

natives of Being not have been assumed as two, viz ; either *first*, that which admits of being known, or *secondly*, that which is unknowable, in other words, the contradictory? (The former of these alternatives would comprehend the two first of our author). Then, when Absolute Existence was proved to be not the contradictory, it would at once follow that it must be the synthesis of subject and object ; for (by the Epistemology) nothing except a synthesis of subject and object is capable of being known.

The whole may be thus summed up. The Theory of knowing (that what is known in the synthesis of subject and object) is unproved. The condition on which alone it could be proved, even if true, (viz, that knowledge be defined) is not fulfilled. A definition of knowledge is no doubt supposed to be involved in the proposition, that along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must know itself. But, on the one hand this is not a definition of knowledge, but a statement regarding what is known ; and on the other hand it is impossible to form any idea of what is meant by an *object known*, till an exposition of knowledge itself has been rendered. There is no reason to think that a definition of knowledge, in the most unrestricted sense, admits of being given. Even were it possible to designate all the cognitions of finite minds by one notion, the assumption that the knowledge of the uncreated infinite God has any thing in common with that of his creatures, would be unwarrantable. The fundamental error of the Epistemology, that there are necessary laws by which all intelligence is governed, extends itself to the Ontology, where it is affirmed that what exists is not the contradictory. This, though presented, not as a definition, but as the result of reasoning, is in reality our author's definition of existence. That he does not demonstrate it, is evident from the consideration that no definition of existence, besides what the proposition itself affords, is furnished as the starting point of a demonstration. Absolute Existence, then, is defined as the Non-Contradictory. In other words it is what can be conceived *per se*. But unless some common characteristics of all thinking, whether divine or human, can be specified, the word *conception* must either be taken otherwise than as descriptive of our thinking specially—in which case we can attach no idea to it, and the definition of existence is meaningless ; or it must be used of our thinking specially—in which case the definition (implying as it does, that nothing exists except what we are contingently capable of conceiving) is a palpable begging of the great question at issue.

As Professor Ferrier in more than one passage illustrates his