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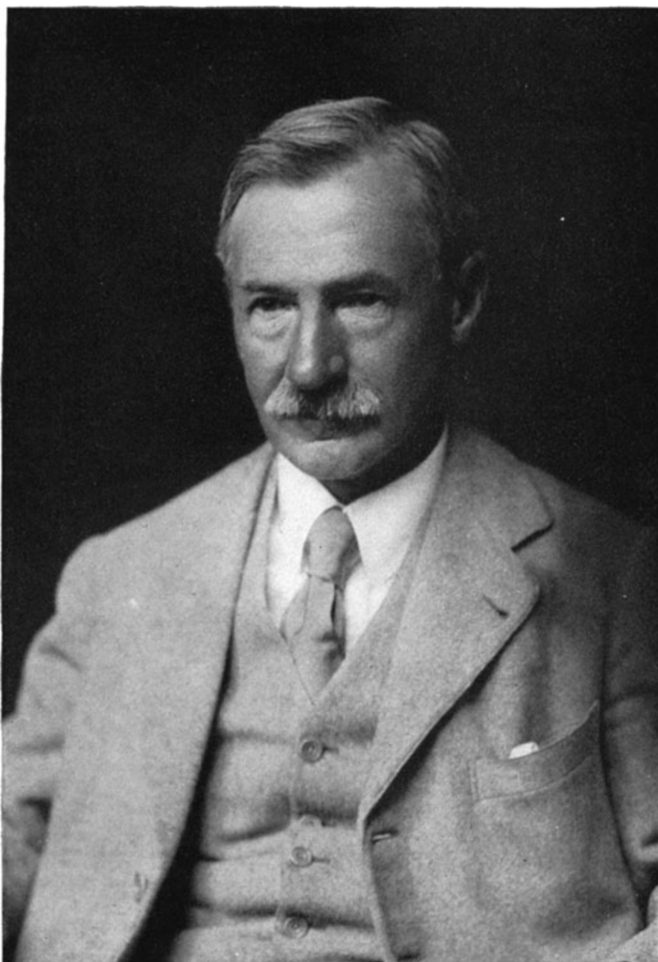

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IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
IN 1919 AND 1921

Edited by

A. K. STOUT

With a memoir by

J. A. PASSMORE

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

G. F. Stout's *Mind and Matter*, published in 1931, is described on the title-page as 'the first of two volumes based on the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1919 and 1921'. It was a new work, based indeed on both courses as delivered, but including no verbatim transcription from either. In the Preface the author explained that he was confining himself in this first volume 'to an examination of certain aspects of ordinary experience—those involved in the knowledge of the physical world, of the self and of minds other than our own'. He reserved 'the express treatment of more ultimate problems for a future work to be entitled *God and Nature*'.

My father never set himself to write a new book in fulfilment of this promise. Much of the ground he intended to cover had been treated in those parts of the original Lectures which he had not used in writing *Mind and Matter*, and it was understood between us that if they had not been published before his death I was to edit them for publication. (He was already past his seventy-first birthday when *Mind and Matter* was published.) When he visited St John's College, Cambridge (of which he was an Honorary Fellow) in 1938, he told friends who asked him about the promised sequel to *Mind and Matter* that he was not sure that he would himself be able to publish the Lectures, but that he had left them in a state in which they could be published.

He had gone through the Lectures with me in 1935, and it was then that he discarded the four Lectures of the First Course (II–V) which dealt with Materialism, saying, 'These are no good now'—because they were replaced by the reconsidered and fuller treatment in *Mind and Matter*. At various times between the publication of *Mind and Matter* and his sailing for Sydney with myself and my family in

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1939—but earlier in this period rather than later—he made a number of revisions in and additions to the typescript (none of them on a large scale), deleted some passages and marked others for further consideration. Although he was still writing articles and carrying on a philosophical correspondence until within a few weeks of his death in August 1944, he did not again turn his attention to the Giffords. He had a distaste for going back to what he had already written (it will be remembered that he left the preparation of new editions of the *Manual of Psychology* in other hands); and of course conditions were very unfavourable for publishing during the war—especially when the author was living at the other end of the earth from his publishers.

