior to my mind" Berkeley is agreeing with 'materialist' opponents, such as Descartes (Ayers 1987, 118-119). The nature of the inference is, however, still unclear.

Kenneth Winkler argues that the inference here, and in the other texts where Bennett charges Berkeley with equivocation, makes use of a suppressed premise which Winkler calls 'the Denial of Blind Agency' (Winkler 1989, §7.2). According to this thesis, which was widely accepted in the period and is explicitly endorsed by Berkeley in other contexts (N, §§812, 841-842; DHP, 239), an agent cannot act without having some conception of what she is trying to accomplish. Once this thesis is accepted, it will follow from the fact that some other mind is the *cause* of an idea in me that some other mind *has* that idea (or an idea like it). In other words, God has to have the idea of redness in order to cause me to have the idea of redness. This principle renders the first step of the argument, from causal independence to ontological independence, valid.

Advocates of independence interpretations have often held that the Continuity Argument is much more closely related to the Passivity Argument than the advocates of continuity interpretations suppose. Margaret Atherton has perhaps set the matter in the clearest light. The Passivity Argument, Atherton says, relies on the premise that the ideas of sense are independent of my *will*, whereas the Continuity Argument relies on the premise that the ideas of sense are independent of my *thought* (Atherton 1995, 247). Berkeley writes that "A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being. As it perceives ideas it is called the *understanding*, and as it produces or otherwise operates on them, it is called the *will*" (PHK, §27).[11] It can thus be said that, on the independence interpretation, the central premise of Berkeley's argument for the existence of God in both the *Principles* and the *Dialogues* is really that my ideas of sense are independent of *me*.

Independence interpretations do not face the dialectical difficulty faced by continuity interpretations: they do not rely on any premises which Berkeley elsewhere derives from the existence of God. However, there are other problems. First, as Stoneham has emphasized, the notion of ontological independence in this argument is somewhat puzzling. Ideas, on Berkeley's theory, depend on minds at least in the sense that they cannot exist without being perceived by some mind, but, on Berkeley's theory, the real things are the things sensed by *us*, and not merely known by God (Stoneham 2002, 158-159). The Denial of Blind Agency allows Berkeley to infer only that my ideas of sense must be copied from an 'archetype' in some other mind. This is, however, not a particularly robust form of independence. Stoneham argues that Berkeley is instead appealing to a notion of ontological dependence from traditional theistic metaphysics, that is, to the world's dependence on God to sustain it in existence (159-161). This, Stoneham thinks, vitiates the argument since atheists have no reason for

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11. Cf. Ayers' remark that "The two arguments [for the existence of God] are clearly not conflated by Berkeley, but conjoined as closely as he would wish to conjoin understanding and will" (Ayers 1987, 123).

thinking the world (i.e., on Berkeley's theory, our ideas) needs to be sustained in this way.

Independence interpretations also do not solve the problem of how Berkeley gets to his strong stated conclusion. It is not clear why, even given that my ideas are ontologically independent of me, I should suppose that all of them depend on one and the same other mind, let alone that that mind has many or all of the traditional divine attributes (Stoneham 2002, 158, 161-162).

1.3   The Divine Language Argument

In the fourth dialogue of *Alciphron*, Euphranor is challenged to present an argument for belief in God which has three characteristics: first, it should not rely on metaphysical subtleties, second, it should not rely on authority, and, third, it should show the belief to be *true*, rather than merely useful (Alc, §4.2). Euphranor responds by issuing his own challenge: Alciphron is asked to provide any justification for belief in other human minds which cannot be used, *mutatis mutandis*, as a justification for belief in God (§4.6). Upon reflection, Alciphron concludes, "I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as his speaking to me" (§4.6). This bit of dialogue serves as the setup for Berkeley's presentation of his third and final argument for the existence of a super-mind, the Divine Language Argument. Berkeley argues that, just as, whenever we hear spoken language we conclude that there is an intelligent speaker, so we must conclude that the language of vision has an intelligent speaker.

Alciphron clarifies that what convinces him of the existence of an intelligence is

> not the sound of speech merely as such, but the arbitrary use of sensible signs, which have no similitude or necessary connexion with the things signified; so as by the apposite management of them, to suggest and exhibit to my mind an endless variety of things, differing in nature, time, and place: thereby informing me, entertaining me, and directing me how to act, not only with regard to things near and present, but also with regard to things distant and future. No matter, whether these signs are pronounced or written, whether they enter by the eye or the ear: they have the same use, and are equally proofs of an intelligent, thinking, designing cause (§4.7).

In the 1709 *New Theory of Vision*, which was included as an appendix to *Alciphron*, Berkeley had argued that vision was just such a system of signs: that visual stimulus conveys complex practical information to us regarding our tangible environment, and that the connection between these signs and their significations was arbitrary (see ch. ?). Thus, Berkeley thinks, if upon hearing human language we are entitled to infer the existence of human minds, all the more so the visual language gives us grounds to infer the existence of a 'speaker' of that language, a super-mind. Evaluating Euphranor's argument, Crito says that it

> proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor actually
> and intimately present, and attentive to all our interests and mo-
> tions: who watches over our conduct, and takes care of our minutest
> actions and designs, throughout the whole course of our lives, in-
> forming, admonishing, and directing incessantly, in a most evident
> and sensible manner (Alc, §4.14).

The argument is thus thought by Berkeley to get much closer to a religious
conception of God than either of the arguments discussed so far.

The exact structure of this argument and its relationship to the *Principles* is
disputed. E. G. King takes the argument as a version of the analogical teleolog-
ical (design) argument (King 1970). The best-known version of this argument
today is from the opening of William Paley's *Natural Theology*, where Paley
argues that observing biological organisms in nature is like finding a watch on
a heath: if the inference to a maker is justified in the latter case, Paley claims,
it is likewise justified in the former (Paley 1809, 1-3).

If Berkeley means to be drawing an analogy it is of course not the same
analogy as Paley's. The analogy must rather be between the system of visual
stimulus and a text or speech: if, Berkeley might say, one were to find a book
on the heath, one would surely infer that it had an author. But the total system
of our visual stimulus is like a book in all the relevant respects. As a result, we
should conclude that our visual stimulus has an author.

Analogical arguments of this sort have been a staple of religious apologetics
since long before Berkeley's time. On this interpretation, all Berkeley has done
is to adapt this argument to rely on some of his own idiosyncratic views. Some
interpreters have, however, found more interesting and original lines of thought
in Berkeley's text.

Michael Hooker identifies three possible interpretations of this argument.
The first is King's analogical interpretation (Hooker 1982, 264-265). The second
is that God is meant to be posited as the best explanation for the uniformity
of our sense data (266). The third and final interpretation Hooker suggests is
the most interesting. According to this line of interpretation, Berkeley's argu-
ment can be seen as intended to uncover a presupposition of the commonsense
assumption that vision is *informative* (267-269). It is rational for us to treat
language as informative only because we take it to be a product of the inten-
tions of agents. Since vision, like human language, consists of signs which are
connected only arbitrarily to what they signify, it is not rational to take vision
as informative unless we presuppose that there is a 'speaker' of the language of
vision.

An interpretation along these general lines has more recently been defended
by John Russell Roberts. Roberts interprets Berkeley as arguing that the world
can be rendered intelligible to us only if we adopt what Roberts calls the 'reli-
gious stance.' To adopt the religious stance is to treat the deliverances of the
senses as utterances of a perfectly trustworthy person (Roberts 2007, 83-87). No
other way of looking at the world can, according to Roberts' interpretation of
Berkeley, justify our trust in the predictability of nature.

A. David Kline emphasizes Berkeley's comparison of our knowledge of God to our knowledge of other minds, and argues that Berkeley's Divine Language Argument is based on Descartes's account of our knowledge of other minds.[12] Descartes, according to Kline, made three central points about language and its use:

> (i) language is composed of *constructed* signs; (ii) linguistic behavior exhibits rich *generative* powers – we are able to combine sings in many diverse ways; (iii) linguistic behavior is *appropriate* to the background environment (Kline 1987, 136).

The complexity with which signs are recombined appropriately in human linguistic behavior is, according to Descartes, impossible to explain mechanically. This is our reason for accepting the existence of other souls like our own. Kline takes Berkeley to be arguing that all of the same features are to be found, and in much greater degree, in vision.

Tom Stoneham also regards the Divine Language Argument as a genuinely novel argument and not a version of the analogical argument. According to Stoneham, however, the central premise of Berkeley's argument is that vision is *literally* a language. Since a language must have a speaker, the existence of a super-mind follows immediately (Stoneham 2013).

The claim that Berkeley's argument relies centrally on the claim that vision is literally a language had been made earlier by Paul J. Olscamp (Olscamp 1970a, 32). Olscamp, however, regards the argument as a version of the analogical argument, and assimilates it with the argument for the divine attributes at the end of the *Principles*, to be discussed in the next section. Stoneham strenuously objects to any such assimilation.

It is widely held that Berkeley's argument here is to be regarded as an inference to the best explanation (Kline 1987, 131-132; Atherton 1995, 233-234; Jesseph 2005). In support of this view, Kline cites Crito's summing up of the benefits of the Divine Language Argument, where it is said that

> this optic language . . . cannot be accounted for by mechanical principles, by atoms, attractions, or effluvia . . . being utterly inexplicable and unaccountable by the laws of motion, by chance, by fate, or the like blind principles, [it] does set forth and testify the immediate operation of a spirit or thinking being (Alc, 4.14).

If the argument is an inference to the best explanation, then it must be regarded as merely probable and not demonstrative. Thus we may say of Berkeley's Divine Language Argument, as of teleological arguments more generally, that insofar as it succeeds at all it provides support for a more religiously adequate conception of God than more 'metaphysical' arguments, such as the traditional ontological and cosmological arguments, or Berkeley's Passivity and Continuity Arguments. However, even if all of its premises are granted, the argument can

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12. Roberts also lays a great deal of stress on the comparison to our knowledge of other minds, but does not take Berkeley to be following Descartes here.

do no more than (probabilistically) *support* its conclusion; it cannot be regarded as anything like a *proof* of the existence of God, or even of some lesser sort of super-mind.

2   Is Berkeley's Super-Mind God?

Berkeley's Passivity Argument shows that, if Berkeley is right that only minds are causes and that minds cause only by an effort of the will, then many of my perceptions are caused by a mind or minds distinct from myself. Immediately following the Passivity Argument, Berkeley argues that this cause is a single "more powerful spirit" (PHK, §33) characterized by "goodness and wisdom" (§32). Near the end of the *Principles* Berkeley defends the stronger conclusion that there is "one, eternal, infinitely wise, good, and perfect ... spirit, 'who works all in all,' and 'by whom all things consist'" (PHK, §146; cf. N, §838; DHP, 215). As Ekaterina Ksenjek and Daniel Flage have recently pointed out, the later definition is far more religiously adequate than the earlier one, and in fact closely resembles a description of God found in the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, the doctrinal standard of the Anglican Communion (Ksenjek and Flage 2012, 291-292).

