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COSMIC PROBLEMS
AN ESSAY ON SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY



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COSMIC PROBLEMS

AN ESSAY ON SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

BY

J. S. MACKENZIE

LITT.D. CAMB., HON. LL.D. GLAS.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CARDIFF; FORMERLY SHAW
PHILOSOPHICAL FELLOW AND FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;
AUTHOR OF "FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF LIFE," ETC.

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PREFACE

THIS little book is to be regarded, primarily, as a sequel to my *Outlines of Metaphysics*. In the third edition of that book (published in 1929) I gave some indication of the ways in which speculative philosophy has been affected by the recent advances in the physical sciences. I referred also to the emphasis that has recently been laid by Dr. Schiller and Mr. Douglas Fawcett on the element of Chance or Contingency in the structure of the spatio-temporal Universe. In the present book I have dealt somewhat more fully with these subjects. I have also taken account of the bearings of psychical research on some of the more speculative problems.

Some of the questions that are discussed in this book were more fully considered in my *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*; but that book was written before some of the latest scientific theories had been definitely formulated and generally accepted; and I had, in consequence, to refer to them rather slightly and with some hesitation. It is now possible to make more confident statements about them; though, of course, it would be rash to assume that there is any finality in the conclusions that have so far been reached.

I may add that, notwithstanding all the advances that have recently been made in scientific and philosophic thought, I am still able to regard myself

as a humble follower of the line of idealistic speculation in which I consider my earliest teacher, Edward Caird, to have been, on the whole, the safest guide.

The important book on *The Problem of Time*, by Professor J. A. Gunn, reached me too late to be referred to in the text; but it does not seem to me that his conclusions would call for any modification of my views on that subject.

I have to acknowledge, with much gratitude, very valuable assistance that I have received from Dr. J. E. Turner, in the correction of the proofs and the preparation of the Index.

J. S. MACKENZIE.

LONDON,

October, 1930.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	- - - - -	PAGE V
---------	-----------	-----------

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT OUTLOOK IN SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

1. THE GENERAL AIM OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY	- -	1
2. THE CONCEPTION OF A COSMOS	- - - -	3
3. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PLATO: THE REALITY OF UNIVERSALS AND THE IDEA OF GOOD	- - - - -	5
4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF HEGEL: THE LOGICAL SYSTEM	-	7
5. MODERN THOUGHT: EVOLUTION AND THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM	- - - - -	8
6. CHIEF DIFFICULTIES: FINITUDE AND CONTINGENCY	- -	9

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL THEORY OF VALUE.

1. VALUE AND GOOD	- - - - -	10
2. TYPES OF VALUATION	- - - - -	11
3. THE OBJECTIVITY OF VALUE	- - - - -	15
4. THE GOOD OF EVIL	- - - - -	16
5. ULTIMATE VALUES	- - - - -	16
6. TRANSITION TO THE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE	- - - - -	17

CHAPTER III

THE IDEAS OF THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD.

1. THE SELF-SUBSISTENT LIFE	- - - - -	20
2. THE REALITY OF UNIVERSALS	- - - - -	21
3. THE UNIVERSALITY OF MIND	- - - - -	24
4. THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSAL MIND	- - - - -	25

	PAGE
5. THE CREATIVE ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND	27
6. DEGREES OF TRUTH AND REALITY - - -	30
7. REALISM AND IDEALISM - - - - -	31
8. GENERAL CONCLUSION - - - - -	34

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF CREATION.

1. TRANSITION TO THE EXISTENT UNIVERSE - -	36
2. PROOFS OF THE BEING OF A CREATIVE PRINCIPLE - -	36
3. THE CONTINGENCY OF THE PARTICULAR - -	43
4. CREATIVE IMAGINATION - - - - -	45
5. PLAN AND PROCESS - - - - -	46
6. THE VALUE OF CREATION - - - - -	47
7. DIFFERENT MODES OF CREATION - - - - -	49

CHAPTER V

THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM.

1. EXISTENCE AS SPATIO-TEMPORAL - - - - -	51
2. THE MEANING OF ENERGY - - - - -	52
3. SOME RECENT THEORIES - - - - -	53
4. THE PLACE OF OUR EARTH - - - - -	57
5. THE FINITUDE OF THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM - -	59

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPTION OF EVOLUTION.

1. THE GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EVOLUTION - -	60
2. CREATIVE EVOLUTION - - - - -	63
3. THE IDEA OF EMERGENCE - - - - -	65
4. THE PLACE OF IMAGINATION - - - - -	67

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIVIDUALITY - - - -	69
2. THE PLACE OF CONTINGENCY IN HUMAN LIFE - -	70
3. THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM - - -	71
4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF FREEDOM - -	72

CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
5. THE POSSIBILITY OF PREDICTION - - - - -	74
6. THE REALITY OF THE TEMPORAL PROCESS - - - - -	75
7. GENERAL CONCLUSION: THE CULTIVATION OF FREEDOM - - - - -	77

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY.

1. THE GENERAL IDEA OF SURVIVAL - - - - -	78
2. THE CONCEPTION OF ETERNITY - - - - -	80
3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONALITY - - - - -	81
4. MIND AND BODY - - - - -	85
5. THE CONCEPTION OF A SUBTLE BODY - - - - -	87
6. THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION - - - - -	88
7. PSYCHICAL RESEARCH - - - - -	90
8. MODERN SPIRITUALISM - - - - -	94
9. GENERAL CONCLUSION - - - - -	97

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCEPTION OF DEITY.

1. SUMMARY OF RESULTS - - - - -	98
2. ALPHA AND OMEGA - - - - -	98
3. UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR - - - - -	100
4. THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF INFINITY - - - - -	101
5. THE REALISATION OF DEITY - - - - -	103
6. THE IDEA OF PERPETUAL RECURRENCE - - - - -	104
7. CHIEF DIFFICULTIES - - - - -	105
8. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS - - - - -	107



CHAPTER X

THE PRESENT OUTLOOK IN RELIGION.

1. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION - - - - -	108
2. THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION - - - - -	109
3. THE PLACE OF OUR EARTH - - - - -	112
4. THE PRACTICAL ASPECT OF RELIGION - - - - -	115
5. THE FREE MAN'S WORSHIP - - - - -	117
6. GENERAL CONCLUSION - - - - -	119
INDEX - - - - -	121

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT OUTLOOK IN SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

I. THE GENERAL AIM OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

SPECULATIVE philosophy, like most other human enterprises, has had a long history. It grew out of the attempt to understand the significance of human life as a whole. It is evident, however, that we cannot understand it as a whole without much preliminary study, 'and especially without some appreciation of the particular conditions under which it is apprehended by us. In early times this meant for most people, as it still does for very many, the particular region of the earth's surface in which they happen to have been born, together with some of the more obvious relations of that region to others more or less closely adjacent and some conjectures with regard to occurrences of a more cosmic character, such as the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies, the succession of the seasons, storms and earthquakes, birth and death, and the various vicissitudes of human life itself. There was a more vigorous development of thought about these things in ancient Greece than in any other country, partly, it would seem, because it contained a happy admixture of races, partly because it was a comparatively small country, separated from others by natural physical barriers, and partly by other less obvious circum-

stances. Speculative thought about human life and about the Universe as a whole has also been carried on from very early times in other countries, most notably in the great continent of India, where the general conditions were very different from those of ancient Greece. In general, it is true to say that the early Indian outlook on the World was in some respects larger and perhaps deeper, but less clear and convincing than that of the early Greek thinkers. Modern philosophy owes much to both these sources ; and it has also been profoundly influenced by conceptions of a more definitely religious kind, largely derived from Judæa.¹ But, in recent times, all these influences have been, to a large extent, subordinated to or even superseded by the detailed researches that have been carried out by specialists in mathematics and in the various concrete departments of science. It is, on the whole, true to say that these detailed investigations have supplied us with a body of knowledge with reference both to human life and to the larger aspects of the Universe that makes possible a more comprehensive and carefully reasoned outlook than was attainable in any previous generation. And it is the fundamental faith of all philosophical speculation that it must be possible to give an intelligible interpretation of the whole of that vast system. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the efforts of earlier thinkers are wholly negligible in attempting to gain such a comprehensive outlook. The vastness of

¹ Much of the best modern philosophy is due to Jewish writers. Spinoza is the most conspicuous instance, but it would be easy to mention others more recent.

the material that is now at our disposal makes it, in some respects, less easy to get a firm apprehension of some fundamental ideas than it was when the total amount of detailed knowledge was more limited. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should still be found worth while to refer to the work of some of the earlier thinkers. In particular, it is very evident that something may still be learned from the speculations of Plato, who is pretty generally recognised as having been the greatest genius who ever devoted himself to the investigation of the larger problems of human life and of the Universe within which that life is carried on. "Out of Plato," as Emerson said, "come all things that are still debated among men of thought." It is true, of course, that much is now known about human life that was not known to Plato; and that a still greater amount is now known about the Universe as a whole than could have been accessible to anyone in the generation in which he lived. But the very multiplicity of modern knowledge is sometimes embarrassing. It becomes difficult sometimes, according to the old phrase, to "see the wood for the trees."

2. THE CONCEPTION OF A COSMOS.

The presupposition of all efforts in philosophical construction lies in the general postulate that human life and the Universe within which it is carried on are orderly and intelligible wholes. It has not always seemed possible to admit this; and even now there are some who are inclined to believe that there is an element of Chance or Contingency both in human life

and in the general structure of the Universe. Indeed, this was pretty definitely admitted even by Plato; and we shall have to consider, at a later stage, whether there is any sense in which it can be reasonably maintained; and, if so, how far it is fatal to a philosophical interpretation. The admission that some things are incomprehensible need not be wholly fatal to our attempt if we can, to some extent, "comprehend their incomprehensibility." Neither science nor philosophy nor any combination of both can be expected to lead us to omniscience. It must suffice if we can gain a point of view from which the main aspects of our lives, and of the system within which they are carried on, can be seen to have an intelligible meaning and to be orderly and systematic so far as our knowledge goes. It is evident that we are in a better position to attempt this than any one was in previous generations; and yet it can hardly be denied that there have been many thinkers and writers, even in remote ages, who have accomplished a good deal in this direction; and it is certainly not unreasonable or presumptuous to hope that, taking account of what they have done, we may be able to carry their work, in some respects, a little farther.

The general presupposition of ultimate intelligibility has been well urged by Professor W. M. Urban in his recently published book on *The Intelligible World*.¹ He contends, in that very interesting work, that the general presupposition of ultimate intelligibility may be said to have lain at the basis of what may be called the "great tradition"

¹ In the "Library of Philosophy" (Allen and Unwin).

in philosophical speculation. It had its first great exponent—certainly still, in many respects, the greatest—in Plato, and his work was carried on by his follower Aristotle. In modern times it had perhaps its most notable representatives in Berkeley, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel; and their ideas have been developed and clarified by many others. It may be somewhat misleading to characterise this process as a “tradition”; since most of those who can be regarded as its representatives have pursued independent methods and have not entirely agreed with one another in their conclusions. But they have agreed in their general aims and, to some extent, in their most fundamental convictions. It may suffice, for our present purpose, to indicate the general nature of the contributions of the first and the last of those who have been named, Plato and Hegel; as I believe (like Professor Urban) that their contributions have been, on the whole, the most important.

3. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PLATO: THE REALITY OF UNIVERSALS AND THE IDEA OF GOOD.

The great significance of the work of Plato lay in his emphasis on the reality of Universals and, in particular, on the reality of the one great Universal—the Idea of Good—as the ultimate explanatory principle in the interpretation of our World. It will be necessary for us to consider shortly the exact sense in which Universals can be said to be real. It is enough, for the present, to state that the emphasis on their reality has been brought into

fresh prominence in recent years—notably by Professor G. E. Moore, who, in most other respects, can hardly be said to have much in common with Plato. Dr. Moore has also laid much stress on the idea of Good, which he holds (following Sidgwick) to be undefinable.¹ It was defined by Plato as “that at which all things aim”; and Aristotle declared² that this is a good definition. Probably it ought rather to be put in the form, that it is that at which *all conscious beings* aim. But even this can hardly be said to be a definition in any generally accepted sense. I think it is right to state that, being a *summum genus*, Good cannot be defined. But we know what we mean by it. It is that which we desire to have. The late Professor L. T. Hobhouse, among others, brought this out in a convincing way.³ Now, Plato’s contention was essentially that it may be supposed that it is that which is aimed at by the Universe as a whole. To say this is practically to say that the Universe exists with a view to the realisation of Good; and this seems to imply that it has been brought into existence for that purpose. To say this is to lay the foundations for a rational Theology. And it is true enough to say that he thus established a “great tradition.” But it might be better to say that reflection on Plato’s argument has helped to convince many people that it is hardly possible to make the general structure of the Universe intelligible except by the supposition that its

¹ See the careful statement about this in his *Principia Ethica*, p. 6 *seq.*

² At the beginning of his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

³ See especially his book on *The Rational Good*.

changing states are somehow determined by a more or less conscious pursuit of what is best. How this pursuit may be supposed to take place, we shall have occasion to inquire at a later stage. But we may at least say that Plato initiated the inquiry, and threw some light on the general nature of the answer that has to be given. It may even be doubted whether any subsequent writer has made it much clearer.¹ At any rate, it is still a subject round which a good deal of discussion has its centre.

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF HEGEL: THE LOGICAL SYSTEM.

Plato and his great successor, Aristotle, devoted a good deal of attention to logical concepts and logical methods; but Hegel, in comparatively recent times, contributed more than anyone else to their systematic formulation. Some defects have been discovered in his system;² but they are, on the whole, relatively unimportant. The general progress, from the simple conception of Being to the Absolute Idea, is generally admitted, by those who have carefully considered it, to be clear and convincing. The difficulty in his system lies mainly in the transition from purely logical concepts to the concrete existence

¹ Professor Whitehead has recently noted (*Science and the Modern World*, pp. 36-7) that the Platonic philosophy is more in harmony with the latest results of modern science than that of Aristotle. It is probably to be regretted that the Catholic Church took Aristotle, rather than Plato, as its guide in philosophy.

² Reference may be made, in particular, to McTaggart's *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* and to his more elaborate *Commentary on Hegel's Logic*.

of Nature and Spirit, in which an element of contingency has, on his own confession, to be recognised. This difficulty we shall have to consider at a later stage. So far as I can see, it was not quite adequately dealt with by Hegel.

5. MODERN THOUGHT: EVOLUTION AND THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM.

It can hardly be said that much of a distinctively novel kind has been added by purely philosophical writers in more modern times to the general conceptions of Plato and Aristotle, on the one hand, and Hegel and his followers, on the other. The chief work of the century succeeding the death of Hegel has lain, on the one hand, in the interpretation and criticism of his work, and, on the other hand, in the development of the special sciences, natural and human, and in their application to practical problems. The theoretical work of the nineteenth century was chiefly remarkable for the perfecting of the mechanical theory of the material world and for the development of the biological doctrine of Evolution. The latter was partly anticipated in the Hegelian theory of Nature and Spirit; but it was given a more definite form by the more empirical investigations of Lamarck and Darwin, supplemented by the more speculative interpretations of Herbert Spencer, Bergson and others. The present century is, so far, chiefly notable for the transformation that has been brought about in the general view of the material Universe by the investigations of Einstein and his followers. These have primarily affected our outlook

on the larger aspects of the Universe; but they have been supplemented by the analysis of the atom—mainly through the researches of Sir E. Rutherford—and by some modifications in the conception of the evolutionary process. On the philosophical interpretation of all these aspects of scientific research, the great work of Professor Alexander¹ has been the most notable, at least in our own country. Recent years have also been remarkable for an increasing interest in what is generally known as psychical research; but that is a more controversial study, the results of which and the precise interpretation of them are still very uncertain. We shall have occasion, however, to refer to them at a later stage.²

6. CHIEF DIFFICULTIES: FINITUDE AND CONTINGENCY.

The philosophical problems that have been most conspicuously raised by the recent developments of science would seem to be those that centre in the general conception of the Universe as a finite enclosed system, and one in which everything appears to be predetermined; and, on the other hand, one in which there seems to be a good deal that is contingent or inexplicable. How far there is any real difficulty in the problems that are thus raised, remains to be seen. They are at least very definite problems; and it is usually found that, when problems have been clearly stated, we are not very far from their solution.

