

I. MAJOR THEMES:

E. Return to Common Sense:

1. Berkeley sees science as challenging not only the Christian faith, but common sense as well. 2. Berkeley contends that there is no difference between how things appear to be and how things actually are. Why? Knowledge comes from our direct contact with reality.
3. Berkeley desires people of speculation to return to the real world & engage in the study & practice of Christian virtue. 4. At best, Berkeley sees the endless "philosophizing" as useless for betterment of humanity.
5. At worst, the endless philosophizing has bad effects: they lead the vulgar to disrespect me of learning, disregard noble truths, & promote morally harmful views about the world (e.g., there is no eternal soul).

F. Clarify what Scientific Language Was All About:

1. He did not want to destroy science but wanted to clarify what the language was all about. For example, terms like force, gravity, causality, refer to nothing more than clusters of ideas which our minds derive from sensation. We experience that heat melts wax, but we all know from this experience is that what we call melting wax is always accompanied by what we call heat. We have know knowledge of any single things for which the word "cause" stands. Indeed, the only knowledge we have is of particular experiences. 2. But even though we do not have firsthand knowledge of the causes of all things, we do know the order of things. We experience order., that A is followed by B, even though we have no experience of why this occurs. So, science can give us a description of physical behavior, and many mechanical principles can be accurately formulated from our observations that are useful for purposes of prediction. 3. Thus, Berkeley would leave science intact, but he would clarify its language so that nobody would think that science was giving us more knowledge than we can derive from the sensible world. 4. This sensible world shows us neither substance nor causality.

II. Berkeley & Locke On Perception:

A. Locke's view:

1. There are objects which exist independently of all our minds; 2. These objects, in the proper circumstances, cause ideas in human cognizers. These ideas, which are the direct objects of awareness, are of 2 important kinds: a. primary qualities which resemble properties of objects (e.g., weight, size); b. secondary qualities don't resemble properties of objects. Rather, secondary qualities, though real properties of objects, are powers which are had by objects by virtue of their primary qualities. 3. Thus, there are 4 important claims made by Locke: (a) We are directly aware of ideas; (b) There are independently existing substances; (c) at least some of our ideas resemble properties of objects; (d) & these objects or substances cause our ideas.

B. Berkeley's view:

1. The ideas of which we are immediately aware are caused by God's volitions. God plays something like the role of Locke's material objects. Whether Berkeley conceives there to be a relation of resemblance between God's ideas & ours is not clear.

C. The Veil of Perception:

Berkeley presses this perception issue with Locke: All we have access to our ideas; we never have direct access to objects. Since this is so, how can we go on to make claims about the things themselves when we never have access to those things? If you argue that there are things which exist independently of all minds then you make skepticism about our knowledge of that independently existing world unavoidable.

D. If Material Objects existed, we could never know this!

1. In Section 18 of the *Principles*, he states that if we had knowledge, it would have to be on the basis of the senses or on the basis of reason. 2. But we have no evidences from the senses that we can establish that something exists outside of all minds-since whatever is perceived is perceived by minds. 3. Reason, that is, demonstrative argument, can't est. the existence of material objects since even the advocates of material substances agree that our experiences might be just as they are now and yet there might be no material objects. 4. Thus, Berkeley claims that his idealism can explain all the phenomena that the materialist seeks to explain. 5. Since there is no good reason to hold that material objects exist, we should prefer Berkeley's idealism as the simpler, more elegant explanation.

III. Causation: Only Spirits Can Be Causes:

A. Berkeley's Objection:

Berkeley objects to the claim that material substances can cause ideas in minds. Not only does he object in view of veil of perception, but he contends his view has greater explanatory power in accounting for an idea. For em. idea of "redness." On Locke's view, particles strike my eyes & causes particles in my brain to move about & so on, but I have no explanation for the idea of "redness." Thus, Berkeley points to the fact that realism can't claim to be superior to immaterialism.

B. Berkeley's View:

1. A positive view of causation. 2. Only spirits can be causes. 3. Thus, neither material substances nor ideas can be causes. 4. It seems he argues that only the volitions of spirits-God & finite spirits posses the kind of activity, power, or efficacy, which is properly termed "cause. 5. Ideas and material substances (if they existed) are wholly passive; they are inert; there is nothing of activity or power in them. 6. Why does he think volitions of spirit can be causes? Berkeley is impressed by the nature of volitional activity. What is it like to move your arm? One wills this: "I will move my arm so." & then, the arm moves. There is a connection of one's will, we might say, "looks forward to" or "foreshadows" the event that it causes. Thus, there is an intelligible connection between the content of one's will & the event that one wills, the power, or activity, that is missing in ideas.