Both the earlier and the later argument are generally agreed to be inferences to the best explanation (Pitcher 1977, 133-135; Stoneham 2002, §4.4; Jesseph 2005; Ksenjek and Flage 2012, 292). Berkeley concludes that there is one 'Author' of our sensations, and that this author is wise and benevolent, from the fact that the ideas of sense "are not excited at random ... but in a regular train or series ... [which] gives us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life" (PHK, §§30-31). Similarly, the evidence cited later in the *Principles* is

> the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of creation, together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but above all, the never enough admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites, and passions of animals (§146).

The orderliness of the world does seem to favor the hypothesis of one super-mind over many. Furthermore, simplicity considerations, which are admissible in inferences to the best explanation, also favor positing a single super-mind as the cause of all those perceptions which "are not produced by or dependent on the wills of men" (PHK, §146; see Ksenjek and Flage 2012, 286-287). The existence of a single super-mind thus seems to be supported by Berkeley's argument. If, however, there is only a single super-mind, then that mind must be eternal, at least in the sense of existing at every time the world does, since the existence of the world depends on there being a super-mind to cause sensory perceptions. The super-mind must also be able to keep track of the total state of the world

and its complex laws so as to preserve its orderliness, and must therefore have wisdom far beyond my own. Furthermore, the super-mind appears to have selected rules which bring about a variety of beautiful and otherwise desirable results. For this reason, Berkeley says that the "consistent uniform working" of nature "displays the goodness and wisdom of that governing spirit whose will constitutes the laws of nature" much more clearly than exceptions to this consistent uniform working (PHK, §32).[13]

This argument of Berkeley's does seem to give some support to his conclusion that the super-mind is in certain respects God-like: we are given at least some reason to suppose that there is only one super-mind and that wisdom, power, and benevolence are among the respects in which that mind is superior to us. However, the argument is subject to the standard objections faced by teleological arguments (Grayling 1986, 184-189, 195-198). Even if the argument supports the conclusion that the super-mind is wise, powerful, and benevolent in some degree, Berkeley's claim that the super-mind is *infinitely* wise, powerful, and benevolent seems rather extravagant if it is meant to be drawn only from empirical observation of the character of our sensory perceptions. Indeed, considerations of natural and moral evil seem to suggest just the opposite (PHK, §§151-153; Winkler 1989, 286).

Berkeley's natural theology is quite ambitious, and it does not seem ultimately to succeed in its ambitions. However, it does come to a more modest conclusion which is still interesting and significant. If Berkeley's basic metaphysical premises are accepted, then I can have deductive proof that there exists at least one mind which is in certain respects superior to me and, further, I can have good reason to suppose that there is *exactly* one such mind, and that it is eternal, exceeds human beings in wisdom and power, and is at least somewhat benevolently inclined toward me. The further claim that this being is *infinitely* or *perfectly* wise, powerful, and benevolent can perhaps be regarded as a teaching of revealed theology, that is, an article of faith (see §6 below; cf. Grayling 1986, 188).

3   The Natural Immortality of the Soul

In addition to the existence of God, Berkeley saw the natural immortality of the soul as "a fundamental Doctrine ... of natural Religion" (BW, 7:114). In fact, he goes so far as to say that the denial of this doctrine is "the most effectual antidote against all impressions of virtue and religion" (PHK, §141). Berkeley understands the natural immortality of the soul as the doctrine that the soul "is not liable to be broken or dissolved by the ordinary laws of nature or motion" (§141). The religious (and moral) importance of this claim stems from the fact that it opens up the *possibility* of judgment after death. Outside the *Principles*, in some of his more religious and less philosophical writings, Berkeley defends the slightly stronger claim that it is *probable* that there is indeed an afterlife in which God distributes rewards and punishments.

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13. On the obvious problems this causes for religious belief in miracles, see below, §7.

Berkeley's remarks on this subject in the *Principles* are relatively straightforward. He first clarifies the content of the doctrine, noting that it is *not* to be understood as the claim "that [the soul] is absolutely incapable of annihilation even by the infinite power of the Creator." Rather, the doctrine states that the operation of "the ordinary laws of nature or motion" cannot lead to the destruction of the soul (PHK, §141). The contrary doctrine, that the soul *can* be so destroyed, follows, as Berkeley sees, from materialist theories of the mind: if the soul is "a thin vital flame or system of animal spirits" or, indeed, if the soul (mind) is identical to the brain, then the physical destruction of the body would destroy the soul. However, Berkeley has argued that souls alone are substances, and bodies are "barely passive ideas in the mind" (§141). Bodies cannot, therefore, act on souls in any way. Furthermore, Berkeley has argued that the 'laws of nature' and the causal relations we attribute to bodies are merely regularities in our ideas of sense, and are to be understood rather as signs than as true metaphysical causes (§§66, 108). Berkeley is therefore in a position to conclude

> that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions which we hourly see befall bodies ... cannot possibly affect an active, simple uncompounded substance. Such a being therefore is indissoluble by the force of nature, that is to say, the soul of man is naturally immortal (§141).

This is, as has been noted, a weak doctrine. It simply opens up the possibility that the soul may survive beyond the destruction of the body. However, as will be discussed in more detail below (§5), Berkeley believes that this mere possibility has a substantial effect on moral motivation, for if it is possible that I may continue to exist after the destruction of my body, then the fact that I escape punishment for my misdeeds, or go unrewarded for my good deeds, in this life, is no guarantee that I will escape punishment, or go unrewarded, altogether.

Although the mere possibility of an afterlife with reward and punishment may have *some* effect of this sort on moral motivation, we would clearly be in a better position if positive reasons could be given in favor of such an afterlife. Berkeley attempted to do just this in his essay "The Future State," printed in the *Guardian* April 11, 1713. The stated aim of this essays is "to evince that there are grounds to expect a future state, without supposing in the reader any faith at all, not even the belief of a Deity" (BW, 7:181). It should be noted here that Berkeley only makes the weak claim "that there are grounds" in natural reason for this belief. This is in contrast to Berkeley's usual habit of making quite strong claims to *prove* or *demonstrate* various controversial propositions.

Berkeley's argument begins by noting the widespread appearance of natural teleology. That is, Berkeley claims that it is evident to our senses that natural things are adapted to ends. We therefore have grounds for supposing, by analogy, that those few things whose ends we cannot see nevertheless *have* ends. Now there are two aspects of human psychology and behavior which have no

visible purpose, namely, "the appetite of immortality, natural to all mankind," and "the generous efforts of a virtuous mind" (BW, 7:182).

An appetite is properly adapted to an end only if it can lead to the attainment of its object, and this presupposes that its object is attainable. Hence, unless immortality were attainable for humans, there would be a failure of natural teleology. The existence in humans of a natural appetite for immortality is therefore grounds for supposing an immortal soul.

Berkeley's concern with virtue is that it is sometimes 'calamitous' for the virtuous person (7:182). He holds, however, that virtue does have a natural teleology: it is directed toward happiness (Alc, §3.9-11). To say that virtue is sometimes calamitous for the virtuous person is to say that it often fails of its end. If virtue is to achieve its end and bring happiness, that happiness must come in another life.

Berkeley thinks that supposing a failure of teleology in these cases would be especially objectionable, because this would be to suppose that inferior things are "by a management superiour to the wit of man ... disposed in the most excellent manner" while the most valuable things in the world, the minds, and especially the virtues, of human beings, are "neglected, or managed by such rules as fall short of man's understanding" (BW, 7:181). To avoid this conclusion, an afterlife must be posited.

The argument from the human 'appetite for immorality' is repeated in two of Berkeley's sermons, both dating much later than the *Guardian* essay (7:73, 114-115). However, there is no mention in these texts of the argument from the teleology of virtue.[14]

As in the case of the existence and attributes of God, Berkeley's weak claim seems to be on sound footing, while his stronger claim is not well supported. It is clearly the case, in Berkeley's system, that nothing in the 'order of nature' – that is, in our ideas – could cause the dissolution of the soul, since nothing in the order of nature causes anything at all. However, even if we accept Berkeley's questionable claim that we should believe in universal natural teleology, his claim that the appetite for immortality and the practice of virtue would fail at their ends in the absence of an afterlife are extremely questionable. The so-called 'appetite for immortality' may be regarded merely as a desire to live as long as possible, and having this desire (our survival instinct) certainly does enable us to live longer. As to virtue, Berkeley argues at length in *Passive Obedience* that the rules of virtue aim at, and achieve, "the general well-being of all men, of all nations, of all the world" (PO, §7). He is not, therefore, in a position to claim that without an afterlife virtue fails at its end, simply because it does not always achieve the well-being of the virtuous individual. This, indeed, may be the reason why the argument from the teleology of virtue is not repeated.

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14. In the case of the first sermon, we have only Berkeley's notes, so it is not certain that he neglected to mention the other line of argument when the sermon was delivered orally.

4   The Language of Natural Religion

Among the major events in Berkeley's Anglo-Irish intellectual context during his lifetime were a pair of intertwined debates about religious language. One of these, the debate about the divine attributes, will be addressed in this section; the other, the debate about religious mysteries, is a matter of revealed religion, and so will be discussed in §9, below.

Because this debate is unfamiliar to most philosophers, and even most intellectual historians, it is necessary to provide some context before describing Berkeley's view. God is traditionally described as having a number of attributes, including knowledge, wisdom, goodness, and power, and is typically thought to have these in an infinite or unlimited degree. God is further claimed by Christianity to have predestined some for salvation (Romans 8:29). A number of problems arise from these claims. First, that God should be infinitely wise, good, and powerful notoriously seems to be in conflict with the presence of evil in the world which God (supposedly) created. Second, God's unlimited knowledge (omniscience) is supposed to include knowledge of future contingents.[15] Both foreknowledge and predestination appear to conflict with human freedom. The resolution to the apparent conflict between predestination and human freedom was (and continues to be) an especially contentious matter within Protestantism. Through the efforts of King Charles I and William Laud, whom Charles appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Arminianism, a theological system which sought to reconcile predestination with libertarian free will, was imposed as the orthodoxy of the Anglican Communion in the 1630s (Cross and Livingston 1997, s.v. 'Charles I'). For his role in these reforms (which included liturgical, as well as doctrinal, changes objectionable to the Puritans), Laud was executed by the Long Parliament in 1645 (s.v. 'Laud, William'). Laud's reforms were also controversial in Ireland, where Archbishop Ussher opposed them both on theological grounds and because he saw them as undermining the autonomy of the Church of Ireland (Schaff and Schaff 1931, 1:664; Fauske 2004, 22-23). At the conclusion of the English Civil War, Puritanism became the official religion, so that Calvinism, which involves the view that divine predestination is inconsistent with libertarian freedom, was imposed as the new orthodoxy. The Restoration (1660) brought the Arminians back to power in England and Ireland, and Calvinist clergy were defrocked and, in many cases, imprisoned (Schaff and Schaff 1931, 1:720-723). The Church of Scotland, however, continued (and continues) to endorse Calvinism. Furthermore, Puritan dissenters continued to be a source of political strife in England and Ireland.