¹ *Space, Time and Deity* (Macmillan). The modifications that were made in the second edition of that book should be specially noted.

² In Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL THEORY OF VALUE

I. VALUE AND GOOD.

WHETHER the view of Plato with regard to the supreme importance of the Good as the fundamental principle in the interpretation of the Cosmos is to be definitely accepted as sound or not, there can at least be no doubt that the consideration of the meaning of Good is of very great use in the study both of human life and of the Universe as a whole. The discussion of the place of the idea of Good in the interpretation of life and reality has, however, in more modern times, been given a wider scope by regarding it as a part of the general treatment of Value. For a considerable time, this wider conception was thought to have its chief significance in its more purely economic aspects; but it has gradually become apparent that it has much wider applications. Happily it is now possible for English readers to study these applications in the recently published book by Professor Laird on *The Idea of Value*. Ruskin had already done something to help us to see the wider bearings of the subject; and the German economists (such as Wagner and Schmoller) and the Austrian psychologists (especially Meinong and Ehrenfels), together with some more theological writers (such as A. Ritschl and E. Troeltsch), as well as several more purely philosophical writers in our

own and other countries (notably Professors Sorley, W. M. Urban and R. B. Perry),¹ had made clear the difficulties that are involved in the subject and had helped considerably to remove them. But Mr. Laird is the first British writer who has dealt with the whole subject in a comprehensive way; and, in the short statement that I have to make about the general significance of the subject here, I believe I cannot do better than take him as my guide.

2. TYPES OF VALUATION.

Setting aside economic value as being essentially subsidiary and instrumental—*bonum utile*, as he calls it—he begins with that unreflective mode of valuation which he characterises as Natural Election—*i.e.*, the choice of objects without any clearly apprehended grounds for their preference. This is quite common in the choice of foods and drinks and even in the formation of friendships. In human life it is perhaps most conspicuously seen in what Goethe characterised as “ Elective Affinities ” (*Wahlverwandschaften*).² When two people are said to be “ in love,” or even when they only form a close friendship with one another, it might often not be easy for them to say, with much definiteness, what are the grounds for their attachment. It may have been little more than a somewhat casual juxtaposition.

¹ Mr. Perry's work is the most extensive, but I think its point of view is rather one-sided. It has to be supplemented by the work of Sorley, Urban and others.

² Goethe's novel with this title is, of course, largely concerned with the problem of misfits.

But usually there are some common interests or, it may be, some complementary differences that tend to create an affinity. The grounds might become apparent on reflection; but sometimes the persons concerned in the relationship might be almost as much at sea as the child referred to by Wordsworth who could only indicate his preference for a particular place by saying "At Kilve there was no weathercock; and that's the reason why."

It is a comparatively easy transition from this unreflective mode of Valuation to what Mr. Laird characterises as *bonum jucundum*, in which desire is consciously directed to objects that are definitely recognised as possessing qualities that can be *appreciated* and that yield pleasure in contemplation. Love, that is not merely an instinctive liking, is directed towards such objects. The disciple (the Apostle John) whom Jesus was said to have specially loved, was, we may assume, not the object of a blind affection, but was appreciated for certain fine qualities that were possessed by him. The founder of Buddhism also (Gautama) is said to have had one disciple (Ananda) whom he specially loved. Things, as well as persons, may be appreciated in a similar, though generally a less emphatic way—houses, landscapes, mountains, seas, and many other objects. The late Dr. McTaggart, who laid special emphasis on Love as the supreme Value, appears to have interpreted it almost—if not quite—exclusively in the sense of appreciation directed towards individual persons. But there is another mode of Love that is directed to things, and especially to persons, not for their beauty or charm or any other

special excellence, but rather for their need of help. This is the type of Love to which the term Benevolence is rightly applied; and it is specially emphasised by many moralists and by many religious teachers—very strongly in Buddhism, and even more strongly in Christianity. The Good Samaritan can hardly be supposed to have had any special appreciation of the qualities of the distressed traveller. Perhaps Jesus himself may have appreciated some hidden charms in the “sinners” with whom he associated himself; but his Love must have been mainly Benevolence. Love of this kind is classed by Mr. Laird as *bonum honestum*, along with other closely related moral excellences.

It is not, of course, by a mere accident that these two attitudes of mind are called by the same name. The one passes very readily into the other in the complex emotional experience that is called Love. Its complexity was humorously illustrated by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*: “It is to be all made of sighs and tears; it is to be all made of faith and service; it is to be all made of fantasy, all made of passion, and all made of wishes; all adoration, duty, and observance, all humbleness, all patience, and impatience, all purity, all trial, all observance.” Of course, in its less emotional forms, it has not so many complications and inconsistencies; but the two elements of Appreciation and Benevolence are generally present in it in varying degrees; and the poets express it in a variety of forms. I think it is true, for instance, to say that in the poetry of Keats Appreciation is predominant, while in that of Shelley and of Browning Benevolence is more conspicuous.

In some others the two aspects are more evenly balanced—very notably, of course, in the Plays and Sonnets of Shakespeare.

All these modes of valuation relate to particular persons or things in the world of our experience. When, however, Plato called the principle underlying the existence of the Universe as a whole "the Good," it is in a sense somewhat different from any of the foregoing that we must understand the term. It is not any particular quality to which we can point, but is rather found in the recognition of a complex whole as harmonious and beautiful throughout. This might be called *bonum intelligibile*. It is not apprehended by sensation or perception or even by imagination or formal reasoning; but rather by what may be described as a metaphysical faith. The dialectic method, as worked out in Hegel's *Logic*, is probably the best way of arriving at it. We find the conception, however, to some extent, as Mr. Laird has urged, in the philosophy of Spinoza; and Mr. Alexander expresses it by the term "Deity"—understood, not as a Person, but as a Quality.¹ The apprehension of the beauty of a great poem may be taken as an approximation to the same. Mr. Laird might perhaps regard that rather as *bonum jucundum*; but, in the case of a sublime tragedy (such as *King Lear* or *Macbeth*), *jucundum*

¹ The significance of this is discussed at a later stage (Chapter IX.) It may be noted that the use of the term "deity" to denote a quality is not altogether a novelty. It is found in the old lines—

"Winds blow and waters roll
Health to the brave and power and deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing."

hardly seems the right word for it. Yet it is "somehow good." It reveals the working out of inevitable laws involved in the structure of the Universe. When it is said that "our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought," the sweetness of them seems to depend on the recognition of their truth to the eternal nature of things.

3. THE OBJECTIVITY OF VALUE.

Some modes of valuation may be held to be purely subjective, though very few are wholly so. There is nearly always some objective ground for the value that we attach to any particular thing or complex situation; and this is emphatically the case with "the Good," as conceived by Plato. It is not merely something that we *think* good. Even what is intrinsically bad may, no doubt, be valued—as in the declaration of Milton's Satan, "Evil, be thou my good." The paradox in such a saying might, of course, be somewhat mollified by substituting what, I suppose, would be its equivalent, "Malevolence, be thou my source of Joy." This would help us to see that the paradox is due to different senses of Value. But the important consideration here is that the sources of valuation are always, in some degree, objective. They are not purely subjective, at least in the sense in which subjective implies arbitrary choice. There are always some real grounds for our preferences, though the grounds may often be obscure or inadequate.

4. THE GOOD OF EVIL.

If, however, we are to take the idea of Good as an interpretative principle for the Universe in general, it is clear that we must recognise that what is good on the whole may include—and usually does include—much that, taken separately, would have to be characterised as evil. If the Universe is really determined, as Plato thought, by the idea of Good, it must somehow be true that pain, and even moral evil, have a part to play in what is ultimately to be regarded as supremely good. This is a subject to which we shall have occasion to return later. In the meantime, it may suffice to state that it is a subject that has been much discussed by various writers, especially in courses of Gifford Lectures. I may refer more particularly to the books by Sir Henry Jones on *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher* and *A Faith that Enquires*. From a somewhat different point of view, Professor Sorley's book on *Moral Values and the Idea of God* may also be referred to with advantage.

5. ULTIMATE VALUES.

When an attempt is made to state what are to be regarded as the great values to which all others are subordinate, there is a pretty general agreement that Beauty, Moral Effort and Reality have to be recognised as the three aspects of Ultimate Value that may be regarded as intrinsic and not merely instrumental. These correspond to what are generally recognised as the three distinguishable aspects in

our conscious life—Feeling, Acting and Knowing. Beauty is the most obvious of the three. Hence the Greeks tended to use the expression τὸ καλόν both for Beauty and for Good in the most general sense. In English, on the other hand, we use the term “Good” both for what has Value in the general sense and also for the moral effort to realise what has intrinsic Value. This is slightly confusing; but it serves at least to remind us that moral effort can hardly be regarded merely as a means for the realisation of what is beautiful, but must also be thought of as having an intrinsic beauty of its own. Finally, nothing can be said to have Value if it is wholly unreal. What is unreal can only be regarded as what *might* have Value if it could be realised. This, however, is, to some extent, a verbal question, and need not be pressed at this point.

6. TRANSITION TO THE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE.

The consideration of Value, as applied to the Universe as a Whole, may lead us to at least two distinguishable conceptions. We may be led to conceive the totality of existing things as forming a single Being, to which a certain absolute perfection may be ascribed. One of the best—certainly the most thoroughgoing—of the representatives of this attempt is Spinoza, who thought of the totality of things as consisting of the two great aspects of Mind and Body (or Space), each infinite and perfect in its kind. Professor Alexander, who has been greatly influenced by Spinoza's conception, adopted Space

and Time (in place of Space and Mind); and he has connected this view with the modern conception of the Universe as a spatio-temporal system. He has interpreted this view as involving the idea of a process from God, as the creative aspect of the Universe, leading very gradually towards the realisation of that ultimate perfection which he calls Deity. We shall have occasion to consider this conception at a later point in our treatment.¹

The other type of philosophical construction to which we may be led is one in which a somewhat sharp distinction is drawn between Appearance and Reality. On the one hand, there is the changing world of phenomena; on the other, there is the Absolute Reality in which there is no change. Of course, it is necessary to find some bridge between the two, which may be provided by the conception of Degrees of Truth and Reality.

Both these ways of thinking have been well represented in recent philosophical thought in our own country, especially by Mr. Alexander and F. H. Bradley. Mr. Alexander's view is the one that is most nearly in harmony with the Platonic conception. It may almost be said to be an attempt to reinterpret Plato in connection with the modern doctrine of the spatio-temporal system. Bradley's view, on the other hand, connects more closely with the general theory of Hegel to which reference has already been made; but it is less systematically

¹ See below, Chapter IX. Professor Alexander's views are expounded in his great work on *Space, Time and Deity*. Some important modifications were made in the second edition of that book.

developed than Hegel's. It has, however, the advantage of being brought more closely into relation to some modern scientific conceptions—though not to the most recent of them.

Another recent attempt at a systematic interpretation of the Universe is that of the late Dr. McTaggart,¹ which is also somewhat closely connected with the theory of Hegel. He thought of Reality as being fundamentally a society of persons, bound together by Love (*i.e.*, by mutual appreciation). He regarded the spatio-temporal Universe as being an essentially unreal expression of the relations of these persons to one another.

It appears to me that there are certain elements of truth in all these views; but, in order to disentangle these elements, it is necessary to consider somewhat carefully what is to be understood by the Absolute, and what is the relation of the conception of God to it. This is an extremely difficult problem; but it is quite essential that we should do our best to deal with it.

¹ Especially in his latest book on *The Nature of Existence*. Reference may be made also to his earlier work on *Some Dogmas of Religion*.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEAS OF THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD

I. THE SELF-SUBSISTENT LIFE.

It is impossible to understand the existence of finite and perishable things without postulating a background that is, in some sense, infinite and eternal. How that background can best be conceived, is, of course, a problem of considerable difficulty. It would seem misleading to characterise that background as the Whole of Reality; for some sort of reality, at least, must be conceded to what is finite and perishable. F. H. Bradley sought to meet this difficulty by the conception of "Degrees of Truth and Reality"; but that conception also is not wholly free from difficulty. Plato and Hegel, as I have already indicated, are the writers who appear to have contributed most to the clearing up of the subject; and, in what follows, I am trying to state, as definitely as I can, what appears to me to be the general result of their speculations. A good deal has, of course, been done in this direction. Edward Caird contributed much to the interpretation both of Plato and of Hegel; and two of his elder disciples—Sir Henry Jones and Professor J. H. Muirhead—have done much to carry on his work.¹ Bradley and

¹ The most important work by Jones is, I think, his critical account of the philosophy of Lotze. Professor Muirhead is most widely known by his very brilliant ethical textbook. But he

Bosanquet helped also, in a more independent way to present the general conception in a form at once cogently reasoned and intelligible to English readers. McTaggart contributed much to the interpretation and criticism of the work of Hegel; and afterwards developed a view of his own, based on the results of that interpretation and criticism. But I believe the whole idealistic position still presents a good deal of difficulty to most students of philosophy. The difficulty turns partly at least on an understanding of the exact sense in which Reality can be ascribed to universal conceptions, and especially to the conception of a Universal Mind, or, in Plato's phrase, the self-subsistent Life (*αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστι ζῶον*).

2. THE REALITY OF UNIVERSALS.

The recognition of the reality of Universals lies at the basis of what is commonly referred to as idealistic philosophy; but it has not always been explicitly recognised by modern idealists; and they have been a good deal helped by some who are commonly referred to as realists—notably by Professor G. E. Moore. The exact distinction between these two tendencies in philosophy may have to be referred to later. In the meantime, what has to be specially emphasised is the distinction between the conceptions of Reality and Existence. In our ordinary way of speaking, when we say that anything

has written also a great deal of expository and critical work, chiefly about Hegel, and, at the time when I write this, he is bringing out an elaborate account of the idealistic movement in modern philosophy, which will certainly be of very great value.

is real, we mean that it is one of the innumerable objects that are apprehended as existing in the world around us. Suns and planets, rocks and trees, men and women, life and death, food and clothing, houses and gardens, success and failure, all such things and events are commonly regarded as very real; and it cannot be denied that they do possess some sort or degree of reality. But they have the kind of reality that is best characterised as *existence*. Truth and Goodness and Beauty are also real; but we cannot point to them in the same way as existent objects. They are characteristics that may be ascribed to existent things or persons, or to certain relations between particular existences. But these relations are also real enough; and they may even be said to have a higher and more abiding reality than the particular things or groups or relations to which they are ascribed. They may not be, in any direct way, apprehended by the senses; yet their significance may be very great. A particular play, such as *King Lear* or *The Tempest* or *Faust*, has a great reality and significance; yet it is doubtful whether any of the persons or events that are set before us in them ever existed. They may be represented on the stage by a number of persons and properties; and the stage, the players and the properties all exist; but the play itself is "such stuff as dreams are made on." Perhaps, as Prospero suggests, the players are that too; but, at any rate, we recognise them as being existent persons. The play itself is essentially a *meaning*, not an existence; yet there is obviously a sense in which it has a vastly greater reality and endurance than the particular persons

and properties that help us to apprehend its significance. "The play's the thing": the actors are relatively shadows.

Numbers have always been regarded as being, on the whole, the best illustrations of what is meant by pure Universals. The number 2, as such, cannot be said to have any existence; yet it is eternally true that $2+2=4$. Some have denied this—notably Dr. F. C. S. Schiller¹—on the ground that if you take two substances and place them along with other two, they may enter into a chemical combination and perhaps yield, not four distinguishable objects, but a single compound thing. This is, of course, true. Two existent things, added to other two existent things, may not yield four existent things distinguishable from one another. But the truth that $2+2=4$ is not affected by this. It has reference to universal concepts. Mathematical truth is concerned entirely with these; and, so long as mathematicians confine themselves strictly to this (which perhaps some are not always careful to do), their conclusions are perfectly valid. The reality of such concepts is, however, a very different kind of reality from that which belongs to existent things. It is best characterised as *validity*. The general principle of the conservation of energy, for instance, appears to be valid. It is true that this is, to a considerable extent, confirmed by the empirical study of existent things and occurrences—as indeed the statement that $2+2=4$ also is; but there are grounds for

¹ He has urged this in several of his writings; but his view appears to arise from a failure to understand the meaning of "meaning," and especially the meaning of Universals.

believing that such general statements are valid far beyond the limits of possible observation. Moral principles also are not based purely on the observation of human conduct and its consequences; though the study of human conduct helps to clarify our moral conceptions. Thus particular existents cannot be regarded as the only kind of reality.