IV. Berkeley's Views On Spirit:

A. There are no material substances:

B. There are spiritual substances: There are minds & ideas (remember ideas are passive, essentially inert):

C. Spirit is fundamentally & essentially, activity or will.

D. How can we know if spiritual substances exist if material substances are unknowable? (1) In Third Dialogue he states that our knowledge of our mind is immediate & direct (Cartesian); (2) By reflection: He is immediately aware of the active principle that he has ideas; (3) Thus, I'm immediately aware of my mind, in addition to my ideas. This is how we come to talk meaningfully about spirits. (4) However, he acknowledges that what we can say about material substance, namely, that we have no understanding of that term, can be applied to "spiritual substance"... so we have a contradiction or incoherence. So, Berkeley states that that though we have no idea of spiritual substance, we have a notion of such experience. So, in this special case, words can have meaning without being linked to an idea. It is a matter of obscurity.

E. How we knowledge of other minds is an argument from analogy. I see others behave in certain ways, ways in which I behave, & so I can rightly conclude on the basis of analogical reasoning that they, too, are spiritual substances.

V. God's Existence:

A. 1st Argument: God is needed to explain our ordinary experience. 1. There are 4 possible causes of sense experience:

- (a) material substance; (b) ideas; (c) me; (d) God. 2. **Material substance is a contradiction, (1) for the only substance that exists are spirits & ideas, 3. Thus, material substances can't cause our succession of ideas of sense experience; 4. Ideas are inert, therefore, (a) ideas can't cause our succession of ideas of sense experience; 5. I know that I am not causing the succession of sense experience; 6. Thus, God is the cause of the succession of ideas of sense experience.**

B. 2nd Argument: God's perceiving explains the continued existence of things that we are not perceiving. (a) Someone must perceive things for them to exist; (b) For the tree to exist in the quad, someone eels must be perceiving yet when I'm not perceiving it; (c) This someone is God.

VI. Free Will:

- A. Two great principles of morality: God & Free will.**
B. Spontaneous free will is a necessary condition for moral behavior.
C. God's foreknowledge doesn't prevent free will; God's omnipotence allows Him to create a free agent, while God's omniscience permits him to know the future, all without contradiction
D. Determination is false.
E. We know our own wills directly.
F. We know the will of god & others by analogy that like effects have like causes, & therefore The minds of others are like our own.

4 Criticisms against Berkeley's account of reality: (1) Problem of Intermittently Observed Objects: Q. If things only exist when they are perceived, then do they pop out of existence when one is perceiving them? A. God is always observing them. Therefore, there is no problem with them spiting into and out of existence (Limerick); (2) Problem of Wholly-Unobserved Objects: Q. If all ideas exist in God's mind from eternity, what about objects that existed before there were finite observers? A. Creation is a matter of God intended that certain ideas should become perceptible to finite creatures; (3) Problem of the Surface: S. There is no reason to have complicated insides to material objects if they only exist in our mind. A. Studying the insides helps us to understand and better predict the course of experience (this is why Berkeley sometimes refers to the order of nature as "the language of God"; (4) Problem of Distinguishing Between Appearance & Reality: P. Oars appear bent when they are in the water; but such perceptual illusions are not our imagination S. The oar is bet is part of the collection of ideas about the oar (this is simply the God intends our perceptual experience to be. Regarding Divine Language: The visible world is a series of signs that constitute a divine language through which God speaks to us. These visible ideas communicate tangible ideas. The divine language specifically concerns the fact that visible ideas communicate or suggest tangible ideas. For Berkeley, this relation of signification is so detailed, elaborate, complex, and uniform, that it seems like a genuine language (of the type that has a grammar, etc. for example, we associate dizziness with fuzziness). One purpose of Divine Language is that God uses it to give us direction in our actions: "Immediate Perception" = perception with no element of inference; Mediate perception = perceptions with an element of inference. We immediately perceive human beings: their bodies are a visual badge from which we infer their existence.