It was against this background that William King, Archbishop of Dublin, delivered a sermon entitled "Divine Predestination and Fore-knowledge consistent with the Freedom of Man's Will" on May 15, 1709. The sermon was published shortly after it was delivered and was widely circulated and discussed. As King

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15. The denial that God has knowledge of future contingents, a view which is now known as 'open theism,' was in the early modern period associated with the Socinians and regarded as heretical by most churches, including the Anglican Communion. (On Socinianism, see below, p. 32, note 42.)

saw it, Calvinism and Arminianism rested on a common assumption, namely, that there was a problem about foreknowledge and free will in need of a solution. King aimed to defuse this contentious debate, as well as the arguments about evil and about foreknowledge and free will, by arguing that there was no such problem. In particular, King argues that when we say that God predestines, or has foreknowledge, we are speaking only *analogically* and not literally, and these analogical predications will not support the inferences which generate the problems (King 1709, §§6-7).

King's sermon does not provide a clear account of how analogical predication works. In introducing the doctrine, King says that, "observing great *Order*, *Conveniency* and *Harmony*, in all the several Parts of the World," we conclude

> that God must either have [wisdom, foreknowledge, and understand-ing], or other Faculties or Powers equivalent to them . . . And because we do not know what his Faculties are in themselves, we give them the Names of those Powers, that we find would be necessary to us in Order to produce such Effects (§4).

Sometimes, it seems that King holds that these predications are merely metaphor-ical, as when he says that none of the divine attributes "are more properly and literally in God after the same Manner as they are in us, than *Hands* or *Eyes*, than *Mercy*, *Love*, or *Hatred* are" (§4). This comparison between these un-controversially metaphorical predications and the traditional divine attributes is developed throughout §5.[16] However, King later says that "there is great Difference between the *Analogical* Representations of God, and that which we commonly call *Figurative*" (§21). The primary difference seems to be that figu-rative language is used by choice for its emotional or rhetorical effect, whereas analogy is the only possible way for us to know or express God's perfections; the two are equally far removed from literal predication.

According to King, "we transfer the Actions of our own Minds, our Powers and Virtue by *Analogy* to God, and speak of him as if he had the like" (§19). King says that it is "as if [God] had predetermined" all things, and it is "as if our Salvation intirely proceeded from [God's] meer good Will and Pleasure" (§18, cf. §24); that is, it is *as if* the Calvinists were correct. On the other hand, when we reject salvation, it is "as if we were out of God's Power, and absolutely in the Hand of our own Council" (§26); that is, it is also *as if* Arminianism were true. Neither Calvinism nor Arminianism gives the literal truth; the literal truth is, in fact, forever beyond our ken. Nevertheless, each of the two views is in some sense correct:

> If we take [Calvinist and Arminian ways of speaking] as *Schemes* designed to give us different Views of God, and his Transactions

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16. The doctrine of divine apathy or impassibility, which has the consequence that emotions are predicated of God only metaphorically, is now quite controversial among Protestant the-ologians (Cross and Livingston 1997, s.v. 'impassibility of God'). However, the first of the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the doctrinal standard of the Anglican Communion, states that God is "without body, parts, or passions" (Schaff and Schaff 1931, 3:487). This view was uncontro-versial in the period.

> with Men, in Order to oblige us to distinct Duties, which we owe
> him, and stretch them no further, they are very reconcileable (King
> 1709, §27).

As David Berman says, the different views involved in these theological conflicts
"are not *logically* compatible, [but] they are *pragmatically* compatible: and that
is what matters" (Berman 1976, 17).

King's doctrine was immediately controversial.[17] One critical response is
especially important to our story, and that is the pamphlet *A Vindication of
the Divine Attributes*, published anonymously in 1710. The author was the
English Deist Anthony Collins (25). Collins characterizes King's strategy as
"understanding *Foreknowledge* in a different sense from what is suppos'd in the
Objection [i.e. the argument for the incompatibility of foreknowledge and free
will], and not assigning any determinate sense to the word." By this strategy,
"all Objections whatever are prevented; for no Man can object to he knows not
what" (Collins 1710, 16). King's strategy, however, proves far too much, for
by it claims about the divine attributes are rendered completely logically inert
– that is, we cannot infer to them from any premises whatsoever, nor can we
infer anything at all from them (17-18). Furthermore, Collins argues, whatever
King might say, he has not in fact rendered human freedom consistent with
divine foreknowledge, for instead of arguing that there might possibly be both
human freedom and divine foreknowledge, King has argued that there cannot
be (literal) divine foreknowledge at all (28).

In reply to these and other objections, Peter Browne, who had been provost
of Trinity College during Berkeley's time there and was at this time serving as
Bishop of Cork and Ross,[18] published a lengthy book under the title, *The Pro-
cedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*. Browne refers explicitly
to Collins' work as one of those he aims to refute (Browne 1729, 20-22).

According to Browne, although King is guilty of writing sloppily, if he is
interpreted charitably his general approach can be shown to be correct (12-18).
Browne holds, not implausibly, that King must be interpreted within the long
tradition of Christian thought on this subject. The most important members of
this tradition are Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Thomas Aquinas. These
writers, as understood by Browne, treat analogy as a middle path between literal
and metaphorical predication (Browne 1733, 93-96). We can speak literally and
truly of God only by saying what God is *not*; to say what God is, we must
resort either to analogy or to metaphor. Browne follows Pseudo-Dionysius in
holding the extreme view that even 'being' or 'existence' cannot be predicated
univocally of God and creatures (Dionysius On the divine names, ch. 5; Mystical
theology, ch. 1; Browne 1729, 83).

According to Browne, all ideas, properly so-called, are ideas of sensation,[19]
and these form the foundation for all human knowledge (Browne 1729, 55-56,
63, 67). However, from the fact "*That we can have no Knowledge without ideas*

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17. On the reception of King's sermon, see Berman 1976, 20-27.

18. Winnett 1974 provides a book-length study of Browne's life and works.

19. Browne explicitly rejects Lockean ideas of reflection (Browne 1729, 65-68, 411-416).

. . . and even without Ideas of *Sensation*" it does not follow "*That therefore we can have no Knowledge of anything* BEYOND" our ideas (Browne 1729, 86, cf. 409). Our knowledge is extended beyond our ideas in two ways: by the reflective awareness of the operations of the mind upon its ideas, which yield "complex Notions or Conceptions of the Operations of the Mind" (415) and, ultimately, the mind itself , and analogy. It is only by analogy that it is possible for us to think or speak meaningfully of God and angels (81-82, 111-112, 150, 445-446).

In analogy,

> the Conceptions and *Complex Notions* we already have of Things *Directly* and *Immediately* known [i.e. either sensible things of which we have ideas or our own mental operations of which we are immediately aware], are made use of and substituted to represent, *With some Resemblance, or correspondent Reality and Proprotion*, Divine things whereof we can have no *Direct* and *Proper* Ideas, or *Immediate* conception or Notion at all (107).

This contrasts with mere metaphor in which "the figurative Words, and Ideas, and Conceptions, are us'd without any *Real Similitude* or *Proportion*, or *Correspondent Resemblance* in the things compared" (106). That is, as Browne puts it later in the work, "In Divine Metaphor the Resemblance, or Proportion, or Correspondency is *Imaginary* . . . But in Divine Analogy the Resemblance, or at least the *Correspondency* and *Proportion* is *Real*" (137). Thus by analogy we affirm, for instance, that "*What* Knowledge and Goodness are in the Nature of *Man*, *That* some inconceivable but correspondent Perfections are in the Nature of *God*" (138).[20]

From an early date, Berkeley was interested in, and opposed to, the doctrine of analogy. In a 1710 letter to Percival, Berkeley essentially endorses Collins' objection to King, that the doctrine makes it impossible to reason either from or to the divine attributes (BW, 8:32). However, Berkeley did not discuss the matter in print until *Alciphron*. In the fourth dialogue of that work, the character Lysicles is informed that, in his absence, Alciphron has, in response to Euphranor's presentation of the Divine Language Argument, conceded the existence of God. In response, Lysicles remarks that "at bottom the being of God is a point in itself of small consequence, and a man may make this concession without yielding much. The great point is, what sense the word God is to be taken in" (Alc, §4.16). He goes on to mention some non-traditional conceptions of God which he finds unobjectionable, then gives an account of King's doctrine of analogy, which, he concludes, makes God "an unknown subject of attributes absolutely unknown" (§4.17). Collins appears here under the name 'Diagoras,' and Lysicles concludes, following Collins, that "You cannot argue from unknown attributes, or which is the same thing, from attributes in an unknown sense. You cannot prove, that God is to be loved for his goodness, or feared for his justice, or respected for his knowledge" (§4.18).[21] Euphranor, who

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20. For further discussion of Browne's distinction between metaphor and analogy, see Olscamp 1970b, 205-208; Winnett 1974, 105-107.

21. On the role of Diagoras/Collins in *Alciphron*, see Taranto 2010.

is usually responsible for expressing Berkeley's own distinctive views, responds, "This account of a Deity is new to me. I do not like it, and therefore shall leave it to be maintained by those who do" (Alc, §4.18). At this point Crito launches into a long discussion of the doctrine of analogy in the Christian tradition.[22] Crito dismisses Dionysius, claiming that "It should seem . . . very weak and rash in a Christian to adopt this harsh language of an apocryphal writer, preferably to that of the Holy Scriptures" (§4.19). In other words, we must simply affirm, with Scripture, that God exists, knows, is powerful, etc., in the ordinary sense of those words, rather than adopting Dionysius's strange ways of speaking. The adoption of Dionysian analogy in order to solve theological and philosophical problems – and here Berkeley likely has King's sermon in mind – is described as a "method of growing in expression, and dwindling in notion, of clearing up doubts by nonsense, and avoiding difficulties by running into affected contradictions" (§4.19). In the rest of the discussion, Crito argues that, although many Christian philosophers and theologians have purported to endorse Dionysius's views on account of his supposed apostolic authority,[23] "yet it is certain they rejected or softened his harsh expressions, and explained away or reduced his doctrine to the received notions taken from Holy Scripture, and the light of nature" (§4.19). Finally, Crito argues that the correct notion of 'proper' (as opposed to 'metaphorical') analogy is simply the mathematical notion of a ratio: divine knowledge is to human knowledge as the infinite to the finite.[24] "We may therefore . . . affirm that all sorts of perfection, which we can conceive in a finite spirit, are in God" *in the very same sense*, but in infinite degree (§4.21).