3. THE UNIVERSALITY OF MIND.

Minds (or spirits) occupy a somewhat ambiguous position among existent things. Each person's mind and each animal's mind are particular existences; but they are particulars that have or aspire to a certain universality. In a few individuals this aspect becomes very emphatically prominent. The mind of Plato, for instance, seemed to dwell among universals in a way that few others have done, though at least Spinoza and Hegel might be mentioned as other instances. All the great philosophers, indeed, have been largely concerned with the study of universals. Great religious teachers also—such as the Buddha and the Christ—have had an extraordinarily comprehensive outlook in the special form of moral insight. To this some further reference will be made at a later stage. Some poets also have had a singularly universal outlook. Nobody seems to know exactly who Homer was. It has even been questioned whether there was any one writer or composer of the Homeric poems; but it seems pretty certain that there must have been some one who gave them their final shape. At any rate, they display an astonishingly comprehensive appreciation of

almost every aspect of life. The range of Shakespeare's insight and power of creative presentation of the various phases of human experience is still more astonishing. In his case we know a little about his individual life, but not much that is of great interest, except as showing that, along with his amazing excellences, he seems to have had some of the imperfections of our common humanity. If we may judge from some of his Sonnets, he appears to have been conscious of a certain super-personal element in his nature, which enabled him to identify himself with others. "My friend and I are one" is an idea that occurs more than once. Still more remarkable is the exclamation:

"No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change.
Thy pyramids built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange."

But we all read and appreciate Shakespeare's work; and, in doing so, we share to some extent in the universality of his outlook. Still, after such participation, we may sink back into our "solitary nothingness," and become very particular and limited persons. Yet we are thus enabled to see, if only for moments, that the human mind has, at any rate, a certain potential universality.

4. THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSAL MIND.

The partial universality of which we thus seem to discover glimpses in the human mind, suggests the possibility of a more complete universality; and the conception of this seems to be what is now generally understood by the idea of God. It is

certainly not an easy idea to make clear. It connects closely, as Plato urged, with the idea of Good; and, as we have already noted, it has been contended that that idea is not capable of definition. We understand it, however, sufficiently to know at least that we shall "not be happy till we get it"; and Aristotle, as we have already noticed, seems to have thought that this was a sufficient definition of it. In a similar way, it might be contended that human beings will never be intellectually satisfied till they have an outlook on Reality such as we naturally ascribe to the Divine Intelligence. This would appear to mean an absolutely universal outlook. From this point of view, all the universal conceptions would be apprehended in their true relations to one another; and particular existences would also be assigned to their appropriate places. Such a conception would evidently have at least the sort of reality that belongs to universals. It has an intelligible meaning; and it may help us to interpret the world of particular existences. It would hardly seem right, however, to regard such a universal outlook as being embodied in any existent person, as the mind of Shakespeare was. Perhaps, indeed, it may be thought by some that the conception of such a Universal Mind is little more than a play of our imagination. This will be discussed more fully in the following chapter. There is, however, one aspect of such a Mind that seems to call for particular attention at this point—*viz.*, the creative aspect which we seem bound to ascribe to it. It is an aspect that appears to belong, in some degree, to all minds.

5. THE CREATIVE ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND.

Granting that we are entitled to postulate a Universal Mind in the sense now explained, even if only as an intelligible hypothesis, there is one aspect of that Mind which has a very special interest for us. Such a Mind would know universals; it would appreciate the Good; and it *would seek to create all forms of Good*. This last aspect was emphasised by Plato, perhaps in a rather too pictorial form, in his conception of a Demiurge; and some well-known writers have recently followed Plato's general way of thinking of the creative process, even if they have not quite adopted his particular way of representing it. Mr. Alexander, for instance, at the beginning of his great work on *Space, Time and Deity*, has referred definitely to Plato's way of thinking and has, in a general sense, accepted it. He has not, however, postulated anything of the nature of a Demiurge; and indeed his whole way of thinking is rather foreign to that of Plato, especially as he tends to set aside as a "prepossession" the general idea of Value which, in Plato's treatment, is quite fundamental.

Mr. Douglas Fawcett, on the other hand, has pretty definitely accepted the idea of a Demiurge¹ who, as he puts it, "creates as the lark sings." I cannot pretend to know, at all definitely, how the lark sings. So far as my observation serves, it appears to sing in a definitely predetermined fashion. But probably Mr. Fawcett only means to ascribe

¹ His view is most clearly stated in his book on *Divine Imagining*.

to his Demiurge a certain unreflective spontaneity such as, no doubt, the song of the lark—and Shelley's poetical representation of it—may be held to suggest. It is difficult, however, to believe that any creative Intelligence would proceed in so unreflective a fashion. And, indeed, it is doubtful whether Plato really meant the Demiurge to be thought of as a being distinct from the Universal Mind. Archer-Hind at any rate, in the interesting Introduction to his edition of the *Timæus*,¹ pointed out that Plato's language rather suggests that the Demiurge is only to be understood as the creative aspect of the Universal Mind itself. It seems clear at least that, if such a Mind is to be postulated at all, it must have a creative aspect, as even far inferior minds have. In virtue of this aspect, it might be supposed to give rise to all the particular worlds or systems that are known to us or conjectured by us. Thus it might serve as an explanatory principle in interpreting those worlds. It seems clear that such an explanatory principle is called for. Thus we are at least led from the conception of an Absolute, regarded as a Universal Mind, to the more definite idea of God as a creative Power. Now, particular existences do seem to call for explanation; and here we have an explanatory principle ready to hand. Just as the postulation of a man known as Homer serves as an explanation of the existence of certain poems, so the postulation

¹ Pp. 39-41. His view was, however, vigorously contested by J. Cook Wilson. I am, of course, assuming here that the *Timæus* may be regarded as expressing Plato's own views. This has been called in question by Professor A. E. Taylor; but his view does not appear to be accepted by other scholars.

of a Universal Mind, having demiurgic power, might serve as the explanation of the Universe of existent things that we are gradually learning to know. The difference is that, in the case of the Homeric poems, we suppose the creative intelligence to be, in many respects, limited; whereas, in the case of the cosmic system, we seem bound to regard it as unlimited. But it may be urged that, in the Universe as we know it, as well as in the Homeric poems, there appears to be much that is arbitrary, defective and even accidental. It is not altogether easy to believe that it has been formed entirely for the realisation of the Good. The general answer is that we are constantly discovering that what appears to be arbitrary or defective is, in reality, part of a general plan which, on the whole, is tending increasingly to realise good.

The general problem that presents itself to us at this point may be most simply stated in the form of the question—How can a pure universal become particularised? In the case of most universals this does not appear to be possible in any direct way. The number two could not of itself give rise to two particular things; nor could the idea of a dog proceed to bark and bite. Can it be supposed that the idea of Good stands on a different footing in this respect? In answer to this, it may at least be urged that the idea of Good demands particularity in a sense in which the idea of a dog does not. There need not, so far as we can see, be any dogs, just as there need not be any mermaids or “men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.” But Good would be essentially meaningless if there were no good things.

Still, it certainly does not appear that the mere idea of Good could create any good things. But the idea of Good does at least demand the existence of some and indeed a considerable number of good things and persons.

In order to understand creation, however, we have to bear in mind that the universals to which a certain reality has to be ascribed are numerous. Number itself is a universal; so, indeed, is creativeness. If we are entitled to postulate a Universal Mind, that Mind would presumably apprehend all the universal conceptions; and, having creativeness, it would be able to give them that special form of reality which we call *existence*, which is itself a universal conception. In this way, the transition from the universal to the particular seems to become intelligible. It may, no doubt, be held that, in making this transition, and indeed in all that has been stated with regard to the Universal Mind, we are, in Professor Urban's phrase, "trenching on the mystical." Certainly we are dealing with matters that cannot be empirically verified; but, after all, there is a good deal, even in the natural sciences, that is of this character. We cannot, in any direct way, verify the activities of the ultimate constituents of the atom.

6. DEGREES OF TRUTH AND REALITY.

In connection with what has just been stated, it is important to bear in mind the conception that was specially emphasised by F. H. Bradley, but that has also been present to the minds of others—*viz.*, that, when we speak of Truth and Reality, we are using

terms that may be understood in wider or narrower senses. Some realities are absolute and may be held to be real in the most complete sense. If we are right in postulating a Universal Mind, this Mind and the creative activity that is ascribed to it would have to be regarded as real in the fullest sense of the word. What is created may be real in a much more limited way. It usually exists only at a particular time and place; and, even within these limits, it may be and generally is imperfectly apprehended; and the extent of its persistence may be open to question. This must be borne in mind; and we may have occasion to refer to it more definitely at a later stage.

7. REALISM AND IDEALISM.

It may be well at this point to refer to the distinction that is commonly made between the two types of philosophical theory that are usually referred to as "realistic" and "idealistic." The distinction is apt to be somewhat confusing. The extreme forms of these two types are now sometimes known as "Materialism" and "Mentalism."¹ No one can well deny that minds exist and that some existences are not minds. But it may be thought that minds are only secondary or derivative modes of existence in which material things are somehow pictured; or, on the other hand, it may be thought that material things are only moving pictures in minds. There are, I believe, very few materialists in the sense that is thus defined. Some scientific

¹ The latter term was introduced by Henry Sidgwick; and it helps to give definiteness to the antithesis.

writers in last century, such as Huxley and Tyndall, seemed to approximate to that view, or perhaps even definitely to maintain it; and M. Clémenceau, if one may judge from his recently published Memoirs,¹ would seem to have held a similar view. But it is certainly not easy to see how the material things could have come independently into existence, or how they could have generated pictures of themselves capable of giving rise to general conceptions. On the whole, I think we may be excused for not taking such a view seriously. But the more extreme forms of idealism are also difficult to take seriously. It can hardly be supposed that the vast systems of suns and planets that are revealed to us by modern astronomers are nothing but mental images or concepts. That they are creations of a Universal Mind seems to be an intelligible hypothesis; and it may even be a necessary postulate. If so, it may be right to say that the Universal Mind has a higher and more abiding reality than that which can properly be ascribed to material existences. Few idealists would go farther than this. Bishop Berkeley may, no doubt, be said to have gone farther. He did, at least, in the first statement of his view; but, when he went on to introduce the conception of Notions, as distinguished from Ideas, he entered into the region of Universals; and this seems to me to bring us to the same point of view as that which I have been endeavouring to explain. Among more recent writers, the late Dr. McTaggart may be referred to as one who defended a somewhat extreme type of Idealism. With that, however, I hope to deal, to some extent,

¹ *In the Evening of my Thought.*

at a later stage. His method of approach was somewhat similar to that of many other idealistic writers; and the differences may be treated as a matter of detail rather than of fundamental principle. For a more extreme type of Idealism, we have to turn rather to India; and on that it may be well to make a general statement.

The consideration of the Vedanta philosophy would be a somewhat large undertaking; and I am not qualified to deal with it at all thoroughly. A good many Indian writers have dealt with it in some detail.¹ It is often said to be substantially in agreement with the idealistic philosophy of F. H. Bradley; but I think it differs from that, at least in most of the forms in which it has been expounded, by failing to recognise the conception of "Degrees of Truth and Reality," which is so fundamental in Bradley's system. The reality of the Absolute is so sharply opposed in the Vedanta system (especially as represented by Shankara) to the unreality of the temporal process that it is difficult to see how the latter can even *appear* to exist. The only explanation that seems to be offered is that the temporal process is to be regarded as a sort of "play" of the Absolute.²

¹ Reference may be made, in particular, to the comprehensive *History of Indian Philosophy* by Professor Radhakrishnan in the "Library of Philosophy" (Allen and Unwin), and also to a more recent work by Professor Ranade on *A Constructive Survey of Upanishad Philosophy*.

² This view appears to be taken by Rabindranath Tagore, as well as by more purely philosophical writers. There are signs, however, that the unsatisfactoriness of such views is beginning to be recognised in India. Some of the latest writers (*e.g.*, Radhakrishnan) are fully aware of this. Professor Radhakrishnan,

But surely its play must be supposed to have some serious significance. So far as I can see, this is never clearly brought out in the Vedanta philosophy.

8. GENERAL CONCLUSION.

What is the result that we have so far reached ? We have taken the conception of a Universal Mind as a Postulate; and what now remains is to consider how far that can be accepted as a valid principle for the interpretation of the Universe as we know it. This is a problem that has been largely discussed by many writers, especially in courses of *Gifford Lectures*; but, as Browning has said, "Truth must seem to us as if it had never been thought before." Perhaps the course of lectures that is most nearly akin to the line of thought that I have been endeavouring to pursue is one that was delivered by one of the earliest of my own teachers, Sir Henry Jones. The course was entitled *A Faith that Enquires* ; and its general contention is that the Universe can best be interpreted by the postulation of a supreme Intelligence, building up a system through imperfection to perfection—this being the necessary order of development. Jones definitely stated, however, that this view should only be accepted as a hypothesis; and I believe he always adhered to that way of conceiving it. Perhaps it cannot properly be regarded as more than that; but, if we find that it fits all the facts that we know about

in particular, has explained (in *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, chap. iii.) that Tagore's view of "Play" is connected with the idea of Art as the highest expression of the Divine.

the Universe, and that there is no other hypothesis that would adequately fit them, it might be regarded as being as fully verified as any hypothesis can be. In order to determine this, however, it is necessary to pay some attention to the general structure of the Universe as we know it, especially as there has been some advance in our knowledge of the Universe since the time at which Jones wrote. Accordingly, we proceed in the next chapter to deal with the general conception of Creation as applied to the existent Universe as interpreted by modern science. In the meantime, it may be best to regard the general conception of a Universal Creative Intelligence as a more or less plausible hypothesis, rather than as a definitely established truth. It has always to be remembered that philosophy, as distinguished from the special sciences, is *speculative*. As Bosanquet put it,¹ there is no "sure march" in philosophy. Perhaps there is none that is altogether sure in the special sciences either. Certainly considerable transformations have taken place in most of them in recent years—even in mathematics. Nevertheless, it may be possible to find a way in which the Universe may be made intelligible. And what I have been seeking to bring out in this chapter is that it can only be made intelligible by regarding it as an expression of a Universal Intelligence. But we have to try to bring that conception into more definite relation to the existent Universe, as known in our ordinary experience and in those extensions of our ordinary experience that are built up by the special sciences.

¹ See the volume of *Essays on Science and Philosophy, ad init.*

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF CREATION

I. TRANSITION TO THE EXISTENT UNIVERSE.

WE have seen that the conception of a Universal Mind that has been discussed in the previous chapter appeared to be of a somewhat hypothetical character. It is a view to which we are naturally led by reflection on the nature of human life and of the Universe within which that life is carried on. But the conception to which we have thus been led may seem to be too much like the inaccessible Deities of Lucretius : *Semota a nostris rebus sejunctaque longe*.

In order to bring it a little nearer to our ordinary experience, it may be well to notice at this point some of the chief ways in which the idea of a creative Being or Principle has been supported by arguments of a more specific kind. Only some of the most notable arguments can be referred to here; and even these cannot be very fully discussed.