My material, then, for the present volume has been the two courses of Gifford Lectures (less the four chapters on Materialism in the First Course), pretty much as they were originally written. My problem has been to produce from this a volume which, while fulfilling the promise made in the Preface of *Mind and Matter*, would not unduly repeat the argument of that work and would yet be coherent and so far as possible self-contained. It has not been possible to fulfil the last two of these requirements without some relaxation of the first, and some of the ground covered in *Mind and Matter* is traversed also in the present book. This applies mainly to Book III, on 'Matter and our Knowledge of it', which corresponds in its general topic with Book IV of *Mind and Matter*. But the treatment is on the whole sufficiently different, even where basically the same theory is being developed (e.g. in the chapter on 'External and Internal Perception'), to justify the hope that those readers who are familiar with *Mind and Matter* will not feel that they are being cheated, but will agree with me that both treatments are valuable, not only in themselves, but for the light that each throws on the other.

God and Nature is of course intended as the completion of a line of inquiry started in *Mind and Matter*, and even if it had been rewritten it would have assumed some acquain-

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tance with the general argument of that book. But in fact, with one qualification, it can 'stand on its own legs' as a self-contained work. The one important argument of *Mind and Matter* which it presupposes is the criticism and rejection of Materialism in Book II and Book IV, Chapter VII.

The following passage from the last Section ('Ultimate Problems') of *Mind and Matter*, pp. 314–15, shows how the argument against Materialism was intended to pave the way for some of the questions discussed in *God and Nature*.

> It has been a main contention of the present work that this inseparable intermingling of continuity and discontinuity between experiencing individuals and other parts of nature cannot be simply accepted as an ultimate fact concerning which there is nothing more to say.... There is a question, and one that calls for an answer more imperatively than any other. The direction in which an answer is to be sought may be gathered from what I have already said in the present work, more especially in the argument against Materialism. Mind, as I maintain, must be fundamental in the Universe of Being and not derivative from anything that is not mind. If we discard mind-stuff theories as failing to account for individual selves, and monadism as failing to account for anything else, we are bound to posit one universal and eternal Mind developing and expressing itself in the world of finite and changeable beings which we call Nature. But at this point there are two alternatives between which we have to decide. The Universal Mind may be ascribed to Nature itself; this implies that Nature, in spite of the endless multiplicity of distinct existences which it comprehends, is a self-contained unity. Any such view seems to break down under intolerable difficulties. The alternative is to deny that Nature is the entire Universe of Being, and to recognise that it cannot exist at all or be what it is apart from a Being beyond it and distinct from it. This Being, whatever else it is, must be an eternal and universal Mind, giving to Nature, through and through, a character which is otherwise inexplicable.

Apart from the four Lectures on Materialism rejected by the author himself, I have included in this volume all but about ninety pages of the original quarto typescript. In

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almost all the passages that I have rejected there have been marks of some kind made by the author to indicate dissatisfaction. A large number of passages have simply been marked off with square brackets, but with nothing to indicate whether this was merely a sign that they should be omitted in lecturing, or whether they were to be revised or possibly deleted. In interpreting marks of this kind I have in general preferred the risk of including what the author would finally have left out to that of excluding what he would have retained.

Chapters I–V and XIII–XIV belong to the First Course of Lectures, the rest of the book to the Second Course; Chapters XIII and XIV originally came between the discarded Lectures on Materialism (which immediately followed the opening Lecture on Ethical Neutrality) and the Lecture on Agnosticism which has now become Chapter II. I have moved them to the place they now occupy (making the necessary minor consequential changes) in order to bring together the arguments about a Universal Mind. I do not claim that this rearrangement is completely satisfactory, but I think that it is better than any other. The only other major transference I have made is to bring forward as Chapter XVI what was originally the last Lecture of all. I have given my reasons for doing this in a footnote at the beginning of the chapter in question.

It might seem at first sight that there was a similar case for moving Book II ('The Unity of the Universe') nearer to the further treatment of the same subject in Book V. But, apart from the difficulty of doing this without breaking some of the threads of the argument, the motive for bringing the two treatments together loses force when it is realised that: (1) Book II does not itself offer positive arguments for accepting the hypothesis that the Universe is a Unity, but prepares the way for them by expounding and refuting arguments which would exclude this hypothesis; and (2) the long discussion in Book III of the nature of matter and the way in which we know it is undertaken, not

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978-1-107-61167-2 - God and Nature: The Second of Two Volumes (The First Being 'Mind and Matter') Based on the Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1919 and 1921
Edited by G. F. Stout and A. K. Stout
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primarily for its own sake, but to prepare the way for establishing the universal correlation of mind and matter, and so ultimately the unity of the universe.