Berkeley thus accepts Collins' criticism of King. He agrees with Collins that we must hold that the attributes ascribed to God by natural religion must be ascribed literally, differing only in degree from the human 'perfections' from which they get their names. The central reason for this is simply that, according to Collins' published position,[25] and according to Berkeley, teleological arguments show that God is wise, powerful, etc., *in the ordinary, everyday senses of those*

22. The dispute between Berkeley and Browne as to whose view is more in line with the traditional, Scholastic notion of analogy will not be discussed here. The question of the accuracy of Berkeley's and Browne's respective interpretations of Scholastic figures is discussed in some depth in O'Higgins 1976. Also see Winnett 1974, 131-132, 147-149, 154-155.

23. The original Dionysius the Areopagite (not the pseudonymous writer in question) was an associate of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:34).

24. According to James O'Higgins, in this discussion Berkeley follows the late Medieval philosopher-theologian Thomas de Vio Cajetan "with remarkable closeness" (O'Higgins 1976, 96).

25. Berkeley accuses Collins of privately being an atheist, and even alleges that Collins "declared, he had found out a demonstration against the being of a God" (Alc, Advertisement; cf. Alc, §4.16; TVV, §6; Taranto 2010, 361). According to Berkeley's friend, the American Samuel Johnson, Berkeley personally heard Collins make this claim in London freethinking clubs. David Berman dates the incident to the early 1710s (Berman 1994, 78, 164-166). A more detailed case for the claim that Collins was indeed an atheist, and that Berkeley had excellent evidence of this, can be found in Berman 1988, ch. 3. O'Higgins, neglecting Berkeley's frequent accusation that the freethinkers dissemble in their published works, holds that Berkeley has somehow managed to misunderstand the text of Collins' *Vindication* so badly as to suppose that atheism is advocated there (O'Higgins 1976, 93).

terms.[26]

Browne evidently interpreted this discussion as a criticism of his *Procedure* (Browne 1733, 427). At the time *Alciphron* appeared, Browne was in the process of writing another book, *Things Divine and Supernatural Conceived by Analogy With Things Natural and Human*, known, more briefly, as *Divine Analogy*. Browne appended to this book, at the last moment, a reply to Berkeley, which takes up nearly one third of the book.[27]

Although Browne may have been a secondary target for Berkeley's criticism, it seems clear that King was the primary target (Berman 1976, 23; O'Higgins 1976, 94). The first edition of the *Procedure* was published in London in 1728, the year Berkeley sailed for America. Berkeley composed *Alciphron* in America, and sent it to the publisher immediately on his return in 1732 (Berman 1994, 134), so it is not likely that Berkeley had read the *Procedure* before writing *Alciphron*. On the other hand, it is quite likely that Berkeley was familiar with Browne's earlier *Letter* against Toland (see below, §9), which contained a discussion of the doctrine of analogy (Browne 1697, 37-58; cf. Browne 1729, 1-23; Berman 1976, 21-22; Pearce, forthcoming). However, the argument under discussion is clearly taken from Collins, and Collins' book is directed quite explicitly against King. This is sufficient reason for regarding King as the primary target.

Be that as it may, Berkeley evidently read Browne's work later and was not impressed. He makes dismissive comments about it in his correspondence with Samuel Johnson (BW, 8:236), and in the *Theory of Vision Vindicated* he is clearly referring to Browne when he speaks of a "modern well-meaning writer, who ... writes much of analogy without understanding it." Browne, Berkeley says, ought to

> return to speak of God and his attributes in the style of other Christians, allowing that knowledge and wisdom do, in the proper sense of the words, belong to God, and that we have some notion, though infinitely inadequate, of those divine attributes (TVV, §6).[28]

Although Browne's account of analogy is in many respects quite sophisticated, there was at least one good reason for Berkeley not to be impressed. Although Browne quotes Collins at the beginning of the *Procedure*, and in *Divine Analogy* he quotes at length from Lysicles' rendition of Collins' argument in *Alciphron*, Browne never really provides an answer to that objection. This seems to be because Browne failed to distinguish Collins' objection to divine analogy, which holds that that doctrine renders our God-talk inferentially inert, from Toland's objection to talk of mysteries, which says that such talk is meaningless (see below, §9). After dealing with *Alciphron* 4, Browne says that Berkeley "states the same Objection at full length" in *Alciphron* 7, but in

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26. For Berkeley's treatment of these arguments, see above, §§1.3 and 2. For Collins, see Collins 1710, 5.

27. On the last minute nature of the addition, see Browne 1733, 374.

28. This passage, along with some of the surrounding text, was printed in square brackets, perhaps to indicate that it is a digression from the main thread of argument.

fact the discussion in the fourth dialogue is about Collins' objection, and the discussion in the seventh dialogue is about Toland's.

At one point in *Divine Analogy* Browne does come close to providing an answer to Collins' objection. In this passage, Browne gives a pair of examples of what he takes to be valid syllogisms involving the divine attributes. Browne's first example is:

> If no Being could make it self; then there must have been an eternal Being.
> But no Being could make it self. Therefore [there must have been an eternal Being] (Browne 1733, 482).

This syllogism does not rely on an equivocation: we could distinguish 'finite being' and 'divine (or infinite) being' and still have a valid *modus ponens*. Browne's second example is similar:

> If *Knowlege* is a Perfection in an *Human Mind*; then there must be Knowlege in *God*.
> But Knowlege is a Perfection in an human Mind. Therefore [there must be knowledge in God] (484).

This strategy on Browne's part misses the point of the criticism. The criticism was that the doctrine of analogy undermines natural theology. What Browne has not shown is how any argument against the atheist can be mounted on his principles. No reason, it seems, can be given why the atheist should accept the major premise of either argument. Like King, Browne is able to answer certain objections to theism, but in the course of answering these objections he has essentially given up the project of making any kind of positive case for theism.[29]

There may, perhaps, be one more chapter to this story. In 1745 the Dublin publication *A Literary Journal* printed an anonymous letter which, according to the covering letter published along with it, "was sent to the ingenious Dr. Brown[e] soon after the publication of his *Divine Analogy*" in 1733 (Pittion, Berman, and Luce 1969, 375). Jean-Paul Pittion and David Berman, who found the letter, argued for its attribution to Berkeley, and were joined in this attribution by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop.[30] The attribution of this letter to Berkeley has, however, recently been challenged on a number of grounds by Stephen Daniel and Bertil Belfrage (Daniel 2011, 157-160; Belfrage 2011). Because the authorship of the letter is disputed and Berkeley's position can be established with adequate confidence and precision on the basis of his undisputed works, I will not discuss the letter further.

Much of the dispute between Berkeley and Browne is grounded in a fundamental disagreement about epistemology and philosophy of language.[31] Browne

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29. On Browne's question-begging, see Olscamp 1970b, 204-208 and Daniel 2011, 154; on King's undermining the project of natural theology, see Berman 1976, 25-27.

30. The full text of the letter and the argument for its attribution to Berkeley can be found in Pittion, Berman, and Luce 1969.

31. The relevance of epistemology to the dispute is emphasized by O'Higgins 1976.

insists against Berkeley that all meaningful words are "Signs of Ideas[,] Conceptions or complex Notions in our Mind" (Browne 1733, 535). He further holds, as we have seen, that all of our direct ideas or conceptions are of the properties of either sensible things or our own minds. However, according to Browne, it is impossible "that the *Essence* or *Substance* of any thing should differ in *Kind* from that of another; and yet that the *Attributes* and *Properties*, inseparable from that Essence, should be of the *Same Kind* in both" (73).

Browne holds that our direct ideas or conceptions are always of some particular attribute or property. Our conception of knowledge is derived from our own knowledge which is an attribute of our own mind. Since all human beings share the same essence, they can all have the very same attribute, which is called 'knowledge' in the proper, literal sense. However, no being with a different nature can possibly have the very same attributes we do, since the attributes flow from our nature. Thus we speak analogically even when we attribute sensation, knowledge, or reason to beasts (Browne 1729, 170-171) or angels (150).

Berkeley simply rejects all of Browne's assumptions. Berkeley holds that "signs may be significant, though they should not suggest ideas represented by them" (Alc, §7.11), or, as Browne sarcastically but accurately puts it, "Words may be *Significant*, tho' they signify *Nothing*" (Browne 1733, 534). Furthermore, Berkeley denies that we can form an idea of a mind abstracted from its activities, or a power abstracted from its effects.[32] For Berkeley, the extension of a general term is fixed not by the term's being attached to a universal or an abstract idea, but simply by the definition, which provides a rule for recognizing the objects that fall under the word (PHK, Intro §18). However, once we actually formulate definitions for words such as 'justice' it is easy to see that these definitions must certainly describe God. For instance, Browne himself defines 'justice' as "*A perpetual Will or Disposition of Mind to give every one his due*" (Browne 1733, 336). Browne's argument that 'justice' is attributed to God only analogically is an argument that, given the differences between God's position and man's, God's justice will look very different from man's, but this provides no reason for denying that God satisfies the definition. If, then, the definition is all there is to the meaning, then certainly God and man can be called just in the same sense of 'just.'

A final point of fundamental disagreement between Berkeley and Browne concerns the methodology of natural theology. Browne seeks to support his theological position by quotations from the 'Doctors of the Church.' Browne takes these quotations to be authoritative both as to what the teaching of Christianity is and as to what the truth is.[33] Berkeley, on the other hand, consistently seeks to answer the freethinkers on their own terms, allowing them to banish authority from discussions of natural theology (Alc, §4.2). Furthermore, it is not often noticed that Berkeley's famous comment about 'siding in all things with the mob' is made in a religious context. The complete notebook entry reads:

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32. Daniel 2011 takes this to be the fundamental point of disagreement between Berkeley and Browne.

33. One of the main aims of Browne's *Letter* against Toland (Browne 1697) had been to argue that 'authority' is an independent source of knowledge, distinct from 'evidence.'

"All things in Scripture wch side with the Vulgar against the Learned side with me also. I side in all things with the mob" (N, §405).[34] For Berkeley, although "the writings of the primitive fathers" are a source of theological truth (BW, 7:146), in the end "our notions about faith [must be] taken from the commerce of the world, and practice of mankind, rather than from the peculiar systems of refiners" (Alc, §7.13); those, such as Browne, who think otherwise "confound Scholasticism with Christianity" (§7.12). For Berkeley, philosophical theology attempts to systematize the beliefs of ordinary Christians, so that the success of the "particular systems of refiners" is to be judged by whether they accurately capture the beliefs of ordinary Christians. Berkeley thus differs from Browne because he has a different conception of what a natural theological defense of Christianity ought to amount to.

5   The Practice of Natural Religion

Berkeley consistently insisted that the end of speculation must be practice (DHP, 167). Belief in natural religion is meant to lead to the practice of natural religion, which consists primarily in moral behavior. At one point in *Passive Obedience*, Berkeley even characterizes a particular moral duty as a "branch of natural religion" (PO, §16).

The view that belief in the existence of God and natural immortality of the soul is foundational to moral motivation was the philosophical orthodoxy of Berkeley's day. However, it had recently come under fire from the Earl of Shaftesbury, who held that the foundation of moral motivation must be placed in aesthetic appreciation of the intrinsic beauty of virtue.