2. PROOFS OF THE BEING OF A CREATIVE PRINCIPLE.

(a) *The Cartesian Argument*.—The argument of Descartes is, no doubt, well known to most of those who are likely to read the present book. He sets out from the general fact of our conscious experience as establishing the reality of a thinking Self : *cogito ergo sum*. Doubts may, of course, be raised

with regard to what exactly is established by this contention. We shall have occasion, at a later stage,¹ to give some consideration to the question, how far the Personality of an individual can be regarded as a persistent being. That it has a certain continuity may be admitted to be obvious. It is obvious also that it has limitations; and the fact that we are conscious of these limitations shows that we have a more or less definite conception of a Being who should be free from any such limitations. It was on this basis that the Cartesian philosophy was constructed, culminating in the fascinating systems of Spinoza and Leibniz. It seems doubtful, however, whether it can be held to carry us any farther than the general conception of a Universal Mind that was discussed in the last chapter; and we are now seeking for something that will give us a greater assurance of reality and connect more definitely with particular existences.

(b) *The Argument of Bishop Berkeley.*—The philosophy of Berkeley sets out from the contention that “*esse is percipi*,” which, strictly taken, would seem to imply that nothing can be held to be real except at the moment when it is being consciously apprehended as existent. This was, however, modified in the later statements of Berkeley’s theory, in which general “notions” are allowed a place, as well as particular “ideas.” This concession seems to bring his view back to the ascription of a certain reality to Universals; and then the argument does not seem to add anything to the view that was set forth in the preceding chapter.

¹ In Chapter VIII.

(c) *The Ethical Argument*.—Several writers have sought to justify the postulation of a Universal Mind on ethical grounds. The most notable of these is Kant. His general philosophy, like that of Berkeley, is idealistic, but in a somewhat different sense. It treats the Universe, in so far as we are capable of knowing it, as being essentially a mental construction which never brings us to the real “thing in itself.” The conception of a Divine Mind is, however, a postulate; and, in particular, it may be held to be a moral demand. In the moral life we aim at a certain perfection that is not realisable in our mundane life; and hence it seems to demand immortality. This can only be guaranteed by the postulate of a Divine ordering of the world. We are thus led to the conception of a Universal Mind; but it can hardly be said that it enables us to affirm the reality of such a Mind.¹

F. H. Bradley, in the closing chapter of his *Ethical Studies*, set forth a somewhat similar argument for the postulation of a more complete Good than that which is attainable in the moral life. This was written at an early stage in his philosophical career, and, though some slight modifications were afterwards made in it at a later stage, he does not appear to have reconsidered it at all thoroughly in the light of the later developments of his philosophy. In the second edition of his *Ethical Studies*, however, he did indicate various modifications of his views, pointing

¹ For further discussion of the Kantian argument, reference may be made, with great advantage, to Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., book ii., chap. v., where the whole subject is very carefully considered.

in the direction of a more comprehensive conception of Ultimate Good; and in his later writings this was made more and more explicit. The conception of the Absolute was made increasingly prominent; and the essentially spiritual nature of this was emphatically set forth. But it is doubtful whether he ever succeeded in making the relation of this to particular existences at all clear. I think this was due to the fact that he had, if I may venture so to put it, too statical a conception of the Absolute. He did not sufficiently recognise its creative aspect. It is perhaps true to say, however, that in his later writings he was advancing towards this conception.

(d) *Green's Epistemological Argument.*—T. H. Green, in his elaborate *Prolegomena to Ethics*, sought to show that it is necessary to postulate a "spiritual principle" in nature. His view is largely based on the Kantian philosophy; but, by the elimination of the "thing in itself," he was able to give a more definitely idealistic turn to that philosophy. He treated the whole of our knowledge as involving a mental construction, the possibility of which implies that nature itself is based upon such a construction. From this point of view, Mind itself has to be regarded as the ultimate "thing in itself"; and, of course, the Mind that is implied in the Universe as a whole must be a Universal Mind. It may, no doubt, be urged that this is still, as in the case of Berkeley, too subjective a way of interpreting the world as we know it. It may be maintained that it hardly enables us to account for the apparent contingency that we find both in nature and in human life. This we must deal with more definitely in the sequel.

(e) *Hegel's . Ontological Argument.*—The philosophy of Hegel, to which some reference has already been made, provides us with a more thorough and convincing line of argument. His general contention is that, if we start from the simplest of all conceptions, that of pure Being, we find that this, taken by itself, is indistinguishable from non-being; and that we are consequently led on, by an inevitable dialectic, to more and more definite determinations of reality, culminating in the conception of creative Spirit. This line of argument has been subjected to a good deal of criticism. McTaggart and others, as I have already noted, have pointed out several weak points at different stages in the dialectical process; but the main line of argument does not appear to be seriously affected by these defects. The real difficulty comes in at the end of the process, when the transition has to be made from the conception of creative Spirit (" God before the creation of the world ") to the finite worlds of Nature and Human Life. Herr Krug's request that Hegel should deduce the existence of his pen was not wholly absurd.¹ Hegel succeeded in showing that there is a certain order in the evolution both of the natural world and of human life; but the exact details could only be accounted for by a somewhat vague reference to the " contingency of Nature." The reference to this appears to be quite valid; but it may be urged that it calls for rather more explanation than Hegel provided; and it is here that Plato may be held to have supplied us with

¹ This has been well discussed by Mr. W. T. Stace in his interesting book on the *Philosophy of Hegel*, pp. 308-9.

a more definite account.¹ The significance of this we shall have to notice shortly.

(f) *The Axiological Argument*.—The deficiencies of the various arguments to which we have referred bring us back to those general considerations that were dealt with in the preceding chapter. The conception of a Universal Mind seeking to realise the Good is based ultimately on the general idea of Value as the determining principle in the real world. This view of the place of Value in the interpretation of reality, as we have already seen, has become increasingly prominent in recent years. Professor Sorley was one of the first to adopt this point of view; and, in particular, he has, I think, gone farther than almost any other writer in basing the reality of the Divine on the general conception of Value. In his very careful and thoughtful book on *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, he has quite definitely sought to establish the being of God on the objectivity of Value. His view of the Divine is, however, somewhat different from that to which we have been led by the foregoing considerations. If I understand him rightly, he conceives of God in a rather more individual way than I have been led to do; but this difference may be a vanishing one. He claims, however, for this conception validity and the kind of reality that is implied in validity, as distinguished from existence.² So far I find myself in agreement with him. His general philosophical outlook, however, differs so considerably from mine in most other respects that I am not entitled to refer to him

¹ An account, however, that appears to me to be quite in harmony with Hegel's general view. ² See especially on this p. 355.

as giving any direct support to my general contention; and it seems to me that it is even more necessary from his point of view than it is from mine to supply some transition from the general conception of the Divine to the existence of the finite Universe.

None of the arguments that have so far been referred to carry us much beyond the recognition of a certain validity in the general conception of the Divine. I have tried to get somewhat beyond this by urging that the aspect of *creativeness* has to be emphasised as belonging to the Universal Mind. This somewhat *a priori* contention has now to be met by considerations of a more *a posteriori* character. The argument that we have now to notice is that which is generally referred to as the argument *a contingentia mundi*—*i.e.*, it proceeds from the contention that the finite Universe is not self-explanatory, and calls for an explanatory principle beyond itself. We have then to urge that such a principle may be found in the conception of a Universal Mind containing the aspect of creativeness.

If we were to rely entirely on the kind of argument that has so far been considered, it would seem that we were led to a general conception like that which was taken by Spinoza—*i.e.*, to the conception of an absolutely perfect and all-inclusive Being, having (as Spinoza thought) the two aspects of consciousness and spatial extension. The particularity of the existent Universe, as we know it, is not easy to reconcile with such an idea of absolute completeness. This has been elaborately brought out by Mr. Alexander in his great work on *Space, Time and Deity*, which is largely an attempt to modify Spinoza's

conception, so as to reconcile it with modern scientific knowledge, especially by the recognition of a real temporal process. But, if we recognise that creativeness is an essential aspect of a Universal Mind, the apparent imperfection of the world, as it is known to us, may become more intelligible. For, in a creative process, as Sir Henry Jones has well urged,¹ perfection can only be looked for at the end. In a Shakespearean play, it is only at the end that the significance of the whole becomes apparent; and, if the Universe in which we live is to be regarded as a creation, we should naturally expect to find that its significance is only gradually unfolded through stages that seem imperfect and even accidental. It is in this way that the idea of contingency that we seem to find in the Universe gives support to the idea of a creative Intelligence. This, however, calls for some further explanation.

3. THE CONTINGENCY OF THE PARTICULAR.

It is sometimes contended that we have to recognise an element of Chance in the world as it is known to us. Even Plato assigned a place to *τύχη* in the *Timæus*. But *pure* Chance can hardly be recognised in a world that is held to be an expression of a perfect Mind. Among modern writers who have recognised an element of Chance in the world, the best known in English are Dr. F. C. S. Schiller²

¹ Especially in his book *A Faith that Enquires*.

² His general view was first set forth in *Riddles of the Sphinx*; but it has been somewhat modified in his later writings. For some further discussion about this, I may refer to my *Outlines of Metaphysics*, 3rd. edn., p. 169 seq.

and Mr. Douglas Fawcett; but there have been several others. Pure Chance, however, can hardly be accepted as an explanatory principle; but it would seem that contingent Choice¹ may be so regarded. Any particular thing must be regarded as one of a conceivable number. There may be some explanation of the existence of that particular thing; but, if we go back far enough, it would seem that we might have to be content to say that it has somehow been so ordained. Hence the absurdity of Herr Krug's request that Hegel should deduce the existence of his pen. It is true, as we have already noted, that Hegel never quite satisfactorily met Krug's demand. In other words, he did not sufficiently explain the *necessity of contingency*, if such a paradox may be allowed. Particular things must be regarded as having been somehow selected; and to say, as Leibniz did, that the existent universe of things is the best that is possible does not carry much conviction; for what is to prevent anything from being possible? We can hardly set limits to the power of the Universal Mind; but to say that particulars are necessarily determined would surely be to deny creativeness altogether. Free choice has never been regarded as an imperfection. How far an entirely free choice can be ascribed to a finite mind, is a question that we shall have to consider later.¹ But to a Universal Mind having creative power it may surely be ascribed.

Mr. Alexander has contended that there may be many independent universes; and, so far as I can see, this appears to be a quite possible supposition;

¹ In Chapter VII.

though it is not at present clear to me that there is any definite ground for believing it to be true. I may make some further reference to it at a later stage. It does not appear that, if there is a number of separate universes, they might not all be equally good. At any rate, how they came to be what they are can only be explained—if there can be any explanation at all—by an act of creative choice; and choice, in the case of a freely creating Power, may be supposed to be completely undetermined, except by the general conception of Good.

4. CREATIVE IMAGINATION.

The considerations that have now been indicated point to the conclusion, which has already been to some extent anticipated, that the formation of the Universe may best be conceived on the analogy of the work of a creative artist. Probably the best analogy would be that of a great poet, such as Shakespeare or the unknown author of the Homeric epics. Mr. Douglas Fawcett, as I have already noted, is the writer who has most definitely conceived the Universe as having been produced by a creative Power similar in its working to that which we may ascribe to Shakespeare. I had already adopted a similar conception,¹ which was suggested to me by Edward Caird; and probably it may have occurred to many other people. The difference,

¹ It is set forth in my *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*. Mr. Fawcett's views are contained chiefly in his books on *The World as Imagination* and *Divine Imagining*—most clearly, I think, in the latter.

of course, is that what the divine Artist creates has the kind of reality which we call existence; whereas what a poetic artist creates is what we call fiction (which may, however, have some foundation in existence). Shakespeare, in particular, seems to have created in a very varied way, partly determined by the traditions of the English stage, partly by more or less reliable historical records and the work of earlier poetic artists, and perhaps by other circumstances of which we know nothing. Evidently we could not ascribe any similar limitations to the creative Power on whose activity the existence of the Universe or Universes may be supposed to depend. On the other hand, it is not easy to see what grounds we could have for stating that any one Universe or all the Universes together are the best that is possible. There seems to be no ground, in this case, for setting any limits to what is possible or stating any criteria of what is best.

5. PLAN AND PROCESS.

If we are to think of creation in the way that has now been indicated, it would seem that the "mighty maze" about which we are gradually gaining some imperfect knowledge, is "not without a plan"; and, though we are here trespassing on the region of the unknown, we can hardly do otherwise than suppose that, in some sense, the plan must be antecedent to the process through which it is carried out; however wrong it may be to assume that the mode of precedence is comparable to that with which we are familiar in the spatio-temporal system—

though, indeed, we have recently been made aware that there are some difficult problems even in connection with that mode of sequence. To this we shall have occasion to refer more definitely at some later stages. In the meantime, it may suffice to think of it as similar to the antecedence of the general plan in the mind of a creative artist to the actual composition of his work. It may be noted, however, even at this stage, that the supposition of the existence of such a plan might help us to understand how it is sometimes possible (as it appears to be) to make definite predictions about future occurrences. But on this we need not at present dwell.¹

6. THE VALUE OF CREATION.

It is not unnatural, and surely it is not altogether unreasonable, to raise at this point the question—What is the value of the creative process? If the Absolute, it may be asked, contains all the ultimate values, why should it be either necessary or desirable for them to find expression in an imperfect creative process? The answer, I think, is clear enough. The reality that is contained in the Absolute appears to be purely ideal. It consists in universal concepts, which are real in the sense that they are intelligible and coherent. To be real in that sense is one thing: to be realised in a particular embodiment is quite another. The concept of Benevolence, for instance, is real and has a certain value; but a benevolent person performing beneficent actions, like the good

¹ It is further dealt with in Chapter IX.

Samaritan, seems to have a much greater value. Even if it be true that there is a sense in which the benevolent actions may be held to issue from the creative power of the Universal Mind, yet this particularising action surely adds very much to the total value. Shakespeare may be held to be responsible for Caliban as well as for Miranda, for Goneril as well as for Cordelia; but different values are brought into being by these different creations; and the more positive values would be inconceivable without the more negative ones. Bradley said that a God who should be capable of existing would be no God¹; but surely a God who should not be capable of *producing* existence would be still less worthy of the name. Shakespeare, in like manner, is not one of the characters in his plays; but it is through these characters that the finer features in his own personality are made apparent. "If our virtues did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike as if we had them not"; and surely the same may, without irreverence, be said of the Universal Mind. Goodness is a universal, but it is only through particulars that it gains complete reality. In other words, to create is one of its essential aspects. This certainly seems to me quite clear.

¹ It is in this sense that I should be inclined to interpret the somewhat dogmatic statement about the being of God in Professor G. E. Moore's *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Second Series. I understand him to mean that there is no God as one particular being among others. But, according to the Christian conception at least, Deity is not to be thought of as *one* Person.

7. DIFFERENT MODES OF CREATION.

The sense in which cosmic creation is to be understood is evidently very different from that in which the term is applied to the work of a poet or artist. The latter is concerned with the transformation of an already existent material by reproducing it in a form in which its significance is made more apparent, or with the invention, by the exercise of imagination, of some new material more or less similar to things that have existed or that might exist. When the creation of the Universe is regarded as analogous to this artistic process, it has to be remembered that the creation in this case is original, and that the result is that comprehensive mode of existence which is now characterised as the spatio-temporal system. When this is described as an imaginative creation, it is not, of course, implied that it is to be regarded as, in any proper sense, unreal. No doubt, even the work of an artist is real, and has a place in the spatio-temporal system, just as dreams also have. Their place, however, is not that which, on a first view, they seem to have. But this is true also of our apprehension of the spatio-temporal system. The real place of our sun, for instance, is not that which it seems to have, when we think of it as rising and setting. The real system of existence would, presumably, be that form which it has from the point of view of the Universal Mind. But we must now proceed to consider more definitely how the created spatio-temporal Universe is to be understood. The exact sense in which reality is to be ascribed to the

existent Universe is a problem that will have to be more fully considered at a later stage.

“A small poet every true worker is” was one of the sayings of Carlyle. We might almost add, in a similar sense, “a small god every true poet is”; but he is generally a pretty small one. It is only in a very limited sense that he can properly be said to create. The old term “Maker” is perhaps more appropriate. He gives a fresh form to things, so as to reveal their significance. The creativeness of the Universal Mind must be understood in a very different way. That Mind creates particular existences as such—particular minds among others. This assemblage of created things is what is now commonly referred to as the Spatio-temporal System; and it is to the consideration of this that we must now proceed—a vast subject upon which we can hardly be expected to do much more than touch. The details have to be developed by a multitude of workers in many different departments.