Most of Book II is a detailed exposition and criticism of certain arguments supporting pluralism in Bertrand Russell's book *The Problems of Philosophy*. Since this is an early work of Lord Russell's, and his position has changed in certain respects since its publication, I wrote to him suggesting that he might like to see these and other chapters in which he is a target, and possibly write something in reply. He answered asking me to send them to him, and with his permission I quote here from the letter he wrote to me after he had read them, in which he explains why he prefers not to write about them for publication:

> I have read the six chapters you sent me with great interest, and am glad to have seen them. I am sorry I do not feel I can write about them for publication. My views are not what they were, and a good deal of rather tedious explanation would be needed. I could not defend myself—so far as I still think my past self defensible—at all briefly, and I incline to think that what working time remains to me ought to be spent rather on the future than the past. But I hope you will not take this as implying any underestimate of the importance of your father's work.

In order to make it easier to find references to chapters, I have numbered the chapters consecutively from I to XXI, instead of following the practice of *Mind and Matter* and beginning each Book with a new Chapter I. In every other respect I have preserved the form of *Mind and Matter*. This has entailed my dividing the work as a whole into books (and giving them titles), and the chapters into sections, and inserting section-headings throughout. In addition, I am editorially responsible for most of the chapter-titles, some of the divisions into chapters (which do not always correspond with the original divisions into Lectures—especially in the Second Course) and much of the paragraphing.

My father sent the typescript of the Second Course of Lectures, after its delivery, to James Ward, who wrote

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many brief and often illuminating marginal comments on them, one or two of the less caustic of which I have quoted in footnotes. Ward had constant difficulty in deciphering my father's minute, tailing-off pencilled emendations, and did not hesitate to say so. ('Your scribbled emendations I find almost invariably illegible', 'Pencilling as usual illegible', etc.) One particular outburst, which I remember amused the culprit himself when he read it, bears witness to a growing feeling of exasperation with which as Editor I have had occasion to sympathise, even if as a son I prefer to leave it to another to express here: 'A man who doesn't dot his *ii* or cross his *tt* is bad enough, but what is one to say when he crosses his *dd*?' Long familiarity with my father's handwriting and with his modes of expression has enabled me in the end to decipher almost everything beyond reasonable doubt, and only rarely—sometimes because of inaccuracies in the typing—have I been uncertain of the author's *ipsissima verba* and had to fall back on conjecture. I have only troubled the reader with a footnote to say so when the meaning has been in doubt.

It has given me great pleasure that my friend and former colleague at Sydney, Professor John Passmore, for whom my father had a high regard, acceded to my request to contribute a memoir of him for this volume.

I wish to express my gratitude to my friend, Dr A. C. Ewing, for helping me by reading through the typescript that I had prepared from the original Lectures, and making valuable comments and suggestions, on almost all of which I have acted; to my friend and colleague, Mr John Mackie, for his skilled help and advice in the revision of the proofs; and to the Senate of the University of Sydney for making a grant to cover typing expenses.

A. K. STOUT

SYDNEY
June 1951

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MEMOIR

GEORGE FREDERICK STOUT
1860–1944[1]

BY J. A. PASSMORE

'The autobiography of a man whose business is thinking' wrote Collingwood, 'should be the story of his thought'; and the biographer may well be guided by the same principle. Stout, one can feel sure, would have approved. He was a man not given to talking about his own life; the conversation in which he delighted, to the very end, was philosophical discussion, not personal anecdote. It is typical that his biography in the *Psychological Register* does not, in all respects, conform with the entry in *Who's Who;* no doubt Stout supplied both sets of information in good faith, but with that indifference to minor details which was one of his endearing, although occasionally infuriating, characteristics.

He was born in South Shields, Durham, England, on 6 January 1860; the substantial record of his life begins in 1879, when he entered St John's College, Cambridge. His record as an undergraduate was exceptionally brilliant. He obtained First Class Honours in the Classical Tripos,

[1] This Memoir is based on one contributed to the *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* in September 1944. But it has been considerably extended, and now bears few traces of its origin. I knew Stout only in the last years of his life; my memoir should be read in conjunction with Professor Mace's in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XXXI, and his obituary notice in the *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. XXVI, no. 2, Professor C. D. Broad's note in *Mind*, vol. LIV, no. 215, Professor Wright's obituary in *Nature*, October 1944 and that of Professor Rex Knight in *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. XVI, pt. ii. I have made some use of Stout's correspondence, and much use of the help freely given to me by his son, Professor A. K. Stout.

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with special distinction in Ancient Philosophy, and went on to First Class Honours in the Moral Sciences Tripos, again with special distinction, this time in Metaphysics. In 1884, St John's elected him to a Fellowship.