In the third dialogue of *Alciphron*, the title character makes use of Shaftesbury's moral theory to argue that "all the ends of society are secured wtihout religion, and that an infidel bids fair to be the most virtuous man, in a true, sublime, and heroic sense" (Alc, §3.3).[35] Euphranor and Crito react strongly against this claim, arguing that natural religion is absolutely essential to human virtue.

Alciphron begins by arguing "that there is an idea of Beauty natural to the mind of man ... [which] all men desire" (§3.3). Beauty is recognized in a quasi-perceptual way, by a sort of aesthetic sense, without reason or argument. According to Alciphron, while "The notion of a Providence, and future state of rewards and punishments, may indeed tempt or scare men of abject spirit into practices contrary to the natural bent of their soul," this is not true virtue (Alc, §3.3; cf. Shaftesbury 1714, 2:21, 55). Genuine virtue arises only when we are motivated by "the moral excellence, the beauty, and decorum" of the virtues (Alc, §3.3). Thus, for instance, the truly honest person is the one who makes his "Conception of ... *Honesty* to be an Object of his Affection" (Shaftesbury

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34. One commentator who does quote the entry in full and recognize its primarily religious significance is Roberts 2007, 142-143.

35. The question of how Berkeley understands Shaftesbury's view, and in particular whether he understands it *correctly*, has been addressed by Olscamp 1970b, ch. 6 and Jaffro 2007.

1714, 2:31).

Euphranor's first response is to agree quite strongly with Alciphron's claim that virtue and the moral order are beautiful, and that the appreciation of this beauty is a strong source of moral motivation. However, according to Euphranor, this appreciation is tied up with "regard [for] the opinion of others concerning it" and is therefore not "a sufficient ground or principle of virtue, for a man to act upon, when he thinks himself removed from the eye and observation of every other intelligent being" (Alc, §3.4). Interestingly, this is one of the cases in which Shaftesbury admits that religion may be helpful to virtue. According to Shaftesbury, once we appreciate the beauty of virtue, we will be ashamed to act wrongly in front of others, and the more ashamed the more virtuous we take those others to be. On the other hand, we will feel a sense of honor when we act rightly in front of others, and again we will feel this all the more the more virtuous we take those others to be. Thus a firm belief in "the Superintendcy of a Supreme Being, a Witness and Spectator of human Life" who is morally perfect would render this sense of shame and honor quite overpowering. Shaftesbury concludes that "in this Case, 'tis very apparent how conducing a *perfect Theism* must be to Virtue, and how great Deficiency there is in *Atheism*" (Shaftesbury 1714, 2:57).

Euphranor, however, does not mention the sense of shame and honor as a source of moral motivation. Instead after Alciphron concedes that the beauty of virtue is an inadequate source of moral motivation with respect to private action, Euphranor secures Alciphron's further agreement that the beauty of virtue is often insufficient as a motive to overcome our selfish desire for pleasure. This point too is conceded by Shaftesbury, who says that when "by the violence of Rage, Lust, or any other counter-working passion" virtuous sentiment is "controul'd and overcome ... [religious] Belief must prove a seasonable remedy against Vice, and be in a particular manner advantageous to Virtue" (2:60-61). In other words, although the agent who is motivated primarily or exclusively by reward and punishment is not truly virtuous, the thought of eternal rewards and punishments can help us to overcome the temptation to, as Shaftesbury says, "apostasize from Virtue" (2:61) by opposing the eternal reward of virtue to the temporal reward of vice.

Later in the dialogue, Euphranor provides a further argument for the fundamental dependence of moral motivation on natural religion. Alciphron had held that the moral sense consisted in an aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of virtue. Euphranor argues that beauty always consists in fitness for an end (Alc, §§3.8-9). To suppose that the 'moral system' is beautiful is thus to suppose that it aims at some end. However, "without thought there can be no end or design; and without an end there can be no use, and without use there is no aptitude or proportion, from whence beauty springs" (§3.10). Thus Shaftesbury's moral theory is to be seen as fundamentally presupposing theism, and hence not to be a genuine alternative to a morality based on natural religion after all.

Berkeley's remarks on moral motivation in *Passive Obedience* are quite similar. There, Berkeley argues that it is rational to obey God's commands because God alone is able to determine our eternal fate, which infinitely outweighs

temporal goods (PO, §6). However, our natural knowledge (i.e. our knowledge independent of revelation) of God's commands can only come from a prior conception of the good and of divine rationality (§7). From here, Berkeley argues that God's commands consist in a beautiful, harmonious collection of moral laws which together maximize human well-being. The goodness of the outcome (namely, human well-being) is prior to God's command, and so it is not merely because God commands it that we ought to value and pursue universal human well-being. However, knowledge that there is a good and rational God, and that it is within his power to confer a life after death, of whatever sort he chooses, upon us, ensures that we always have reason to follow these rules, independent of whatever momentary inconveniences may accompany them.

It should finally be noted that, as Vanessa Nurock has emphasized (Nurock 2010), Berkeley's interest in moral motivation is fundamentally different from Shaftesbury's. Shaftesbury has an upper-class, elitist conception of ethics, whereas Berkeley the clergyman is concerned for the moral education of the common folk. For this reason, Crito shrugs off the question of whether the virtuous atheist is a possible character (Alc, §3.12), and focuses instead on insisting that an atheistic moral theory patterned on Shaftesbury does not provide adequate moral motivation for the ordinary person. As a result, by casting doubt on traditional religion and demeaning motivation based on reward and punishment, Shaftesbury has, "under pretence of making men heroically virtuous, endeavour[ed] to destroy the means of making them reasonably and humanly so" (Alc, §3.13; cf. TVV, §§3-5). Berkeley's central claim, then, is that belief in God and belief in at least the possibility of reward and punishment in an afterlife is essential if we ordinary (non-heroic) human beings are to be steady and constant in our duty. This constancy and regularity in our duty, done in obedience to divine commands, is the practice of natural religion.

Part II
Revealed Religion

6   Faith and Reason

'Revealed religion' is that part of religious belief and practice which is accepted on the basis of faith. The starting point, therefore, in any philosophical examination of revealed religion should be an examination the nature of faith and its relation to reason.

Locke defined 'faith' as "Assent to any Proposition . . . upon the Credit of the proposer, as coming from GOD, in some extraordinary way of Communication" (EHU, §4.18.2). 'Faith,' in other words, is belief on the basis of divine testimony. This definition is accepted by Berkeley (Alc, §6.4). A crucial consequence of Locke's definition of faith is that one must believe that God exists and has revealed some particular propositions *before* one can have faith. These claims

must therefore be established by reason, that is, by our natural faculties, and
cannot themselves be articles of faith (EHU, §§4.18.6, 10; Jolley 2007, 443-
444). Furthermore, Locke holds that, although it can be demonstrated that
God exists, the claim that God has revealed some particular proposition is
a historical claim and hence can never be more than merely probable (EHU,
§§4.18.5-6, 4.16.8-11). A consequence is that "*no Proposition can be received for
Divine Revelation . . . if it be contradictory to our clear intuitive Knowledge*"
(§4.18.5), or, as Nicholas Jolley puts it "knowledge trumps faith" (Jolley 2007,
445).

Unlike most of Locke's early religious critics, Berkeley accepts Locke's ac-
count of faith, along with all of these consequences (Pearce, forthcoming).[36]
Berkeley's aim in his defense of Christianity, especially in the fifth and sixth
dialogues of *Alciphron*, is to provide probable arguments in favor of the belief
that the Bible is a revelation from God, and to rebut claims that it contains
propositions known to be false.[37] On Berkeley's broadly Lockean view, if it
can be shown, by natural reason, that it is *probable* that the Bible contains a
revelation from God, then it is rational to accept any proposition contained in
the Bible as an article of faith. Much of *Alciphron* is devoted to this task.

At one point in *Alciphron*, Berkeley offers a rather different definition of
'faith,' which is of interest. In §5.6, the character Crito remarks that "religion
is the virtuous mean between incredulity and superstition." By 'religion' Crito
presumably means religious faith. The suggestion seems to be that faith is
an Aristotelian intellectual virtue. Incredulity is the vice which consists in
unwillingness to believe when one ought, and superstition is the vice which
consists in believing too easily. It seems, then, that just as courage is the virtue
which consists in the proper regulation of action in the presence of fear (Aristotle
Nicomachean ethics 1115a6-1117b22), faith is the virtue which consists in the
proper regulation of belief in the presence of uncertainty.

Although both Locke and Berkeley usually treat faith as a purely doxastic
state, they also both sometimes employ a more robust, practical conception of
faith. In *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, Locke wrote that

> the faith whereby those believers of old pleased God, was nothing
> but a steadfast reliance on the goodness and faithfulness of God,
> for those good things, which either the light of nature, or particular
> promises, had given them grounds to hope for (LW, 7:131).

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36. David Berman has recently defended the shocking conclusion "that Berkeley was a
philosopher of little or no religious faith." However, what Berman means by this, he says,
is that by the year 1707 Berkeley's "religion became entirely philosophical, that is, based
entirely on reason" (Berman 2010, 141). It seems that what Berman really means, then, is
that Berkeley rejected 'fideist' conceptions of faith, such as those associated with Pascal and
Bayle, and instead accepted a view closer to Locke's, on which all assent, including faith, had
to be judged by individual reason. In any event, none of Berman's arguments tend to suggest
that Berkeley rejected faith in Locke's sense.

37. The structure of the argument in dialogue 6 has been examined by Jakapi 2010 and
Charles 2011. For more details on *Alciphron* and its arguments, see ch. ?? [Schwartz] of this
volume.

'Steadfast reliance' clearly involves a sort of practical attitude, and not mere intellectual belief. Similarly, according to Berkeley, an individual has 'saving faith' when Christian doctrine "makes proper impressions on his mind, producing therein, love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby become a lively operating principle influencing his life and actions" (Alc, §7.11). Here again "speculation [must be] referred to practice" (DHP, 168).

7 Miracles

The constancy of nature is one of the central themes in Berkeley's natural theology. It figures in the Divine Language Argument for the existence of God (§1.3, above), as well as Berkeley's argument for the divine attributes (§2). Furthermore, in *Passive Obedience*, Berkeley argues for rule utilitarianism, against act utilitarianism, on the basis of God's observed habit of following the general rules he has established even in cases where this leads to an undesirable outcome (PO, §14). However, miracles play an important role in Berkeley's understanding of revealed religion. First, miracles serve as the *evidence* for revealed religion; second, they are part of the *content* of revealed religion. Miracles are usually thought of (and are thought of by Berkeley) as irregularities. Here we will first examine the role miracles play in Berkeley's understanding of revealed religion, and then discuss Berkeley's attempt to resolve the apparent conflict between his natural theology and the occurrence of miracles.