CHAPTER V

THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM

I. EXISTENCE AS SPATIO-TEMPORAL.

To give a detailed account of the existent Universe is the task of the special sciences,¹ rather than of philosophy. Philosophy has the more imposing but, in reality, the much humbler task of supplying a general survey and interpretation. No doubt, the exponents of the special sciences may themselves, to a very large extent, accomplish this. But there are special problems of interpretation that belong rather to the province of philosophy. It seemed at one time as if the conclusions of the special sciences were hardly capable of philosophical interpretation. In particular, the views that prevailed in the latter half of the nineteenth century were of this character. A world built up out of impenetrable atoms and held together by unintelligible attractive forces could hardly be regarded as the expression of a creative Power aiming at the realization of the Good. Hence at that time philosophy and science seemed to be almost definitely opposed to one another, greatly to the detriment of both. It is true that they managed to struggle along side by side, chiefly by the

¹ The brilliant writings of Sir A. Eddington may be referred to for this. For a more purely philosophical interpretation Mr. Alexander's great work on *Space, Time and Deity* may be referred to. Some remarks on this will be found below in Chapter IX.

help of the philosophical view, largely derived from Kant, that the scientific synthesis could only be taken as an account of the phenomenal world; while the philosophical interpretation 'concerned a deeper reality. But that has now been changed, mainly through certain changes in the scientific outlook, but partly also by a reinterpretation of some of the leading philosophical conceptions. The nature of that reinterpretation—largely due to Hegel—has been, to some extent, indicated in the preceding chapters.

The general view that seems to be now universally accepted, is that the Universe in which we live is to be conceived as a spatio-temporal system—infinite perhaps in the Hegelian sense of internal coherence and completeness, but limited in the more ordinary acceptation of the term. The spatial and temporal aspects are to be regarded as inseparable from one another. Sometimes it would seem that the one dimension is hardly distinguishable from the other. At least, both have to be taken into account in determining the place of an object in the general scheme.

2. THE MEANING OF ENERGY.

The power that is expended in any creative process has magnitude; and this is now most commonly expressed as amount of energy. This appears in a great variety of forms. Sometimes it appears in definite processes of change: at other times it

¹ I think this difficulty has been somewhat exaggerated; but it is not for me to decide. In Mr. Alexander's treatment, at least, the two dimensions seem to be clearly distinguishable.

has to be regarded as latent. Our earth, for instance, moves as a whole; but the greater number of distinguishable objects on or within its surface do not change their relative positions. The store of energy that is contained within them is then latent; but there is a measurable amount of energy contained within them. The amount of this has commonly been called their "mass"; but it has now become customary to describe it, in more familiar language, as their "weight." Perhaps it would be less misleading to call it their potential energy. This, however, is a subject that must be left to writers on Theoretical Mechanics.¹ In living beings this movement is somehow capable of being initiated by thought—a circumstance that is not surprising if mental activity is also to be regarded as owing its origin to the Universal Mind. But this is a subject to which we shall have occasion to return at a later stage, especially in Chapter IX.

3. SOME RECENT THEORIES.

The general conception of the spatio-temporal system has only been recently introduced by Einstein, and the detailed treatment of it is still under consideration. The most ambitious attempt to deal with it, from a definitely philosophical point of view,²

¹ Reference may be made, in particular, to the book on that subject by Sir J. Jeans, in which (as well as in his book on *The Universe Around Us*), "weight" is used instead of "mass." Other writers, however, prefer the more technical term, which appears to have a more universal application.

² From a more purely scientific point of view, it has, of course, been very brilliantly expounded in the writings of Sir A. Eddington.

is that contained in Mr. S. Alexander's great work on *Space, Time and Deity*, which was published in 1920 and has been considerably modified in a second edition. I have already referred to 'some of its leading conceptions, and I shall have occasion to discuss some others at a later stage. The most remarkable feature of it, especially in its earlier form, is that it involves the idea, not merely of one spatio-temporal system, but of a long series of such systems. I do not know of any decisive reason against such a supposition; but, on the other hand, I do not see any decisive ground in support of it. A good deal turns on the way in which the conception of Deity is to be interpreted. It seems to correspond, to a considerable extent, to Plato's "Form of Good"; and it could not be properly discussed at this stage. It will have to be dealt with in a later chapter (Chapter IX.).

The writings of Sir A. Eddington are also on a rather extensive scale, and appear to be still proceeding. He has the advantage of being an expert in astronomy, as well as a distinguished mathematician; and he writes in a singularly eloquent and attractive style. To criticise his work, so far as it is based on astronomical observation and mathematical deduction, would be quite beyond my competence; but I think there are occasional evidences of haste and lack of precision in the more speculative parts of his work; and some of his conclusions have, I suppose, to be accepted with considerable reserve.¹ One

¹ Criticisms on some details of his recent work by Mr. G. Dawes Hicks will be found in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. xxx. I think some more might have been made.

of the most interesting features of his work is that he appears to attribute to the ultimate elements in the system a certain individuality and even a kind of free will. The general subject of free will must be left for consideration in a subsequent chapter; but, so far as I can judge, his argument seems to point only to some degree of individuality in the ultimate constituents of the material system. This, of course, has to be considered in connection with the analysis of the atom by Sir Ernest Rutherford and others. As Hegel remarked long ago, matter has become "very thin." It seems best to think of it now as distribution of energy, rather than as anything more solid. But, of course, it is not for a mere speculative philosopher to dictate to an astronomer or experimental physicist on such questions.

The element of particularisation in the physical system has been emphasised in a somewhat different way by Professor A. N. Whitehead.¹ He makes much use of the conception of "patterns"—*i.e.*, of systems within a system—a conception that seems to me to have a close connection with Eddington's idea of individuality in the ultimate constituents of matter. What is known as the "*quantum theory*" appears to be also closely connected with this. It all points to the idea that was greatly emphasised, from a more purely philosophical point of view, by James Ward²—*viz.*, that individualisation runs all through the structure of the Universe. Large systems can be analysed into smaller systems, having a certain relative independence, just as, in human life,

¹ *Science and the Modern World*, especially chap. viii.

² Most definitely in his book on *The Realm of Ends*.

continents can be analysed, as we know to our cost, into independent nationalities. The independence, however, is never complete. The antithesis that we find in purely speculative philosophy 'between the all-inclusive Whole of Spinoza and the relatively independent monads of Leibniz is one that seems to run through the whole of nature. Indeed, a whole that should be made up of parts without some degree of separate individuality seems inconceivable.¹ This is a subject that we shall have occasion to touch upon at many points. But it is particularly interesting to see how it comes out in the latest attempts to interpret the results of physical investigation without direct reference to speculative philosophy.

The work of Sir James Jeans is another of the most interesting recent contributions to the newer views of the physical system. Most of his work is rather more purely astronomical than that of the others to whom I have referred; but he has also written in a very interesting way about theoretical Mechanics. One of the most notable features in his treatment of this lies, as I have already noted, in the elimination of the old conception of "Mass" and the substitution of "weight"—*i.e.*, if I understand him rightly, of a mode of Energy.² Space, Time and Energy seem to be the ultimate conceptions in the modern interpretation of the Universe. Mr. Alexander prefers to speak of *Space, Time and*

¹ Cf. the statement of Howison, to which Ward referred, that there can be no real creation which is not a "creation of creators" (*Realm of Ends*, pp. 455-60).

² Other writers on Mechanics appear to be following his lead in this.

Deity; but, if our interpretation of Energy is right, there is no fundamental difference between these two expressions. This also, however, is a point to which we shall have occasion to refer again at a later stage.

4. THE PLACE OF OUR EARTH.

What most intimately concerns us at this point, as bearing upon human life and destiny, is the general view that is now taken of the place that is occupied by our Earth in the stellar universe.¹ It is now thought that the existence of our Earth, as well as of the other planets within the solar system, is due to the rather close approach of two suns to one another. As a result of this, several fragments were disengaged from the sun that now forms the centre of our planetary system. These fragments became in time what is now known as the Earth and the other planets that constitute our solar system. This was one of those apparent "accidents" that are apt to be somewhat disconcerting to anyone who seeks for a philosophical interpretation of the Universe; and especially to anyone who seeks for such an interpretation in the conception of Good. It would seem that Jeans has been led by this discovery to take a somewhat pessimistic view of the life of the Universe in general. In the most popular of his writings—*Eos: The Wider Aspects of Cosmogony* (p. 56)—he quotes, as a description of the final end "to which the whole creation moves," the somewhat depressing lines:

¹ The account of this is to be found chiefly in the book by Sir James Jeans on *The Universe Around Us*.

“ Then star nor sun shall waken,
‘ Nor any change of light;
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight . . .
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.”

This is gloomy enough; and, as far as regards the spatio-temporal Universe, it may very well be true; but there may be other Universes, as Mr. Alexander appears to believe; or there may be other modes of existence intrinsically 'different from a spatio-temporal system. Again I have to say, all that is a subject for further consideration.

Another important fact that seems to have been pretty definitely established by these astronomical investigations is that our planet is the only one that is suitable for the development of the conscious life of beings at all similar to ourselves. Very little encouragement is given to such speculations as those of the French astronomer Flammarion or of Sir Francis Younghusband with regard to the possibility of life in other worlds than ours. Still, it is proverbially difficult to “prove a negative.” Other planets may have been struck off in remote parts of space; or there may be forms of conscious existence very different from our own and capable of being supported under circumstances entirely different from those on which our own bodily life is dependent. Certainly, the Universe in which we live would be, in some respects, less interesting than it is if everything happened according to a predictable plan and if the conditions were everywhere the same. It may even be added that the significance of human

life may be enhanced, rather than otherwise, if it is the only thing of the kind that is anywhere to be found. At any rate, speculations of this kind are at present rather futile. Some further remarks bearing upon them will, however, be found in Chapter X.

5. THE FINITUDE OF THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL SYSTEM.

One interesting conclusion that has been brought out by recent scientific theories about the Universe within which we live, is that it must be regarded as definitely limited in extent, both in its spatial and in its temporal aspects, though, of course, extremely vast in both of these dimensions. This result has come as a disappointment to some philosophical thinkers. Mathematicians of the school that is represented by Mr. Bertrand Russell have tended to believe that the Universe must be thought of as infinite. Those who derived their conceptions from Hegel, or even from general reflection on the difficulty of combining the two ideas of endlessness and totality, may have been rather relieved by the definite removal of an ancient nightmare. But it can hardly be denied that there are theoretical difficulties—as Kant very definitely contended—in thinking of the Universe either as limited or as unlimited; and it may be best to postpone the consideration of this problem, along with some others, for definite treatment at a later stage.¹

¹ It is dealt with, to some extent, in Chapter IX. It may be mentioned that Mr. Russell's disappointment is expressed at the beginning of his little book *What I Believe*.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPTION OF EVOLUTION

I. THE GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EVOLUTION.

It is now generally agreed that life on our Earth—plant, animal and human—has been developed through a process of gradual evolution.¹ Indeed, the meaning of the term may be extended so as to include the processes involved in the formation and development of our Earth itself and of many other modes of existence to which life cannot properly be ascribed, as well as in the formation of modes of social intercourse and behaviour, methods of government, laws, institutions, languages, customs and, in short, every particular thing and process. Life itself, however, is the main thing that has to be considered. The rest follows without difficulty. But the exact sense in which the term “evolution” is to be used calls for a good deal of consideration. In a sense, it stands for a very old conception. Most of the early Greek philosophers held views of a definitely evolutionary type; and it is probable that such views could be traced a good deal farther back. At any rate, the views indicated in Plato’s *Timæus* seem to involve a process that might not unfairly

¹ The writings of Sir J. Arthur Thomson contain, I think, the clearest statement of the modern doctrine of Evolution, apart from some of its most recent developments, to which reference is made below.

be characterised as one of evolution of a particular type—a type, as we have already had occasion to notice, that cannot now be regarded as altogether antiquated. /The general meaning of the term is, of course, that the various grades of being—especially the various forms of life—are to be conceived as having arisen from the gradual transformation of forms of a more primitive type./ In this general sense, the conception may certainly be said to be as old as Thales—probably a good deal older. But Lamarck has the credit of having first formulated it in a way that seemed to supply an intelligible account of the process by which it had taken place, at least in the higher forms of life. The acceptance of it was, of course, greatly retarded by the prevalence of the old Jewish idea—perhaps derived from Egypt—of a special act of creation. Also, the view of Descartes, according to which even animal activity is to be regarded as essentially automatic, made it difficult to see how there could be any development from lower forms of life to that in which there is conscious thought. Lamarck's view certainly involved the recognition of some degree of intelligent choice on the part of animals—perhaps rather more than could be readily ascribed to them. It also appeared to involve the recognition of the inheritance of acquired characteristics—a view which Weismann and some other biologists have been disposed to reject. One of the simplest illustrations of Lamarck's view is that relating to the long neck of the giraffe. He thought that this might be due to the act of stretching in trying to reach suitable food on high trees. The length of neck acquired in this effort

might be supposed to have been inherited by the offspring of those individuals that had learned to make the effort. He may have been right in this particular instance; but it was not altogether easy to see how it could be applied as the basis of a general theory; and the idea of evolution does not appear to have gained any general acceptance till it was formulated in a different way by Charles Darwin.

The special contribution that was made by Darwin lay in his stress on the ideas of "natural selection" and the "survival of the fittest." Some fresh light has been thrown on the idea of natural selection by certain considerations that have already been referred to in connection with the treatment of Value. We noticed in Chapter II. that in Professor Laird's book on *The Idea of Value* it is contended that the simplest beginnings of positive valuation are found in what he calls "natural election." We saw that this expression was used to characterise the simple process by which conscious beings are led to pursue unreflectively those objects that are suitable for their needs. What Darwin urged was, in effect, that those individuals that made a good election tended to survive and to transmit to their offspring the right flair, so to speak, for what is beneficial to life. Thus the "fittest" types tended to persist. I think it is generally admitted that this is a *vera causa*. It carries us some way—as, indeed, Lamarck's suggestion may also do—to an understanding of the way in which the evolutionary process may be supposed to be initiated. Whether they carry us all the way may be more doubtful.

Herbért Spencer contributed a good deal to the

further development of the theory of evolution. He sought to show how it could be applied, not merely to the development of plant and animal life, but also to the growth of institutions and to the whole history of the Universe. Perhaps he tried to cover too wide a field; and he did not sufficiently appreciate the work of the more speculative philosophical writers, such as Hegel; but I believe the value of his comprehensive outlook has, on the whole, been unduly underrated in recent years. Hæckel in Germany had a somewhat similar point of view; but I think he was rather more dogmatic and one-sided. The *odium theologicum* was naturally turned against them both; but, of course, the general idea of Evolution is not in any way opposed to the idea of a Universal Mind. Rather the latter idea seems to call for some such explanation of the upward tendency in nature. This was emphatically brought out by Henri Bergson.

2. CREATIVE EVOLUTION.

Bergson gave a new turn to the treatment of evolution by his emphasis on a creative urge—*élan vital*—in nature. There has been a decided tendency in recent scientific thought to recognise an element of truth in this conception. All life may be said to be forward-looking in its attitude; though the degree in which this forward-looking tendency enters into consciousness may vary greatly at different stages. Emerson gave expression to it in a rather extreme form in the saying—

“ Striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.”

It can hardly be supposed that the worm, in any conscious way, strives to be man, or even strives to be anything at all. But it has some vital energy which encounters obstructions; and those that are most successful in surmounting these obstructions may tend to survive and transmit some of their power to their offspring. Thus growth, in any form, can hardly be treated as wholly passive or as due simply to a *vis a tergo*. The modern view even of the motions of the heavenly bodies and other material systems is dependent on the recognition of the presence of "energy"; and this would seem to be, as we have already noted, an expression of the creative Power on which the whole existence of material objects depends. The conception of "Holism," recently introduced by General Smuts, taken in conjunction with Sherrington's conception of the integrative action of the nervous system, is an important aspect of recent scientific thought. All these new conceptions may be held to point in the direction of vital urge in a unified system, as against mechanical struggle among the parts.¹ The term "creative" is, however, perhaps best reserved for processes in which the conception of the end that is aimed at is, at least to some extent, consciously present, as it is in the work of a creative artist—though, no doubt, even there the consciousness may not be fully explicit. The saying that "we never go so far as when we do not know where we are going" may have some application even in human life; and, in such cases, it may be right to speak of a

¹ See on this Professor Muirhead's statement in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, second series.