Two Cambridge teachers he particularly esteemed: James Ward and Henry Sidgwick. Stout always emphasised his indebtedness to Ward, even to the point of exaggeration. He wrote to Mrs Ward: 'I do not approach your husband's work as an external critic, but rather as a disciple seeking and in a large measure finding in it a basis from which to develop his own.'[1] Ward showed Stout what a philosophical psychology should be like; he set Stout the tasks on which he was mainly to concentrate, and taught him the methods he was principally to employ. But Stout's 'discipleship' was so critical and independent that the term is scarcely applicable; it would be less misleading to think of him, simply, as Ward's heir and successor in a tradition which has persisted in British philosophy since the time of Hobbes. He wrote very little on ethics, and had no public occasion to insist upon his indebtedness to Sidgwick, but he liked to draw attention in conversation to Sidgwick's qualities as a teacher and as a thinker. The moral atmosphere of liberal Utilitarianism, so congenial to his eminently unfanatical, optimistic temperament, pervades Stout's work, even though his ethics is not explicitly formulated as doctrine.

Another young philosopher, Samuel Alexander, was by now disturbing Lincoln College, Oxford, with his psychological experiments; and the two philosopher-psychologists soon conjoined as allies in defence of psychology and in opposition to Oxford apriorism. Alexander was later to abandon the epistemological approach to philosophy, to which Stout always remained faithful, but he had learnt a great deal from Stout, even if it was not precisely what Stout had wanted to teach him. In the course of expounding his conational theory of knowledge, Alexander

[1] *Studies*, p. 127.

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writes:[1] 'The whole discussion is founded on Mr Stout's treatment of perception in connexion with impulse or instinctive action; one of the greatest contributions that have been made to psychology.' On this passage, we have Stout's comment: 'This statement plainly suggests that Alexander regards his own doctrine as essentially only a further development of mine, so that whereas I have stopped at a half-way house he has gone to the end. There is no hint that his view is in radical conflict with mine and that if he is fundamentally right, I am fundamentally wrong.'[2] Here in the last, but by no means the least vigorous, of his writings, we catch an echo of the lively controversies of his younger days. He admired Alexander greatly, but his admiration was not unmixed with exasperation. It is significant that when it fell to his lot to describe Alexander's philosophical achievement, Stout concentrated on his epistemology. Of his ontology, he writes: 'What he says corresponds to nothing in my experience. It is all in the air, or rather in an airless region in which I at any rate find myself suffocated.'[3]

Stout's first articles began to appear in 1888, and he wrote freely in the next few years both for the Aristotelian Society and for *Mind*. It was clear from the beginning what his main interests were to be. Body and mind, mind and consciousness, the cognition of physical reality—these were the topics on which he began to write, and on them he dwelt most happily in his Gifford Lectures over thirty years later. His views were to alter in a great many respects, but he never lost his conviction that epistemology was the key both to philosophy and to psychology. 'Psychology', so he wrote in the introduction to his *Analytic Psychology*, 'investigates the history of

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. II, p. 119 n.

[2] 'Alexander's Theory of Mind and Knowledge', 1944 (p. 22). Page references in parentheses are to the journals in which the articles appeared. See List of Stout's Works, p. l.

[3] 'The Philosophy of Samuel Alexander', 1940 (p. 144).

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individual consciousness, and this coincides with the history of the process through which the world comes to be presented in consciousness....When, on the other hand, the nature of knowledge is considered apart from its genesis, it becomes the subject-matter, not of psychology, but of metaphysics.' And in *God and Nature*, 'We shall inquire what is logically prior in our knowledge of the material world, and examine the logical nature and conditions of the process by which we reach that view of it which is now taken for granted by common-sense and the sciences. In this way, we may hope to gain some answer to the questions what matter ultimately is, and how it is ultimately related to mind within the unity of the universe.' Through knowledge to its constituents: that is Stout's psychological method—'a plain historical account', as Locke put it. Through knowledge to its logical conditions: that is Stout's method in philosophy.

Stout quickly established his reputation as a philosopher and a psychologist; so that when, in 1891, Croom Robertson relinquished the editorship of *Mind*, Stout was asked, and consented, to succeed him. The appointment was a particularly appropriate one. *Mind* had been founded by Alexander Bain, and, as its name suggests, his special concern was to provide a medium for the publication of contributions to psychology. 'Nothing less, in fact,' Robertson had made it clear in the first number, 'is aimed at in the publication of *Mind* than to procure a decision of the question as to the scientific standing of psychology.' Stout could appreciate and give expression to this intention: at the same time, as circumstances converted *Mind* into a purely philosophical journal, he could move with it into its new sphere.

Robertson's editorial farewell was not at all optimistic about *Mind's* future prospects; Stout was to find that a successful editor must be something of a diplomat. Sensitive authors, like Münsterberg, had to be soothed,

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