As we saw in the last section, Berkeley follows Locke in holding that, in order to have rational faith, we must have probable grounds for supposing certain propositions to have been revealed by God. Berkeley argues that these probable grounds are provided by the historical evidence for the occurrence of certain miracles, most importantly the resurrection of Christ (Alc, §§6.3, 30). There are, however, other miracles, such as the Incarnation, to which no human being is able to bear witness. These 'private' miracles, as we might call them, can be accepted on the basis of 'public' miracles, such as Jesus' healing the sick and calming the sea (§6.15). The private miracles are, therefore, part of the *content* of faith. The pattern, then, is this: the miracles performed by Jesus, for which there is supposed to be independent historical evidence, certify his teaching as a revelation from God. This teaching includes the claim that certain further miracles, which are not independently attested, occurred. These latter miracles are therefore accepted by faith. This is a familiar pattern in Christian apologetics in constant use from the beginning of Christianity up to the present.[38]

In this apologetic pattern, miracles are not used as arguments for the existence or attributes of God. Indeed, from Berkeley's perspective, miracles tend to *weaken* such arguments: the more regularity we see in the natural order, the more we are justified in supposing that the natural order is the creation of a

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38. The earliest appearances of this pattern occur in the New Testament itself (see, e.g., John 20:30-31; Acts 1:3; 2 Peter 1:16-19). For a recent example, see Swinburne 1992. The pattern also occurs in many of Berkeley's contemporaries, including, notably, Locke (LW, 7:136-138, 143, 146-147).

wise and good God.[39] However, Berkeley must nevertheless claim that God *does* sometimes perform miracles, and that, once we know God exists, such miracles can serve as evidence that particular propositions are revealed.

Berkeley never squarely faces these difficulties, but he does make some suggestive remarks. First, in the *Principles*, after emphasizing the constancy of nature, Berkeley writes:

> It may indeed on some occasions be necessary that the Author of nature display his overruling power in producing some appearance out of the ordinary series of things. Such exceptions from the general rules of nature are proper to surprise and awe men into an acknowledgement of the Divine Being. But then they are to be used seldom; otherwise there is a plain reason why they should fail of that effect. Besides, God seems to choose the convincing our reason of his attributes by the works of nature, which discover so much harmony and contrivance in their make, and are such plain indications of wisdom and beneficence in their Author, rather than to astonish us into belief of his being by anomalous and surprising events (PHK, §63).

The contrast between "astonish[ing] us into belief" and "convincing our reason" suggests that miracles are here being used to overcome human irrationality. In fact Berkeley elsewhere identifies the irrationality in question:

> Whenever the course of nature is interrupted by a miracle, men are ready to own the presence of a superior agent. But when we see things go on in the ordinary course, they do not excite in us any reflexion; their order and concatenation, though it be an argument of the greatest wisdom, power, and goodness in their Creator, is yet so constant and familiar to us, that we do not think them the immediate effects of a free spirit, especially since inconstancy and mutability of acting, though it be an imperfection, is looked on as a mark of freedom (§57).

In §32, Berkeley explains that this regularity leads us to suppose (incoherently) that ideas have within them the power to cause the ideas that regularly follow them; in other words, because the cause of our ideas is so constant and reliable, we suppose that the cause of our ideas is not a mind choosing freely. Thus God might perform miracles to get our attention, and show us that the cause of our perceptions is indeed a being free to cause others if he so chooses, and this is necessary due to our irrationality.

Similarly, in *Passive Obedience*, Berkeley insists that God never diverts the course of nature in order to achieve a better outcome. "As for those miracles recorded in Scripture," he writes, "they were always wrought for confirmation of some particular doctrine or mission from God, and not for the sake of the particular natural goods, as health or life, which some men might have reaped

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39. This concern is pressed forcefully by Overall 1985. Similar concerns were also emphasized, in Berkeley's own time, by Leibniz (see Brown 1995).

from them" (PO, §14; cf. §27).[40] Thus, according to Berkeley, the *sole* purpose of miracles is to direct our attention to particular events, which we are to consider as free acts of God. If miracles can serve this function (and Berkeley nowhere produces any argument to show that they can), then it is not difficult to see how they might serve as evidence of divine revelation: if God chooses to direct our attention to a particular teacher, then a likely hypothesis is that this is because he endorses what that teacher is saying. Since we are aiming only at probable belief and not at knowledge, a sufficiently likely hypothesis is all we need.

8   Bodily Resurrection

Christians have traditionally believed that the Last Judgment will be preceded by a bodily resurrection of the dead. The standard view of the matter among 'magisterial' Protestants is roughly as follows.[41] Upon death, each soul is subject to an immediate 'personal' judgment, so that the (disembodied) soul experiences either immediate conscious bliss or immediate conscious torment until the end of the world. This disembodied existence is known as the 'intermediate state.' At the end of the world, it is further held, the bodies of the dead will be raised and each soul will be reunited with *its own body*, the *very same* body it animated in its earthly life. At this point, there will be a public judgment of all of the dead, and the creation of a 'new heaven and new earth' (Revelation 21:1) to be inhabited by the elect, while the reprobate are now sent permanently to hell, in their bodies.

The question of the sameness of the body in the resurrection was the subject of an acrimonious debate between Locke and Stillingfleet, in which Locke showed deep ambivalence about the doctrine (LW, 4:301-330). This ambivalence led to Locke's being charged with Socinianism (Milner 1700, 187).[42] Berkeley likely

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40. For some possible political implications of this claim, see Berman 1994, 89-90.

41. 'Magisterial' Protestants are those who accept the existence of a 'magisterium,' i.e. of some role for the church in providing authoritative teaching on matters of faith and practice, in creeds, confessions, and so forth which the laity ought to accept. This includes the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican traditions, as distinct from the churches of the 'radical Reformation,' such as the Baptists and Anabaptists. The doctrine of the afterlife I describe can be found, for instance, in the (Dutch Reformed) *Belgic Confession* (1561), art. 37; the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), questions 57-58; the (Anglican) *Irish Articles of Religion* (1615), §§101-103; and the (Presbyterian) *Westminster Confession* (1647), chs. 32-33. These texts can be found in Schaff and Schaff 1931, vol. 3, pp. 433-436, 325-326, 543-544, and 670-673, respectively. The *Thirty-Nine Articles* are, in fact, oddly silent on this subject, and the *Irish Articles* were not binding on the Church of Ireland in Berkeley's day (for a brief historical account, see 1:662-665). Berkeley certainly could not, in any event, have subscribed to the *Irish Articles*, for they were rigorously Calvinistic. Nevertheless, Anglicans in Berkeley's day, including Berkeley himself, certainly regarded this position on the afterlife as the standard, orthodox one.

42. Socinianism was among the most extreme movements of the radical Reformation, emphasizing individual, rational interpretation of Scripture and showing open hostility toward tradition. Because it was an individualistic movement, Socinianism did not have official doctrines of its own; the Socinians were rather united by their individualistic and rationalistic approach to theology and their rejection of traditional understandings of core Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation. Locke's relationship to Socinianism is studied in detail by Marshall 2000.

has this debate in mind in his discussion of 'Socinian scruples' regarding the resurrection (PHK, §95). According to Berkeley, "the most plausible of [these scruples] depend on the supposition that a body is denominated the *same*, with regard not to the form or that which is perceived by sense, but the material substance which remains the same under several forms" (§95). Stillingfleet, in particular, held that the doctrine of the resurrection of the same body required that the body which was raised "must be the same Material Substance which was vitally united to the Soul here [on earth]" (Stillingfleet 1698, 35). By the same 'material substance' Stillingfleet clearly means the same living organism, which, he emphasizes, even on Locke's principles, does not require the sameness of the individual particles (EHU, §§2.27.4-6; Stillingfleet 1698, 42). Locke's account, however, does require causal continuity, and Locke himself had argued that causal continuity could not be preserved in the resurrection (EHU, §2.27.21). Stillingfleet's own view is that if God were to reanimate the same material substance by connecting it again to the same soul, this would certainly be the same life (Stillingfleet 1698, 42-43). However, this presupposes identity of material substance as something independent of either causal continuity or sameness of particles, and it is unclear in what this sameness of material substance is meant to consist, and how it is supposed to be preserved in cases where the body has entirely decomposed.

According to Berkeley, this is yet another place where "we have first raised a dust, and then complain, we cannot see" (PHK, Intro §3):

> Take away this material substance, about the identity whereof all the dispute is, and mean by *body* what every plain ordinary person means by that word, to wit, that which is immediately seen and felt, and which is only a combination of sensible qualities, and then [the Socinians'] most unanswerable objections come to nothing (§95).

Since bodies, for Berkeley, do not have any causal powers, their identity over time, even in the ordinary case, cannot possibly consist in the kind of causal continuity Locke found impossible. Berkeley claims here that their identity across a large gap, such as the gap between death and resurrection, is, on his view, utterly unproblematic. This is an exaggeration, for it is an unclear and much disputed matter how Berkeleian bodies can persist over time *at all*, even in the most ordinary cases. However, it seems likely that, for Berkeley, the identity of bodies over time consists in some kind of systematic, lawful relationship between one perception and another. If this is true, then there will not be any *special* problem about the identity of resurrection bodies as there is for the materialist (see Hight 2007).

9   The Language of Revealed Religion

Even more than the debate about the divine attributes (see §4, above), the Anglo-Irish intellectual scene in Berkeley's lifetime was dominated by an extremely contentious debate about religious 'mysteries,' such as the doctrine of

the Trinity. In 1696, John Toland, a native Irish convert to Protestantism, published a tract entitled *Christianity Not Mysterious*, in which he used Locke's theory of ideas as a platform to attack traditional Christian doctrines as inventions of 'priestcraft.' Most notoriously, Toland argued that Arianism and orthodox Trinitarianism are both incomprehensible (Toland 1696, 27).[43]

The overarching argument of *Christianity Not Mysterious* is simple. Toland defines 'mystery' as "a thing of its own Nature inconceivable, and not be judg'd of by our ordinary Faculties and Ideas" (66) What this implies is that mysteries are really "Words that have no Ideas at all" (135). However, if the words to which we verbally assent in confessing our belief in mysteries do not correspond to ideas, we may as well be confessing "that something call'd *Blictri* [has] a Being in Nature" (128): the alleged belief has no content, and thus cannot be a genuine belief, but is only an empty form of words (134-135). It is, in other words, impossible to believe in mysteries.

Toland's work set off a firestorm. In 1697 the Irish parliament ordered that the book be burnt, and a motion to burn Toland himself was introduced in the House of Commons (Belfrage 1985, 118). Among the books written against Toland's views, the most influential was Edward Stillingfleet's *Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, which launched his famous correspondence with Locke. Another important response was Peter Browne's *Letter*. Both of these were published in 1697. Stillinglfeet and Browne both accept Toland's characterization of a mystery as something of which we have no ideas (Stillingfleet 1697, 262; Browne 1697, 32-37),[44] and his contention that the doctrine of the Trinity and many other important Christian doctrines are, in this sense, mysteries (Stillingfleet 1697, ii; Browne 1697, 17). Stillingfleet and Browne must therefore reject Toland's Lockean assumption that we cannot believe where we have no ideas (EHU, §4.18.3; Berman 1994, 14-15).