“vital urge.” The idea of the end involved can, at least, hardly be supposed to be consciously present in the life of plants, however true it may be (as Sir J. C. Bose has contended)¹ that it is not wholly absent even there. Even in the life of most animals it can hardly be supposed to be very explicitly present. Otherwise we should have to regard them as being more highly developed than many human beings are. Hence it seems best to use a less anthropomorphic term than “creative” to characterise the upward urge in the lower forms of life.

3. THE IDEA OF EMERGENCE.

Professors Alexander and Lloyd Morgan are chiefly responsible, in this country at least, for the introduction and defence of the idea of emergence. I think it must be admitted that the precise meaning of the term has not yet been made quite clear.² When anything is said to emerge, this is generally understood to mean that it was already present before it came out—as in Vergil’s account of Neptune rising out of the sea; and it can hardly be supposed that this applies to the development of higher forms of life out of lower forms. /What seems to be implied in the use of the conception is rather that what is implicit in lower forms of life becomes explicit in those that are more highly developed; but then the question turns on what exactly is to be understood

¹ See the book by Professor P. Geddes on *The Life and Work of Sir J. C. Bose*.

² There is a good deal of discussion about it in the *Proceedings of the International Philosophical Congress* at Chicago.

by "implicit." The interpretation of emergence may itself be regarded as a case of emergence. The term does not definitely imply any particular interpretation; but it may perhaps be claimed that a definite meaning is gradually emerging out of reflection upon its use. It would seem to be true, in a certain sense, that the lower forms of life are, as Emerson said, striving to become higher; chiefly perhaps in the sense that they are aware of deficiency in their lives and are somewhat vaguely aware of what is wanted to supply the deficiency. Human beings themselves are often conscious of such deficiencies, and gradually become aware of what is wanted to supply them. Science and philosophy may be said to have emerged out of the effort to deal with the facts of experience. The difference between one and two must be pretty obvious without reflection; yet the whole of arithmetic and a large part of mathematics may be said to be implicit in this distinction. Similarly, horns may be said to be implicit in hard protuberances that may be found useful even in an undeveloped form. It may be true, as Sir J. C. Bose has contended, that there is a rudimentary consciousness even in plants. If we are right in thinking that all energy is an expression of the Universal Mind, consciousness may be held to be implicit in it from the beginning; and it would then seem to be true that all development is of the nature of emergence. It contains from the first the "promise and potency" of the higher forms of life. This is, of course, a highly speculative view; but it is difficult to understand even the beginnings of life without some recognition of this: What chiefly stands in the way of this is the

comparatively small power of prevision that even highly developed human beings possess. But it has to be remembered that certain powers tend to become atrophied when higher powers are evolved. Primitive peoples possess many powers of prevision that have become atrophied in those who are mainly guided by conscious thought. This is a consideration that we shall have occasion to notice more definitely at a later stage.¹ Submergence has to be recognised, as well as emergence. Indeed, the distinction between higher and lower is seldom one that can be applied in all respects. The cultivation of the powers that we regard as higher often involves some loss of powers to which we attach (perhaps sometimes too hastily) less importance. A great mathematician is often somewhat "absent-minded" in matters of a less reflective kind. Thought has emerged, and some other modes of apprehension have become submerged.

4. THE PLACE OF IMAGINATION.

These considerations tend to reinforce what has already been urged about the importance of imagination. It seems clear that the mode of consciousness that is involved in the evolutionary process, in its earlier stages, must be more nearly akin to imagination than to explicit reasoning. It is by reasoning that we gradually learn *why* certain things are more suitable for the support of life than others; and this is an enormous help to us in the later stages of human development. It also enables us to help animals to

¹ Especially in Chapter VIII.

more definite forms of development, perhaps not always to their own advantage. But, even in human life, many things are learned perceptually and imaginatively before there is any clear apprehension of the grounds for the preference of one thing or one mode of life to another. In this sense at least, we may agree with Mr. Fawcett and others in believing that, in general, the process of emergence is imaginative before it becomes rational. But this is not to deny that it is by rational reflection that we become aware of its full significance. Even in reasoning, however, we continue to make use of imagination as a basis; and perhaps it is true that the greatest achievements of human genius have rested more on imagination than on explicit reasoning. This may be taken as another instance of the truth of the saying that we never go so far as when we do not know where we are going. At any rate, it can hardly be denied that the highest human achievements have depended on a happy combination of imaginative insight with rational analysis; and that the more creative aspect of human progress has depended fully as much on imagination as on intellectual analysis. This is more obviously true in the arts than in the sciences; but even in the sciences the use of imagination has been well emphasised by Tyndall and others. It is impossible to foresee without first *seeing*.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIVIDUALITY.

THE modern conception of Evolution has led to considerable changes in our general outlook on human life. It has led us to recognise, more fully than was previously possible, the intimate way in which the lives of individuals are bound up with cosmic processes. At first it seemed as if this must involve a very serious limitation in individual freedom. Even before the introduction of the doctrine of Evolution, it was of course known that heredity plays a large part in the determination of individual character and conduct; but it was still possible to think of the birth of each individual person as, in some sense, a fresh creation. *Fortes creantur fortibus* was, no doubt, in a general way, recognised as applying to human life as well as to all other animate beings; but it was possible to combine this with the recognition of each individual as a fresh creation having an independent life of his own, wholly distinguishable from the life of a purely animal being, and capable of being judged without specific reference to other beings. In particular, the Christian religion had led in Western countries to an emphatic recognition of individual responsibility. The idea of an evolutionary process leading up, by inevitable stages, from the purely animal life to the human,

seemed to put an end to such a conception and, to some considerable degree at least, to destroy the conception of personal responsibility. Hence it seems well to devote some attention at this point to the question of the real bearing of modern views of life on the general problem of freedom, as well as on the closely related problem of personal immortality. The latter will be dealt with in the following chapter. For the present we confine our attention to the conception of human freedom.

2. THE PLACE OF CONTINGENCY IN HUMAN LIFE.

Human life, like all other particular things in the Universe, contains an element of contingency, though it is much less prominent here than in most other forms of existence. "Man is man and master of his fate," but only within pretty definite limits. We are capable of knowing, to a very considerable extent, what are the most important values at which it is right to aim; though it is doubtful whether they are capable of being reduced to any definite form of calculation. The discussion of this in Mr. Laird's book on *The Idea of Value*¹ may be referred to with great advantage. We have, at least to a large extent, the power of making clear to ourselves what are the most important values that we have the necessary capacity to achieve, and what are the most suitable methods for their pursuit. A man or woman of large experience and cultivated reflection—what Aristotle seems to have meant by a *φρόνιμος*, i.e. a person of practical wisdom—may have a compre-

¹ Chapter X.

hensive survey of the chief goods of life and of the most suitable means for their realisation in practice, and may be able to guide others in their pursuit. In modern times it is perhaps true to say that Catholic priests, more definitely than any others, have sought to cultivate this power, and have made it a chief business of their lives to exercise it. In Protestant communities there has, I suppose, been a greater tendency to leave it to the judgment of each individual, assisted by the advice of private friends; and it can hardly be doubted that it is not always safe to rely too exclusively on such guidance.

But it is right to say that, in this general sense, we have freedom in willing. However much advice—good, bad or indifferent—we may listen to, the ultimate decision—except in the case of slaves or young children—rests with ourselves.

3. THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM.

We have seen in what sense free choice may be ascribed to the Demiurgic Power, if it is right to characterise the creative aspect of the Universal Mind by that term. Free choice, in that sense, can hardly be described as unlimited. It is determined at least by the general idea of Good. But it would seem that there are many different ways in which Good might be realised; and it is not certain that Leibniz was right in thinking that there is any one way that can be affirmed to be preferable to all others. There may thus be held to be a certain contingency even in the construction of a Universe or Universes. This is not, to the same extent, true of human life. Our powers are restricted, and our

apprehension of what is good is generally lacking in complete clearness. It has been said that "if it were as easy to do what is good as to know what it would be good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces." This may be questionable. A world all palaces might not be as good as the variegated world that we know. It may be truer to say:

"Rough-smooth our globe be,
Mixed man's existence."

It would take a very wise man to know what would, in the end, be best for such beings as we are. Even the Pope has been regarded as infallible only in the sense that his decisions have to be accepted as final by the body of which he is the official Head; and his decisions have not been supposed to be formed without consultation with others. Everyone's freedom is limited at least by the degree of his insight into what is good and into the particular conditions in which it can be realised. Usually, if not always, it is limited also by an imperfect devotion to the realisation of Good as such; and this imperfection may be traceable to defects in heredity and education. Thus complete freedom in willing can hardly be ascribed to any human being. We have been gradually learning the precise nature of its limitations; and it may be well to give some historical references at this point.

4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF FREEDOM.

The idea of Freedom did not play any conspicuous part in the early thought of the human race. The generality of mankind were ruled by authority and

tradition, and were not expected to display any individual independence. If they violated the customary usages, they were generally supposed to be under some demonic influence. The apparent originality and independence of great leaders, on the other hand, were attributed to divine guidance or inspiration. Socrates appealed to a certain "dæmonic" guidance in his own individual life; and Plato relied, for society in general, on a carefully organised system of education, by which clear thought and right action would become spontaneous in the leaders of society and would be enforced on others. In India men were supposed—and indeed still are supposed—to inherit a definite "karma" from previous lives of men or even from animal ancestry. Among the Jews it was thought right that good or bad actions should be rewarded or punished, not merely on those who committed them, but on their children for many successive generations. So far as I can judge, it seems true to say that the idea of purely individual responsibility for good or bad conduct was first definitely emphasised by Christianity. But, even in the Christian teaching, the recognition of the responsibility of the individual for his present actions appears to have been very gradually developed. It might have been thought that the definite conceptions of Heaven and Hell as reward or punishment for individual conduct would have carried with them a definite conception of personal responsibility. But this was to a large extent camouflaged by such ideas as those of forgiveness, imputed righteousness, the washing away of sins, and the like—ideas which may not be without

a certain value, but which tended to obscure the recognition of individual responsibility. Even the Apostle Paul seems to have had little difficulty in employing the metaphor of the Potter and the clay—a metaphor, it may be noted, which even so robust a moralist as Browning was quite ready to adopt. The difficulty was, however, keenly felt by the Calvinistic Protestants. Milton, it will be remembered, represented even the devils in Hell as exercising their minds over the problems of “fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.” Some remarks on the possibility of prediction may help a little to clear up this subject.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF PREDICTION.

If we had a complete knowledge of the degree of clearness that particular individuals possess with regard to the values that they seek to achieve and of the conditions under which such achievement has to be accomplished, it would seem that we should be able to predict the whole course of their actions throughout their lives; and we may consequently suppose that the demiurgic Power (if we are right in postulating such a Power) has a complete knowledge of the way in which the course of events will work out.¹ Even human beings who possess extensive knowledge and insight can often make very shrewd

¹ It is noteworthy that even so convinced a libertarian as Professor Sorley appears to recognise this. See his book on *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, especially p. 472. But surely the creative Power must be supposed, not merely to know the course of events, but to have planned it. This will be further considered in Chapter IX.

guesses with reference to future occurrences in the lives both of individuals and of nations; but such power of prediction is usually very limited in its scope and somewhat uncertain even within those limits. If, however, they were able to gain access to the demiurgic plan, the possibility of such prediction might be greatly extended. There are some grounds for thinking that such predictions, even in matters of minute detail, have sometimes been made. Reference may be made, for instance, to Dunne's *Experiment with Time* and to some of the curious experiences that have been recorded by the French astronomer Flammarion in his book on "the Unknown" (*L'Inconnu*). This subject will be further considered in a later chapter (Chapter IX.).

6. THE REALITY OF THE TEMPORAL PROCESS.

It is sometimes maintained that the possibility of a definite determination of the content of the temporal process shows it to be essentially unreal. The writer who most definitely maintained this view was the late Dr. McTaggart. Reference may be made to his book on *Some Dogmas of Religion* and to the much more elaborate argument in the second volume of his last work on *The Nature of Existence*. To discuss his views at length would be beyond the scope of such a book as the present. It seems to me, on the grounds that have just been indicated, that he is right in maintaining that the temporal process would be seen by an omniscient Being as determined throughout; but I see no reason for holding that what is determined is unreal. The

motions of the machinery of a clock are approximately determined, but they are none the less real; and, in this sense, it may be quite true, as Huxley put it, that human beings are "the cunningest of nature's clocks." They differ from clocks, however, in the fact that their movements are dependent upon their own valuations. It seems to me that what is determined in this sense is more real than what is subject to caprice.

I think the view that was taken by Bosanquet on this subject is sounder than that which was taken by McTaggart. He has expressed it briefly¹ by saying that "Time is in the Absolute," but that "the Absolute is not in Time." According to the view that I have been led to adopt, it is not quite true to say that Time is in the Absolute; but Bosanquet interpreted the Absolute as little more than a name for the Whole of Reality. To say that Time is in the Absolute is, from this point of view, simply a way of saying that the temporal process is real. To say that the Absolute is not in Time, is, again, simply a way of saying that, since the Absolute is the whole of reality, it cannot be in anything else. According to the view, however, that I have been led to adopt, the Absolute is rather to be understood as meaning the eternal system of Universals. In that sense, the *idea* of Time is certainly contained in the Absolute; but the temporal process is a contingent creation of the demiurgic Power, which is one aspect of the Absolute Mind—*viz.*, the particularising aspect which is implied in the nature of the Absolute as

¹ See especially the statement in the series of Essays on *Science and Philosophy*, VII.

creative. In any case, it would seem that it may, quite properly, be characterised as real, and even as one of the most essential forms of real existence. I hope, however, that this will become a little clearer as we proceed.¹

7. GENERAL CONCLUSION: THE CULTIVATION OF FREEDOM.

The result to which we are thus led is that Freedom, in any full sense of the term, is not a general postulate that we are entitled to make with reference to human life, but rather a result that may be gradually achieved. Just as, in the political life, liberty is only made possible by the recognition of definite laws, so, in human life in general, freedom becomes possible through the clear apprehension of the values at which we aim and of the conditions under which these values can be achieved. It is not a pre-supposition, but an object of pursuit.

¹ See especially the statement in Chapter IX.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY

I. THE GENERAL IDEA OF SURVIVAL.

THE belief in some form of the survival of individual personality after the death of the bodily organism is one that makes a ready appeal to our hopes, but not a very ready one to our intellectual convictions. All particular modes of existence seem to pass through the successive stages of initiation, growth, temporal continuance, decay and dissolution; and human life appears, on the face of it, to resemble all other particular modes of existence in this respect. In particular, all modes of existence that have life are subject to a very obvious process of decay and death: and there is nothing to suggest that they have any further life except through their seeds or offspring. In the case of plants, it would seem almost absurd to suppose that they have any other form of continuance than this. The species continues, though even that may in time die out or become greatly transformed. Of the lower animals also it is natural to think as "the beasts that perish." The phoenix has hardly ever been supposed to be anything more than a pleasing fiction. In the case of human beings, however, it sometimes seems as if what was most real and significant in the life of the individual hardly became apparent till some time long after the date of bodily death. We think of Homer as

“immortal,” though we do not know where or when he ever existed in bodily form. But, of course, what we mean is that his work, his thought, his inspiring influence, persist. We never knew him as an existent personality, and we never expect to know him in that way. In a different way, we may think of a great scientific discoverer such as Newton or Darwin as immortal; but we mean only that certain ideas of his are not likely to be ever altogether forgotten. To be thus remembered can hardly be held to be without value. “Kings for such a tomb might wish to die.” Of many men and women we may think that all that is most worth knowing in them is in this sense imperishable, and may even become increasingly vital with the passage of time. Perhaps Shakespeare is even more fully alive for us than he was for his contemporaries. There is also a quite real sense in which a nation or people may be regarded as a living being. “The glory that was Greece” need never perish so long as the earth endures. Hence the idea of immortality is, in a certain sense, a very natural one, and has a very real significance; and, though it has not always seemed credible as applied to the actual persistence of embodied individuals, yet there are few peoples that have not, in some form, postulated a certain continuity of the individual life. It must be confessed that, on the face of it, it does not seem a very plausible supposition. The only thing that at all obviously suggests it is the resemblance between death and sleep. In dreamless sleep (if there is any altogether dreamless sleep) the individual, as a self-conscious entity, appears to be completely extinct. But we know that; except

when it is the sleep of death, the sleeper does at some time awake, often with an enhanced vitality. Hence it is at least not wholly unnatural to suppose that there may be an awakening even from the sleep of death. And there are some grounds that have led many people to believe that there is such an awakening. The most obvious ground is that people who appear to be dead do occasionally come to life again. But there is a more important ground than this, one that connects very closely with the whole conception of human life that we have been led to take.

