

THE OBJECTIVITY OF TRUTH

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The Objectivity of Truth by George J. Stokes

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GEORGE J. STOKES

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BY

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"Abstract notions can do nothing."—*Bishop Butler.*



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P R E F A C E.

THE greater part of this Essay was written in Germany in 1883, at the close of my second year of study as Hibbert Travelling Scholar. The theory advocated in it, however, had occurred to me in its main outlines several years previously upon first becoming acquainted with Hegelian thought through Dr. Hutchison Stirling's celebrated work, "The Secret of Hegel."

The earlier portion of the Essay is principally historical, and relates to the conditions under which the problem arose, the solution of which is here attempted. That problem is the combination of the two schools whose development marks the progress of modern Philosophy. To this end it was necessary to point out that the Kantian and Scottish philosophies offer only inadequate, partial, and respectively one-sided solutions of the difficulties such a combination involves. The following pages are an attempt to enunciate a principle that may re-unite the divergent streams of speculation which flowed from Kant and Reid.

The last two chapters deal with the application of this principle to scientific and religious truth. The former, however, aims rather at illustrating the principle itself than at applying it to determine anything regarding the

ultimate laws or general method of scientific procedure. The latter attempts to sketch the outlines of scientific Theology. In doing so it seeks to show in opposition to the school represented in Germany in the present day by Biedermann, Pfeiderer, and Hartmann, that the Personality of God must be accepted, not merely as an accommodation to the needs of religious feeling, but as necessary on strictly philosophic grounds.

The discussion of the principle of the Objectivity of Truth, which forms the subject of the Essay, has been of necessity limited in its range. Its complete proof could only be accomplished by an exposition of the three sciences—Dialectics, Metaphysics, and Theology—which constitute the sub-divisions of Philosophy. The principle itself simply tries to develop all that is meant by “creative thought,” and to give full scope to the realistic element latent in that conception.

DUBLIN, *March*, 1884.

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