It appears that in the earliest part of Berkeley's career he was largely oblivious to this debate. A short paper, entitled "Of Infinities," which Berkeley delivered to the Dublin Philosophical Society on November 19, 1707 casually endorsed Locke's view that all meaningful words must stand for ideas (BW, 4:235-238). David Berman and Bertil Belfrage have argued that William King and Peter Browne were likely present at this meeting and, given their preoccupation with the controversy surrounding Toland, would have opposed Berkeley's semantic assumption quite vigorously (Belfrage 1985, 117-119; Berman 1994, 11-17). Whether due to objections received at this meeting or not, it is clear that Berkeley's views about language, and in particular the language of revealed reli-

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43. Arianism is the view that the Son of God was the first and greatest creature, by whom all other creatures were made, and is called 'god' or 'divine' only as a sort of honorific title. The term is sometimes (improperly) used more broadly to refer to anyone who denies the full divinity of the Son. Orthodox Trinitarianism, by contrast, holds that the Son is "begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father" ("The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed," in Schaff and Schaff 1931, 2:58), and hence is a divine person in precisely the same sense as the Father.

44. Stillingfleet refers to 'clear and distinct' ideas but, as Locke points out (LW, 4:28-29), the Lockean theory Stillingfleet is arguing against requires only that we have ideas, not that we have clear and distinct ideas.

gion underwent a dramatic shift in the period in between "Of Infinities" and the publication of the *Principles*. This development can be traced through Berkeley's first extant sermon, "On Immortality" (January 11, 1708; BW, 7:9-15), his notebooks, and the manuscript version of the Introduction to the *Principles*.

In the sermon, Berkeley says that "we can in this life have no determined idea of the pleasures of the next" (7:13). Our attempts to conceive of heavenly bliss are "in vain, since the Apostle himself, who was caught up into the 3d heaven could give us no other than this empty tho emphatical description of it. 'tis wt eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive" (7:13; see 1 Corinthians 2:9). Throughout the sermon, Berkeley emphasizes, by Pascal's Wager-type reasoning, the effect this promise of inconceivably great joys ought to have on our actions.

In the sermon, then, Berkeley evidently endorses an assertion which he explicitly says does not convey 'determined ideas,' and claims that accepting that assertion can, and should, influence our actions. Berman takes this to show that, by the beginning of 1708, Berkeley's 'semantic revolution' was complete (Berman 1994, 12). Belfrage, on the other hand, takes the position in the sermon to be intermediate between the position in "Of Infinities" and that in the *Manuscript Introduction* (Belfrage 1986b). It is, however, not entirely clear whether the sermon represents a departure from Locke at all. First, Locke himself had quoted this statement of St. Paul's in his discussion of faith and reason (EHU, §4.18.3). Locke's point there is that God can give us new ideas only by direct personal revelation, not by a traditional revelation like the Bible. In writing about his mystical experience, St. Paul is forced to give a *negative* description in terms of ideas we already have, because he cannot convey to us any new ideas he may have received. Berkeley similarly considers the possibility that God could "inspire us with new faculties & give us a tast of those cœlestial joys" (BW, 7:13), which suggests that he has Locke's discussion in mind. It is true that in the *Manuscript Introduction* Berkeley uses this passage as part of an argument against the view that all meaningful words stand for ideas (MI, §36), but his argument there depends on his rejection of the abstract idea of a reward, and it is unclear whether Berkeley had already rejected abstract ideas in January of 1708.

In November and December of 1708, Berkeley was engaged in revising the *Manuscript Introduction*, which implies that the text had already been written at that point (Belfrage 1987, 20-23). In this text, Berkeley clearly and explicitly argues that the aim of St. Paul's statement "is not to raise in the Minds of Men the Abstract Ideas of Thing or Good nor yet the particular Ideas of the Joys of the Blessed. The Design is to make them more chearfull and fervent in their Duty" (MI, §36). Berkeley goes on to provide an account of how children learn the proper use of the English word 'reward.' According to this account, we are *conditioned* by experience to increase our "Zeal and Activity" upon hearing the promise of a reward from "an honest Man" (MI, §37; see Berman 1994, 162). Berkeley does say that it may sometimes happen that upon a person's hearing the word 'reward' "there may be excited in his Understanding an Idea of the particular good thing to him proposed for a Reward" (MI, §37). However,

he clearly holds that even in many ordinary cases, in which we are capable of having ideas of the particular rewards in question, the effect of the words is nevertheless *directly* to motivate us, and there is no need for an idea to mediate in this process. In the case of the heavenly reward – a particular example of a religious mystery – it is impossible for us to have any such idea, but we nevertheless can and should be *motivated* by the promise of a heavenly reward, and that use of language is therefore meaningful.

According to Belfrage, Berkeley's view here is that,

> What the apostle intends to do is to make people act in a certain way. Therefore, instead of saying:
>
> (4) There are inconceivably pleasant joys in store for blessed souls in heaven,
>
> one could equally well say:
>
> (5) Act in accordance with what Christian doctrine prescribes as being our duty! (Belfrage 1986a, 646)

This interpretation of the *Manuscript Introduction* has been criticized by Kenneth Williford. Williford complains that Belfrage's interpretation reduces religious mysteries to nothing more than "useful nonsense" (Williford 2003, 291). Although Belfrage notes that Berkeley could not possibly accept the characterization of religious mysteries as 'nonsense' (Belfrage 1986b, 321), on his interpretation the 'sense' which religious mysteries make is merely emotional and practical, with no descriptive or cognitive component. This is the substance of Williford's criticism: it is not clear how, on Belfrage's account, the mysteries can count as *true* (or false) rather than merely *useful* (or useless). On Williford's alternative interpretation, although the promise of an unspecified reward does not communicate any ideas, it does communicate the speaker's intentions. With respect to the heavenly reward, this theory has the benefit of explaining how, on Berkeley's view, we can expect really to be rewarded in the afterlife (something to which Berkeley is clearly committed; see above, §§3, 8) despite the fact that the promise on which this expectation is based conveys no ideas.

In the published Introduction to the *Principles*, the entire discussion of the heavenly reward has been reduced to one sentence: "May we not, for example, be affected with the promise of a *good thing*, though we have not an idea of what it is?" (PHK, Intro §20). Berkeley did not deal with religious mysteries in print until the detailed account found in *Alciphron* VII, to which we now turn.

Alciphron launches the discussion by laying out Toland's argument for the claim that religious mysteries are "empty notions, or, to speak more properly, . . . mere forms of speech, which mean nothing, and are of no use to mankind" (Alc, §7.1). Alciphron's particular target is the concept of *grace* which, he observes, "is the main point in the Christian dispensation" (§7.4). To the word 'grace,' Alciphron says, no idea can be attached. However, "there can be no assent where there are no ideas: and where there is no assent there can be no faith: and what cannot be, that no man is obliged to" (§7.4).

In response, Euphranor begins by laying out Berkeley's argument against abstract ideas (Alc, §§7.5-6), and his alternative account of general ideas (§7.7). Alciphron is convinced by the critique of abstraction, but is left puzzled for, Alciphron says, "the only use of words is to suggest ideas. And indeed what other use can we assign them?" (§7.7). Euphranor responds by developing an account of the use of words which, he says, will "make sense of our daily practice" (§7.8). The account which follows is indeed focused on the practical use of words in everyday life, rather than on an abstract notion of 'meaning' divorced from use. In this respect, the account can be classified as proto-Wittgensteinian (Flew 1974), though it is of course important to avoid anachronistically exaggerating the resemblance.

Since Berkeley's philosophy of language is dealt with in detail elsewhere in this volume (ch. ??), we will remain focused here on Berkeley's specific remarks on the use of the words 'grace' and 'Trinity' and his attempt to show that these words are 'significant' despite suggesting no ideas.

The question of the significance of 'grace' is addressed through an extended analogy with 'force,' considered as a technical term of physics. Alciphron had used "the disputes . . . [which] have employed the pens of Protestants as well as Popish Divines, of *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, of *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, and *Arminians*" as evidence that there is no agreed upon "clear and distinct idea marked by the word Grace" (Alc, §7.4).[45] In reply, Euphranor notes that, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were similar debates about the nature of force (§7.9).[46] This, however, casts no doubt on the fact that "there are very evident propositions or theorems relating to force, which contain useful truths" (§7.10). Euphranor emphasizes that these theorems of force guide our actions, explain various phenomena, and allow the construction of machines "by means of which things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed." Furthermore, "the same doctrine, which is so beneficial here below, serves also as a key to discover the nature of the celestial motions." In light of these facts, it would be absurd to "deny that ['force'] is of use, either in practice or speculation, because we have no distinct idea of force" (§7.10).

Euphranor concludes that none of the charges leveled against 'grace' show that it is insignificant. All of the allegedly problematic features of 'grace' are had also by 'force.'

> Ought we not therefore by a parity of reason to conclude, there may
> be diverse true and useful propositions concerning the one as well
> as the other? And that grace may be an object of our faith, and
> influence our life and actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits

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45. Note that Alciphron, like Stillingfleet, erroneously supposes that the Locke-Toland theory requires a *clear and distinct* idea in order for a term to be significant, although in fact the theory says that any idea will do (see above, p. 34, note 44). This is good evidence that Stillingfleet was one of the sources Berkeley had in mind in this discussion. I have elsewhere marshaled other evidence for the influence of the Locke-Stillingfleet debate on Berkeley's thought (Pearce, forthcoming).

46. These disputes are among Berkeley's central concerns in *De Motu*. For details see ch. ?? of this volume.

and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct
idea of it, separate or abstracted from God the author, from man
the subject, and from virtue and piety its effects? (Alc, §7.10)

Euphranor goes on to remark that "that philosopher cannot be free from bias
and prejudice ... who shall maintain the doctrine of force and reject that of
grace, who shall admit the abstract idea of a triangle, and at the same time
ridicule the Holy Trinity" (§7.11). Alciphron, however, balks at the idea that
the Trinity, of all things, could "really be the object of man's faith." Euphranor
responds by reminding Alciphron that it has already been established that "signs
may be significant, though they should not suggest ideas represented by them,
provided they serve to regulate and influence our wills, passions, or conduct."
If this is correct, Euphranor insists, then it is possible to believe in the Trinity,
for

> although [the believer] does not frame in his mind any abstract or
> distinct idea of Trinity, substance, or personality ... the doctrine of a
> Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper impressions on his
> mind, producing therein, love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and
> thereby becomes a lively operative principle influencing his life and
> actions, agreeably to that notion of saving faith which is required of
> a Christian (§7.11).