If we are right in the general conception of the Universe that we have been led to maintain throughout, human beings have to be regarded as the particulars—or some of the particulars—of which the creative Mind is the Universal; and it would seem that its particulars must somehow share in its eternity. Perhaps this may be held to apply to the minds of animals as well; and some of the most strenuous supporters of the idea of immortality have extended it to them. But, before proceeding to the consideration of such details, it may be well to take note of the exact meaning of the conception of eternity.

2. THE CONCEPTION OF ETERNITY.

Immortality is sometimes understood as meaning eternal life. Now, eternal life may be taken to signify either a life that is not temporal at all or one that endures without end. If it is to be understood as entirely timeless, this can hardly be maintained without affirming that the temporal process is essentially unreal. Of course, it is not necessary to affirm

this if we mean by immortality nothing more than the survival of bodily death. One may survive death without living for ever. On the other hand, one may interpret eternal life as meaning a mode of life which is not temporal at all; and some have tried to think of it in this way. If the general view of creation that I have been endeavouring to maintain is correct, this view must be set aside. A creative process necessarily implies successive stages. I admit, however, that there are some theoretical difficulties in connection with this; and I think it best to reserve the consideration of these for the following chapter. In the meantime, we are simply concerned with the question of survival without reference to the exact nature of the life that may be supposed to persist and the speculative difficulties that are raised by its continuance.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONALITY.

There have been considerable differences among recent writers on philosophy with regard to the conception of personality. McTaggart was the one, at least in our own country, who attached most importance to it. He conceived¹ that even the Absolute is best regarded as a number of persons bound together by love. This is not quite in accordance with the view to which we have been led in the present study; and it will have to be considered more definitely in the following chapter.² What

¹ See *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, chap. ii.

² The chief difficulty about it is that the persons contained in the Absolute, being *particular* persons, would call for explanation, and could not be presupposed from the start.

concerns us more particularly at present is the fact that he based his general argument for immortality on the necessary persistence of individual persons. According to the Hegelian view, which McTaggart to some extent followed, subjects approach more closely to the Absolute than substances, and may consequently be supposed to have a more persistent reality. How far Hegel would have pressed this view is uncertain; but at least several of his English followers—such as Edward Caird and, more definitely, Sir Henry Jones¹—have given support to the idea of personal immortality on this general ground, but not quite as confidently and insistently as McTaggart. Whether the Hegelian view of the reality of subjects justifies the belief that they endure everlastingly may be open to question. At any rate, Bosanquet, who was quite as definitely associated with the Hegelian point of view as any of these others, took a very different view of the persistence of personality. He not only did not base any argument for immortality on it, but he even threw doubt upon the persistent identity of the individual throughout his life on earth—thus apparently regarding the subject as even less persistent than the bodily substance with which its life is carried on. He urged that a man at sixty can hardly be regarded as being the same person as the one who at ten occupied the bodily organism that has developed from one form to another through half a century. He contended that, if he could be confronted with that previous individual, he would not recognise him

. ¹ See especially *A Faith that Enquires*, pp. 346-7.

as the same person.¹ This is a question that can, to some extent, be tested by memory; and some light may be thrown upon it by the study of autobiographies. We have at least the well-known utterance of Wordsworth to set against it:

“ My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

It is probable that this continuity of interest is more marked in some than in others; and it would be interesting to have the testimony of a number of people about it. From my own memory and observation, and from what I have read in autobiographies and memoirs, I should judge that such continuity is pretty common, though not universal. My own interest in speculative problems dates from a pretty early age; and the general way in which I tend to regard them does not appear to me to have undergone any very radical change, though, of course, my opinions on particular topics have been affected by what I have subsequently learned. It seems to me that most other people whom I have known at all intimately have retained their chief interests in a similar way. I am thus led to believe that such continuity is normal, if not even, in some

¹ See the collection of his Essays in the volume *Science and Philosophy* (p. 104), which contains one of his latest and most carefully considered statements on this subject.

degree, universal. There are, no doubt, some curious cases of complex or dissociated personalities; and, even in more ordinary cases of religious conversion, it may seem that the converted person becomes "a new creature"; but even in so striking an instance as that of the apostle Paul, or in the hardly less striking one of John Bunyan, the new creature seems to retain a good many of the characteristics of the old one.

The case of Bosanquet does not appear to present any serious difficulty. He was a remarkably versatile person. Even in his later life, as he has explained,¹ his whole view of the scope of philosophy underwent a complete transformation. One who is liable to such fundamental changes in outlook must forgo something of that "natural piety" to which Wordsworth attached importance; but the quality of versatility, in which perhaps Wordsworth himself, as well as some of the rest of us, may have been deficient, seems to be a personal characteristic quite as truly as the quality of constancy. Of course, it is not to be denied that there have been extreme cases of "multiple personality"; but these are abnormal and call for special investigation, for which this is not the place.²

Apart from the actual continuity of the individual personality, there is, no doubt, another way in which personality may be said to persist—*viz.*, in the memory of others. This has been very finely

¹ In the series of *Essays on Science and Philosophy* (p. 20).

² On multiple personality, reference may be made to the book by Dr. T. W. Mitchell on *Medical Psychology and Psychical Research*.

illustrated by Bosanquet in the Essay to which reference has just been made. The exquisite perpetuation of the memory of Keats in Shelley's poem *Adonais* is the finest illustration of this; but Bosanquet has given other illustrations. It is finely expressed in the familiar lines—

“Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken;

* * * * *

And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.”

But most people would like to think that there is some more substantial form of persistence; and we must proceed to consider what grounds can be given for the belief in such persistence.

It may be added here that the general subject of Personality has recently been discussed with considerable fulness by Miss Hilda D. Oakeley, both in a book on Personality and in a number of interesting papers—especially in the article on Personality in the current edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It is to be hoped that she will now put together her various statements on the subject in a more complete and connected form.

4. MIND AND BODY.

The general subject of the relation between mind and body is evidently of great importance in dealing with the problem of the persistence of personality. That the body is subject to decay and death is very obvious; and though immortality has sometimes been conceived as involving the resurrection of the

body, that is hardly an idea that would commend itself to any modern mind. Death, however, is primarily a physical fact. It is the final outcome of some paralysis of particular vital organs or of a more general decay of the organism as a whole. Such paralysis or decay is generally, but perhaps not always, accompanied by a certain loss or weakening of some aspects of consciousness; and it is at least not unnatural to assume that the complete cessation of vital organic processes would involve the cessation of conscious experience as well. But it does not appear that this must necessarily be the case. It depends on the exact way in which the relation between mind and body is to be conceived. As Dr. Broad has somewhat elaborately explained in his book on *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, there are several distinct ways in which conscious processes may be supposed to be connected with the bodily organism; and some of these would be compatible with the persistence of those processes after the dissolution of the physical organism. Many people have believed that this is the case, though it has generally been recognised that it is difficult to see how the conscious processes could function in any effective way without some medium that is not purely mental.¹ There are, however, some ways, other than the persistence of the physical organism, by which such a medium might be supposed to be provided. The most important hypotheses that

¹ It is for this reason, as I understand, that Mr. Alexander is led to reject the idea of survival. See *Space, Time and Deity*, pp. 423-5. He leaves the subject open, however, for experimental investigation.

serve to make it conceivable are that of reincarnation and that of the existence of a "subtle body," distinguishable both from the pure mind or spirit and from the physical organism. This body has sometimes been characterised as "etheric"; but that term is objectionable on several grounds which need not be here discussed. The two hypotheses are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is difficult to see how reincarnation could be made intelligible without the postulation of a subtle body that could be transferred from one organism to another. Hence it may be best to explain the latter hypothesis before giving any definite consideration to the idea of reincarnation.

5. THE CONCEPTION OF A SUBTLE BODY.

The subtle body is generally conceived as an organic unity intermediate between the pure mind and the corporeal embodiment. It is sometimes called the "soul"; and those who support the idea of immortality on this basis usually suppose that both the mind or spirit and the soul survive the death of the physical organism. This is, of course, not the only way in which personal survival has been conceived; but it appears to be the clearest and most plausible. In the Christian doctrine of immortality, as already noted, it is supposed, or used to be supposed, that the physical organism survived or was somehow restored to existence—a conception that is obviously very difficult. It was on this account that the early Christians were opposed to cremation; and the idea of the importance of

“ Christian burial ” appears still to persist in certain quarters. Sir Henry Jones seems to have thought¹ that the mind might create a new body for itself after it quits its earthly embodiment; but, this supposition seems to involve the view that the mind not only survives the body but, after leaving it, acquires a power that does not belong to it in its embodied life; for surely no living person has any trace of the power of creating even the body of a worm. The Christian conception, however it may be interpreted, certainly presents great difficulties; and it has tended, perhaps more than anything else, to make the general idea of immortality appear incredible or at least inconceivable to the inhabitants of countries in which Christianity has prevailed. This fact has to be set against the other fact that Christianity has done a good deal to popularise the general idea of human survival. And, of course, against the view of the survival of the actual physical organism we have to set the declaration that “ it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” This may be interpreted as a somewhat vague recognition of the possible conception of a subtle body.

6. THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION.

This is the view that has been most commonly held in Eastern countries, especially in India; and in our own country a considerable amount of interest has been taken in it, partly on account of our intimate connection with India, but perhaps even more on

¹ I do not find any definite statement about this in his published writings; but I have heard him maintain this view.

account of the emphasis that was laid on it,¹ on more purely metaphysical grounds, by the late Dr. McTaggart. It is well to note, however, that in India it has been generally regarded as undesirable in itself, as a condition, indeed, that we must hope to outgrow and finally escape from; whereas McTaggart thought of it rather as intrinsically desirable, as furnishing an opportunity for the acquisition of an extensive experience of different modes of life. In India the doctrine appears to be accepted as a tradition. It is not usually supposed to be capable of any empirical verification. I understand, however, that the distinguished philosophical writer Das Gupta thinks that he has some empirical evidence in its support. The evidence, however, seems to consist merely in the fact that he was aware in very early life of a certain amount of Indian poetry which he believes he could not have had any opportunity of hearing. Certain poetical expressions are so much "in the air" in India that it would not be easy to prove that he might not have had an opportunity of hearing them at an early stage in his present incarnation. McTaggart's belief in it was based on more purely philosophical considerations. He thought that the Hegelian Logic justified us in believing that subjects have a greater persistence than that which belongs to substances, while yet the endurance of spirits cannot be well conceived without

¹ In the book on *Some Dogmas of Religion* McTaggart connected his view pretty definitely with the Hegelian philosophy; but, as Mr. Stace has remarked (*Philosophy of Hegel*, p. 514, note), it is very doubtful whether Hegel can be claimed as a supporter of the idea of immortality.

some physical embodiment. The conception of a subtle body may perhaps render this supposition unnecessary. At any rate, most of those who have supported the idea of human survival have not laid much emphasis on the hypothesis of reincarnation. Their views are based rather on certain modes of psychical research, to which some reference must now be made.

7. PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

In recent years the study of problems connected with the idea of survival, and of other questions that relate to the more recondite aspects of mental activity, has become recognised as a suitable field for experimental investigation. It had long been known that there were many unexplained phenomena in human life; but most of them—such as hypnotism, telepathic vision, clairvoyance, haunted houses, *etc.*—tended to be set aside as due either to diabolic influences or to conscious or unconscious fraud or illusion. It is now known that many of them are due to somewhat abnormal powers in the human mind, the precise nature and extent of which still call for investigation. Some of them, though not all, have a pretty direct bearing on the question of human survival. A few philosophical writers, such as William James and Henry Sidgwick (*venerabile nomen*), were led to take an interest in such problems chiefly through their knowledge of the remarkable experiences of Mrs. Piper;¹ and the Society for

¹ The *Life of Mrs. Piper*, by Alta L. Piper, gives a good account of the early beginnings of psychical research in America and England. •

Psychical Research was founded in this country, chiefly through the influence of Sidgwick,¹ who became its first President. F. W. H. Myers and Professor Lodge (now Sir Oliver) and several other literary and scientific workers were associated with him in this work; and both in our own country and in many others the subject has now become one of general interest. It is somewhat noteworthy, however, that the actual work of investigation has been more actively carried on by students of the natural sciences than by those who have been psychologists or philosophers by profession. Many of the latter have shown indifference or even hostility to such investigations. It is perhaps not surprising that some students of the natural sciences should have been specially attracted by such inquiries, since they have to be pursued by the methods of patient observation and experiment with which such students are more familiar than psychologists and speculative philosophers usually are. It may be also that those who belong to the latter class are apt to feel that, just because such investigations fall naturally within their province, they would feel bound to devote more time to them than they could well afford to give. I know that this was strongly felt by James Ward; and I must confess that I also have been prevented by the same reason from giving as much time to such investigations as they might otherwise have seemed to demand; but I have at least pursued them sufficiently far to be convinced that

¹ It does not appear that Sidgwick himself ever arrived at any positive conclusions on the subject. He seems to have been largely occupied with the exposure of frauds.

much is to be learned by them; and I consequently feel myself entitled to offer a few remarks about them, which must be regarded, however, as only the testimony of an amateur. There is, indeed, one circumstance that makes this, to a large extent, inevitable. The actual exercise of some of the powers that have to be referred to is confined to a few people, and I do not happen to be one of them. In fact, it would seem that most of these powers, at least in any high degree, are only to be found in a limited number of women. The explanation that is commonly given of this circumstance is that these powers depend on the use of a particular part of the brain which in most men has become atrophied, but is more or less fully retained in many women, though even in them it has to be somewhat carefully guarded. The part that is concerned is commonly said to be the pineal gland—the part, it will be remembered, that Descartes erroneously regarded as the seat of consciousness in general. I am not enough of a physiologist to be entitled to pronounce an opinion on this view of the localisation of psychic powers; but it seems certain that the active exercise of most of them is confined to a few people, almost all women. Hence I am only entitled to refer rather briefly to the general nature of these powers.

Telepathy is the simplest of these somewhat abnormal methods of observation. It seems to bear a close resemblance to wireless telegraphy, but does not involve the use of any special apparatus. One who possesses the requisite power is able, by concentrating her attention on the thoughts and activities of another person at almost any distance,

to give an accurate account of these activities. It is usually things seen that are thus capable of being observed; but I understand that sounds have also been, in some cases apprehended at a distance. I can testify at least that visible things can be apprehended in this way in a minutely detailed fashion at distances and in circumstances very far removed from any possibility of ordinary sight. Such powers are now pretty well known; and the possibility of telepathic vision is no longer under dispute. The closely related powers of clairvoyance, psychometry and some others are also well established; but it is not necessary for our present purpose to refer to them in detail. They have no direct bearing on the question of survival; and, indeed, even the indirect bearing that they may be said to have on that is mainly of a negative kind. Experiences that seem to imply the survival of particular individuals may sometimes be explained away as being due to some form of telepathy, clairvoyance or similar powers. It is chiefly for this reason that it has seemed desirable to refer to them here. But, of course, they have also an independent interest as evidence of certain mental powers that were previously unsuspected or denied.²

¹ Professor Gilbert Murray, in particular, considered that he had heard voices telepathically, but it seems doubtful whether the distance was sufficiently great to preclude the possibility of ordinary hearing. I have certainly never found it possible to convey any sounds telepathically. The reason probably is that sounds are generally transient and are usually attended to, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the meanings that are conveyed by them.

