

**CLAVIS UNIVERSALIS: OR, A NEW
INQUIRY AFTER TRUTH. BEING A
DEMONSTRATION OF THE NON-
EXISTENCE, OR IMPOSSIBILITY,
OF AN EXTERNAL WORLD**

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Clavis Universalis: Or, a New Inquiry after Truth. Being a Demonstration of the Non-Existence, or Impossibility, of an External World by Arthur Collier

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ARTHUR COLLIER

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OF AN EXTERNAL WORLD**

CLAVIS UNIVERSALIS

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EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

By this edition of Collier's "Clavis Universalis" it is hoped to call attention to a book otherwise inaccessible, which, though curiously parallel to Berkeley's contemporary works, has undoubted independent value; and which anticipates Kant's first two antinomies. The whole history of philosophy perhaps presents no more striking example of undeserved neglect, and no more curious coincidence of thought than the eighteenth century in England. By entirely different modes of approach and unknown to each other, Berkeley and Collier reached the same conclusion, — that matter, as conceived by traditional philosophy, is non-existent.

This edition of the "Clavis Universalis" is an exact and verified copy of the essay as it appears in Dr. Parr's "Metaphysical Tracts of the Eighteenth Century," a book now out of print. The Introduction and Notes are modified extracts from a Master's thesis accepted by the faculty of Wellesley College. They aim to show the direct dependence of Collier upon Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Norris, as well as the parallelism of Collier and Berkeley.

The thanks of the editor are due to Professor

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Mary Whiton Calkins who suggested and directed the work; to Dr. Benjamin Rand, of Harvard University, who has given counsel at several points; and to Mr. James Van Allen Shields who consulted the British Museum copy of Taylor's translation of Malebranche's "Recherche de la Verité."

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introduction - - - - -	vii
Clavis Universalis	
The Contents - - - - -	3
The Introduction - - - - -	5
Part I - - - - -	14
Part II - - - - -	55
The Conclusion of the Whole - - -	118
Notes - - - - -	133

INTRODUCTION

In the early eighteenth century, metaphysical speculation turned from the material world toward the inner life of man. Des Cartes and Malebranche in France, and Locke in England, had stripped the external world of its warmth and light and color and had left to it little save the character of extension. The completely idealistic theory of matter was formulated at nearly the same time, and in apparent independence, by George Berkeley and by Arthur Collier. And yet Berkeley alone commonly has credit for the metaphysical discovery, while Collier's little volume of scarce a hundred pages remained practically unnoticed for more than fifty years.

The book seems to have attracted little or no attention even at the time of its publication. Had not Dr. Reid chanced upon it in the library at Glasgow, it might never have been known. Reid appreciated the value of the book, and in his "Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man," published in 1785, gives it brief notice. After a discussion of Norris's "Essay toward the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World," he says that he ought not to omit mention of "an author of far inferior name, Arthur Collier. . . . His arguments are the same