

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

IDENTITY AND IMPLICATION

IT IS claimed for the dictum, identity implies difference, that it states the sole view of identity on which implication is possible. Other than the truth that all is relevant to all, there is but the absurdity that whatever may be distinguished is what it is absolutely, and hence with no necessary relations beyond itself. For, it is argued, on the assumption that the moments of experience are self-identical, every single moment of the real is itself inherently, and independently of all else. Yet, were this true, the Absolute would be a mere "dissolute"; an infinite plurality of intrinsically individuated moments, each one isolated in its own integrity.

On any such ontological atomism as this, it is urged, inference and implication would not be possible. For were reality composed of the atoms of being into which it would thus be pulverized, knowledge could be no developing process of thought, but only a discrete, static intuition of the actual moment. Such utter fatuity might be enough for a resolute solipsist; certainly it could not satisfy a mind. And even though it were admitted that a Cartesian view of inference is tenable, there remains the plain fact that the notion of identity as absolute is a view of identity on which implication is not possible. For if every moment of experience is intrinsically individuated and self-identical, all moments of the real are then absolute, each one in itself, and separate, every one from the other. Now as thus self-sufficient because self-identical, no moment can imply anything beyond itself. Hence the being of no moment implies the being of any other. It is thus plain that, in the succession of intuitions sustained by memory, which, on this pluralist view, inference is, no necessary connections between the moments successively intuited are to be disclosed. The move-