Euphranor's claim is clearly that 'grace' and 'Trinity' have legitimate uses,
and are therefore meaningful, whether or not they stand for ideas. These uses
evidently have something to do with moral motivation. Beyond this, things
become rather murky. In the discussion of 'grace,' there is a use/mention ambi-
guity.[47] It sounds as though Euphranor is saying that *grace itself* "influence[s]
our life and actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of
good ones" (§7.10), and this would certainly be in line with traditional Protes-
tant theology, and with Alciphron's earlier description of what grace is supposed
to be ("an active, vital, ruling principle, influencing and operating on the mind
of man" – §7.4). However, in the discussion of 'Trinity,' it is not the Trinity It-
self, but the "*doctrine* of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier" which "becomes
a lively operative principle" (§7.11, emphasis added). Similarly, it is *belief* in
Original Sin which is said to "produce in [the believer's] mind a salutary sense
of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may
follow good habits, and from them good actions" (§7.13). Furthermore, it is not
clear how our lack of an idea of grace could be thought to be a hindrance to its
being "a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of good ones." On
the other hand, if it is our *belief* in grace which is meant to be such a principle,
then one can clearly see how it could be thought that the lack of an idea of grace
would prevent this from happening. What is clear is that the notion we have

47. A related ambiguity in Berkeley's use of 'mystery' is identified by Jakapi 2007, 190-191:
'mystery' sometimes refers to particular religious doctrines, and sometimes to the supernatural
realities described by those doctrines.

of grace cannot be "separate or abstracted from God the author, from man the subject, and from virtue and piety its effects" (Alc, §7.10).

That 'grace' and 'Trinity' are connected to other notions in this way is crucial here, since Berkeley had said that 'force' is meaningful in virtue of the theorems which can be demonstrated by the use of that word. Thus Berkeley's defense will not work if the mysteries become inferentially inert, as King made them (see above, §4). Instead, it must be possible to demonstrate 'theorems of grace,' analogous to the theorems of force (Pearce 2008, 261-262), and these theorems must, like the theorems of force, have practical import.

David Berman has characterized Berkeley's thought on religious language as involving a contrast between 'cognitive theology' and 'emotive mysteries' (Berman 1981).[48] It is indeed clear that there is a contrast to be drawn between Berkeley treatment of the language of natural theology and the language of revealed theology. However, Berman's use of twentieth century terminology is apt to mislead (Williford 2003)belfrage-theologicalPositivism. 'Emotivism' or 'non-cognitivism' about a domain of discourse is often understood as involving the claim that the statements (or pseudo-statements) in that domain of discourse are not truth evaluable (see, e.g., Ayer 1946, 107; cf. Williford and Jakapi 2009, 100). However, as Berman recognizes (Berman 1994, 161-163), Berkeley seems to think that claims about grace are genuinely *true* (Alc, §7.10; cf. Jakapi 2007, 189-190). Furthermore, in comparing 'grace' with 'force,' Berkeley connected the uses of language in religious mysteries with the use of language in physics, a paradigmatically cognitive domain of discourse (Williford and Jakapi 2009, 106; cf. Roberts 2007, 59-60).

Dropping the misleading phrase 'emotive mysteries,' the substance of Berman's account of the theory of *Alciphron* VII is that terms like 'grace' and 'Trinity' are meaningful *in virtue of* their ability to "produce emotions, dispositions, and actions." In this, they are like such utterances as 'Cheer up!', 'Life's a bore' and 'Get out!' (Berman 1994, 148).

This account has been challenged by Kenneth Williford and Roomet Jakapi. According to Williford and Jakapi,

> Berkeley's specification of the other functions of language [besides suggesting ideas] *is not* presented as a positive characterization of the semantic content of these terms and sentences . . . Rather . . . the fact that terms such as 'grace' and 'force' direct actions and engender appropriate emotions, etc., is, according to Berkeley, *a reason* for thinking that the terms are indeed meaningful (Williford and Jakapi 2009, 105).

In place of the emotional and motivational associations of words, Williford and Jakapi emphasize the inferential relations in which the words stand, and claim that it is only indirectly, by means of these inferences, that the words impact actions and emotions.

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48. The material in this paper of Berman's was later incorporated in Berman 1994. My account of his views will rest on the later book rather than the earlier paper.

On either of these interpretations, Berkeley has a serious theological problem, for Berkeley says that 'grace' and 'Trinity' are meaningful in much the same way that 'force' is. However, Berkeley's *De Motu* was dedicated to showing that "'Force', 'gravity', 'attraction' and similar terms are useful for reasoning, and for calculations about motion and moving bodies, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion itself or for designating so many distinct qualities" (DM, §17). If the analogy is to hold, Berkeley would seem to be committed to the claim that 'grace' and 'Trinity' are useful for religious and moral reasoning, but not for understanding the nature of God or for designating qualities of God. To state the matter more emphatically, Berkeley's aim in his discussions of 'force' is to argue that discourse involving 'force' can be useful and perhaps even (in some sense) true, despite the fact that, strictly speaking, there are no such things as forces. From the perspective of Christian orthodoxy, the application of the same line of thought to revealed theology would be a disaster. Berman and Belfrage seem to hold that Berkeley does indeed depart from (or at least radically reinterpret) Christian orthodoxy in this way,[49] while Williford and Jakapi argue that Berkeley would have found this conclusion unacceptable (see especially Jakapi 2007).

This problematic aspect of Berkeley's view was recognized early on by Peter Browne. Browne complains that "in the particular Instance of divine Grace, [Berkeley] in effect gives up the whole Cause of Revelation and Mystery" (Browne 1733, 508), and, more generally, that, on Berkeley's account, faith in the Christian mysteries "is no other than believing in certain Sounds and Syllables," so that in the end "you may as well be said to have Faith in the Noise of sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal" and faith in God becomes "no more than Faith in a Monosyllable" (539). Berkeley never answered these strong words of Browne's. As a result, the question of whether he would have accepted Browne's characterization of his view remains open.

10   The Practice of Revealed Religion

At the end of the *Principles*, Berkeley indicated that it was part of "the main drift and design of [his] labours" to "dispose [us] to reverence and embrace the salutary truths of the Gospel, which to know and to practise is the highest perfection of human nature" (PHK, §156). In revealed religion, as in natural religion and in life in general, belief must not be divorced from practice.

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49. For instance, according to Belfrage, the difference between Berkeley's view in the sermon "Of Immortality" and his view in the *Manuscript Introduction* is that in the former Berkeley has a theory of 'metaphysical descriptions' which describe realities beyond human knowledge, and in the latter he rejects this view, holding instead that non-cognitive propositions, such as St. Paul's promise of a heavenly reward, never describe realities (Belfrage 1986b, 321-324). So on Belfrage's interpretation of Berkeley's view in the *Manuscript Introduction*, the phrase 'heavenly reward' does not denote any reality. Belfrage, however, never applied this thesis beyond the *Manuscript Introduction*, and in a later paper he explicitly agrees that Berkeley would have been dissatisfied with this account, and therefore holds that Berkeley's view underwent significant 'transformation' throughout the course of his career (Belfrage 2007, 51).

According to Berkeley, the central elements of Christianity are "the love of God and man, the practising every virtue, the living reasonably while we are here upon earth, proportioning our esteem to the value of things, and so using this world as not to abuse it" (Alc, §5.5; cf. Alc, §5.15). This is very similar to Berkeley's account of the practice of natural religion, and indeed Berkeley holds that one of the most important recommendations of Christianity is that it has succeeded in popularizing natural religion (Alc, §§5.9, 5.27; cf. Leibniz 1710, 50-51). Nevertheless, Berkeley holds that the specific, distinctive doctrines of Christianity can shape our practice in morally beneficial ways which go beyond the effects of natural religion.

As was mentioned in the previous section, Berkeley says that when the "doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper impressions on [one's] mind, producing therein, love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, [it] thereby becomes a lively operative principle influencing [one's] life and actions" (Alc, §7.11). Why exactly the doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier – and, in particular, the doctrine that in one divine substance are contained three distinct persons, the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier – should produce love, hope, gratitude, and obedience is not explained by Berkeley. However, it is clear that these attitudes toward God provide a deeper sort of moral motivation than a mere prudential calculation on the basis of the promise of reward and threat of punishment. In this way, revealed religion goes beyond natural religion with respect to moral motivation.

In the succeeding portions of *Alciphron*, Berkeley discusses the motivational impact of two other distinctive Christian doctrines. Berkeley says that when we "believe the divinity of our Saviour, or that in him God and man make one person . . . by virtue of such persuasion [we] submit to his government, believe his doctrine, [and] practice his precepts" (§7.11). In other words, the doctrine that God became a visible human person in concrete historical circumstances makes it easier for us to accept that certain beliefs and practices are backed by divine authority.

Similarly, the doctrine of Original Sin,[50] we are told, "may produce in [our] minds a salutary sense of [our] own unworthiness, and the goodness of [our] Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions" (§7.13). Here the effect of the doctrine is tolerably clear: a belief in one's own innate moral corruption, accompanied by the belief that one has been saved by the grace of God, produces humility and gratitude toward God. These mental attitudes have a positive effect on moral behavior.

Moral behavior is not, however, exhaustive of religious practice. According to Berkeley, the claim that "God Ought to be worship'd" is an analytic truth, and so a proposition of natural theology (N, §705). The *manner* of worship is, however, a matter of revealed religion. The government and precepts of Christ, which belief in the Incarnation leads us to obey, include regular communal

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50. The doctrine of Original Sin states that human beings inherit moral corruption from the first sin of Adam. In the West, a stronger version, sometimes called the doctrine of Original Guilt, has traditionally been held, according to which each of us bears moral responsibility for Adam's sin.

meetings for worship featuring the Christian sacraments. The sacraments are 'means of grace' and grace, for Berkeley, is "a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of good ones" (Alc, §7.11), which is to say that God's grace is his supernatural intervention for the reformation of the believer's moral character. Thus, in Berkeley's view, participation in Christian worship is important in large part because of its effect on moral character (BW, 7:121).

In revealed as well as natural religion, "the end of speculation [is] practice" (DHP, 167). In particular, "the sum and substance, scope and end of Christ's religion, [is] the love of God and man" (Alc, §5.15). It is the practice of this religion which Berkeley's philosophy aims to promote (PHK, §156).

Abbreviations

Alc   Berkeley, George, *Alciphron.*

BW   Berkeley, George, *The works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne.*

DHP   Berkeley, George, *Three dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.*

DM   Berkeley, George, *An essay on motion [de motu].*

EHU   Locke, John, *An essay concerning human understanding.*

LW   Locke, John, *The works of John Locke.*

MI   Berkeley, George, *George Berkeley's manuscript introduction.*

N   Berkeley, George, *Philosophical commentaries.*

PHK   Berkeley, George, *A treatise concerning the principles of human knowl-edge.*

PO   Berkeley, George, *Passive obedience.*

TVV   Berkeley, George, *The theory of vision, or visual language, shewing the immediate presence and providence of a deity, vindicated and explained.*

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