² F. H. Bradley stated (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 343) that "A direct connection between souls we cannot say is impossible,

8. MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

It is undoubtedly the case that very great progress has been made in recent years in the attempt to gain empirical evidence of human survival; but the investigations are so much mixed up with those other forms of psychical research to which reference has just been made that it is not always easy to determine the precise parts of such research that have a direct bearing on the question of survival. Most of it, of course, may be said to have an indirect bearing, in so far as it leads us to recognise the possibility of exercising certain mental powers with but little use of the physical organs of sense or of any of the usual mechanical aids to perception. The unquestionable fact that it is possible, in certain circumstances, to observe distant objects without the use of any of the ordinary mechanical aids to observation, does carry us some way to the recognition that psychical processes are much less dependent on physical conditions than has been commonly supposed. But this power is still dependent, it would seem, on the use of a particular part of the brain by certain individuals (almost all women) in which that part of the brain happens to function with unusual

but, on the other hand, we find no good reason for supposing it to exist. The possibility seems, in addition, to be devoid of all interest." This, like some of Bradley's other statements, does not seem to be any longer justifiable. Whatever the explanation of telepathy may be, the fact itself can no longer be denied, any more than wireless telegraphy or water-dowsing can; and surely such facts can hardly be said to be without interest, though it may be admitted that their interest is scientific, rather than philosophical.

power. This does not entitle us to infer that the mind could continue to function if it were severed entirely from the bodily organism. If the postulation of a subtle body could be fully justified, this would make the possibility of such functioning more easy to believe than it would otherwise be. In the meantime, there is a certain amount of evidence in support of such functioning. Much of the evidence, however, is of a kind that hardly admits of any direct verification. When deceased spirits are said to communicate their experiences in another world, there is in general no direct means of determining whether their communications are true or false. Even if they agree largely (as they certainly appear to do) about the general nature of the life that persists in separation from the physical organism, this might be due, in part at least, to the adoption by mediums of a certain general theory as to the conditions of the after life. But it is not easy to believe that such a general view could have been adopted without objective grounds. The kind of evidence that is most convincing is the communication of specific information of a private kind, not known to the person to whom the communication is made, but capable of subsequent verification. If, for instance (to take a case that was recently brought to my knowledge), a young boy who has died prematurely seems to make a definite communication about his toys or other objects in which he was interested, and if the particulars about these are not known to the person to whom the communication is made, but are afterwards found to be correct, there would be considerable grounds for believing that the

boy survived and was making this communication. Very simple cases, such as this, are often more convincing than communications of a more elaborate kind. It is difficult also to see how such communications could be supposed to be explicable by telepathy or other methods not implying personal survival. No doubt, most of the communications that are made through mediums are of a more elaborate character than this, and many of them are not capable of any direct verification. Many of them impress me as being somewhat of the nature of dreams—dreams in which the conditions of life on earth are mixed up with what may be imagined of different conditions. But even this seems to imply some sort of survival. On the whole, it seems to me that the best attitude to take up on the whole subject is one of a somewhat sceptical or at least strongly critical interest.¹ The empirical evidence certainly goes some way to support the argument based on the general view of the intrinsic reality of spiritual life. The literature relating to the subject is, however, now so enormous that it would be quite beyond the scope of such a book as this to discuss it even in a cursory fashion. I may say, however, that the writings that seem to me most impressive are those of the French astronomer Flammarion. They are very voluminous; but I believe they have all been translated into English. We know, however,

¹ Sir Henry Jones thought (*A Faith that Enquires*, p. 342) that modern Spiritualism should be “put on the rubbish-heap.” This was a very natural view to take at the time when he wrote. It can hardly be justified now. But a good deal of caution is still very desirable.

on other grounds, that he was a writer who gave a pretty free scope to his imagination. His book about the planet Mars may be referred to as giving some evidence of this. Hence the more speculative parts of his work have to be taken with some caution. But I see no reason to doubt the accuracy of the facts that he records, so far as they were observed by himself; and most of the others appear to have been derived from trustworthy witnesses.

I wish it were possible to make a more definite pronouncement than this; but the evidence at my disposal does not enable me to do so.

9. GENERAL CONCLUSION.

The kind of research I have referred to certainly gives some support to the general doctrine of survival, and is probably more convincing to most people than arguments of a more purely speculative kind. The general view of the relation between mind and body that is implied in it is one of very considerable interest. From the point of view that has been adopted in the present book, however, the argument on which we have chiefly to rely rests upon the belief that the ultimate explanation of the existence of the Universe in which we live is to be found in the conception of a Universal Mind having creative power. If this postulate can be taken as legitimate, it can hardly be supposed that the Universal Mind can be indifferent to the existence of the particular minds through which it finds expression. In order to bring this out, however, we must return to the consideration of the conception of the Universal Mind. This will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCEPTION OF DEITY

I. SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

It may be well now to indicate the general conclusions to which we have been led so far. It has seemed necessary to postulate a Universal Mind, having a creative aspect, as the Source of all particular existences. Our Universe is to be thought of as a particular system brought into being by a contingent choice in a manner somewhat analogous to that of the imaginative creation of a human artist. The supreme object of that creative process may be supposed to be the production of a society of persons, each of whom has a limited power of choice, relatively independent, but controlled by the general purpose of the creative Power; just as the characters in a play express their individuality subject to the structure of the plot. There are some grounds, both speculative and empirical, for thinking it at least probable that such persons may survive the death of their bodily organisms. It is now desirable to try to form a somewhat more definite conception of the manner in which the whole process ought to be conceived; though, of course, we can hardly expect to give more than a very general sketch.

2. ALPHA AND OMEGA.

The chief difficulties lie in the conception of a Mind that is not an individual Person, that cannot

properly be said to exist, and that yet has to be regarded as somehow the Source of all particular existences. It may be best to say that such a conception is necessarily incomprehensible; and that, at the utmost, we can only hope to "comprehend its incomprehensibility"—i.e., to understand why it is that we cannot hope, with any fulness, to understand it. But it is not very satisfactory to leave it at that. We may at least help ourselves out with the aid of some imperfect analogies. The writing of a book might be taken as a partial analogy. The general plan must, in some degree, be present to the mind of its author before it is developed in detail. But perhaps the composition of a play supplies us with a more perfect illustration. To take a specific instance, the play of *Othello* contains a pretty elaborate plot, which is dependent on the special characteristics of the individuals who take part in it, as well as on some incidents that may be said to be "accidental." All this must have been, to some extent, present to the mind of Shakespeare before he wrote a word of the play; and, in a sense, it might almost be said that he must have composed it backwards. He must at least have had in his mind, from the first, the conclusion to which the whole was tending.

It would seem that this must be supposed to be still more emphatically true of the Universal Mind on which the created Universe depends. But it may be urged that, if we think of the process in this way, we are, after all, thinking of the creative Power as an individual person like Shakespeare. Perhaps it would be truer to say that we are thinking of Shakespeare as an individual who approximated to a

universal point of view. A universal point of view can only properly be understood as comprehending the particulars that essentially belong to it. It cannot be interpreted simply as an abstract form. It may be well to enlarge a little on this subject at the present point.

3. UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR.

It may help us at this stage to take note of the difference that has to be recognised between different types of generality. Take such a conception as that of country, on the one hand, and that of number, on the other. Country is a general term, but it is not a true universal. England, for instance, is a country; but so is Great Britain, which includes England as one of its parts. It is difficult to say whether India should be regarded as a country or as a collection of many countries. Contrast this with the case of number. Number is a universal, and it may be contrasted with the infinite series of numbers which are its particulars. But each of these numbers is itself a universal, which may be applied to many particular things; and they are not mere *instances* of number, but rather the definite content that is involved in the nature of the general conception. The case of philosophy might also be referred to. There are many philosophies. Hegel went so far as to compare them¹ with the various kinds of fruit, apples, pears, oranges, *etc.* But the different philosophies conflict with one another, in a way that different kinds of fruit do not. If one is true, the

¹ In the lesser *Logic* (translated by W. Wallace), section 13.

others must be more or less false. The universality of mind seems to be somewhat different from either of these instances. Every mind aims at universality, just as every system of philosophy does; but it seems true to say that no human mind attains it with any completeness. What right have we then, it may be asked, to postulate a Universal Mind? The answer seems to be that it is a necessary postulate for the explanation of the existent Universe. But it may still be asked whether it is right to regard such a Mind as having individuality as well as universality. It is a question that is very difficult to answer satisfactorily. If we ascribe individuality to it, it would seem that it must be an infinite individuality; and that is a conception that calls for separate treatment. It seems clear at least that it must be thought of as necessarily giving rise to individuality; and I admit that it is very difficult to understand how we are to think of this as taking place. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that the conception of creation should not be completely intelligible.

4. THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF INFINITY.

Are we to say that the Universal Mind is infinite? If so, we must try to be quite clear as to the sense in which infinity is to be understood. So far as I can see, it was Hegel who first made clear the sense in which infinity has to be understood in philosophy, as distinguished from that—or perhaps it would be better to say “those”—in which it is commonly interpreted in mathematics. According to the Hegelian conception, a circle or other curve that returns

into itself is the true type of infinity. On this interpretation, what is infinite may be quite definite; and it is not easy to see how, on any other interpretation, a definite meaning can be given to it. Before the introduction of Einstein's theory of the spatio-temporal system, it was difficult to understand how the material Universe could be thought of either as finite or as infinite. It was on this account that Kant held that it must be supposed to have only a phenomenal reality. But the idea of the curvature of space enables us to regard it as infinite in the Hegelian sense, though finite in the more customary interpretation. It may be thought that this is little more than a verbal point; but, in reality, it is a very great help in the interpretation of the Universe. The way in which it is to be applied may be briefly explained as follows. The Universal Mind may be supposed to begin the process of creation by a descent from the complete perfection downwards to the imperfect beginning; and this descent might then be followed by a reascent towards perfection. In this way we might accept the ancient view of Heraclitus, according to which the downward and the upward paths are the same. If a view of this kind were accepted, it might enable us to understand how it is possible to make a definite anticipation of the future, such as is recorded in Dunne's *Experiment with Time* and other similar reports. We might suppose that the downward path leaves some trace of itself which, under certain circumstances, may become apparent. A view of this kind is sometimes said to involve the unreality of Time. But the fact that the temporal process may be regarded as deter-

mined throughout (as McTaggart also urged), does not seem to me to involve its unreality, but rather to make its reality more strikingly apparent. But it does not seem unintelligible to suppose that it may have a backward movement as well as a forward movement.

It should be noted that the view of infinity that is here taken is not really opposed to the general conceptions that are supported by such mathematicians as Mr. Bertrand Russell and accepted by such logicians as Mr. W. E. Johnson. Mathematicians are entitled to their own special concepts. They use several expressions, such as $\sqrt{-1}$, which have no direct application to existent things, but are quite valid for mathematical purposes. Such expressions become misleading only when it is supposed that there must be—or even that there may be—particular existences directly corresponding to them. There are, it would seem—certainly there may be—particular existences corresponding to the Hegelian conception of infinity. So far as I can see, it is not conceivable that there should be any particular existent thing that would be infinite in the mathematical sense. This is the really important consideration. The question as to the best way of using the term is of comparatively little consequence.

5. THE REALISATION OF DEITY.

If the view that has now been indicated is to be accepted, we must think of the process towards Deity in a way somewhat different from that in which it has been conceived by Mr. Alexander. The

perfect Whole, which constitutes, in Plato's phrase, the self-subsistent Good (*αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν*), must be supposed to be realised from the outset by a contingent self-differentiation of the Universal Mind into a "society of persons" (to use McTaggart's phrase). This society must, it would seem, be supposed to include all the conscious beings, animal as well as human, that have ever existed on Earth or in any other habitable sphere; but they must be supposed to be included in the form in which they are finally realised. This might then be supposed to be followed by the thought of a descent through all the stages that intervene between the realisation and the initial stage (a process, as has been already suggested, of which it may sometimes be possible to catch prophetic glimpses). It may be regarded, however, as rather of the nature of a dream, if such a term may be used with reference to the working of a Universal Mind. The upward path, on the other hand, which is the downward one reversed, is what is commonly recognised as the "real" world.

A view of this kind will, no doubt, strike many readers as somewhat fantastic; but there does not appear to be any intelligible account of the real world which does not recognise it as being, in some degree, according to Wordsworth's phrase, "an unsubstantial fairy place."

6. THE IDEA OF PERPETUAL RECURRENCE.

If a view of the kind that has now been suggested may be accepted, it becomes possible to reinterpret some other ideas that have had a certain currency.

Nietzsche, in particular, was fond of emphasising the idea of "perpetual recurrence"—an idea, it would seem, by which he was sometimes attracted, but which he more often regarded with a certain horror. As a matter of ordinary experience, the past does continually recur in memory; and its recurrence may be agreeable or disagreeable according to the nature of the experiences that recur. Without adopting the view that all reality is mental, we may at least state that all *experience* is mental; and what is mental may recur in memory, and may be either pleasant or unpleasant. Perhaps, however, it may be legitimate to assume that, if the past history of the Universe could be recalled in its entirety, the evil in it would be seen as only the necessary correlative of the good. This is an optimistic view; but we have assumed throughout that the ultimate interpretation of all things must be optimistic. This is involved in our initial postulate that the totality of things is to be regarded as a Cosmos determined by the idea of Good.

7. CHIEF DIFFICULTIES.

It cannot be denied that there are considerable difficulties in the view that has now been indicated. It would, indeed, be strange if an attempt to give a general interpretation of the whole of reality did not involve a great deal of difficulty. I can imagine a somewhat impatient reader asking "What does it all amount to? Are we to say that Reality, as ultimately interpreted, is personal or super-personal? And, if it is super-personal, does that mean that it is a society of persons, or what does it mean?" I think

we may at least go as far as Bradley went in his well-known conclusion that "the more anything is spiritual, the more is it real." But perhaps that also may be thought to be somewhat vague. I have tried to make it somewhat less vague, as I think Bradley also did, by representing ultimate reality as "super-personal"; and, if that also is thought to be too vague, it may be made less vague by thinking of it as McTaggart did, as a "society of persons"; and it seems to me that that society must be supposed to include *all* persons in that final realisation to which the process of evolution is gradually tending; and, indeed, not merely all persons, but all conscious beings in the final form in which the significance of their whole course of development would become completely intelligible. It may be thought that this is a rather "large order." But surely the complete Cosmos must be large. It must, indeed, be infinite—not in what seems to me the impossible mathematical sense, but in the Hegelian sense of a Whole that is complete and intelligible throughout. If I have failed to make this clear, I can only hope that someone else will succeed in making it clearer. But it does not seem to me to involve any real obscurity, once the idea of a self-revealing Universal Mind is fully apprehended. It is not really very difficult to apprehend its general significance; though I admit that it cannot be fully comprehended in all its detailed implications. We are in the midst of the process; and we cannot, with any fulness, represent to ourselves its beginning or anticipate the realisation, in which both beginning and end would be clearly revealed.

8. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.

It may be asked whether such speculations have any practical value; and that is a question which, I believe, people in this country are particularly prone to raise. Well, I think we may at least say, as McTaggart did, that metaphysical speculations "give us hope." They open up a large prospect, even if they leave it somewhat indefinite in its details. "Philosophy," as it has been said, "bakes no bread; but it gives us God, Freedom, and Immortality." Perhaps some may think that it does not even give us the kind of assurance of these great ideas that many people would desire to have. No one of them, perhaps, emerges quite in the form in which it has been most commonly understood. They are the ideas that form a large part of the substance of most forms of religion; and, though it is not the special task of such a book as this to discuss the degree of truth that may be held to be contained in the various forms of religious belief, it may be well to attempt, in a closing chapter, to indicate the general nature of the bearing of the views that have been discussed upon the present outlook in religion.

CHAPTER X

THE PRESENT OUTLOOK IN RELIGION

I. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

It seems clear that the general view of the cosmic system that has been sketched in the previous chapters has a pretty direct bearing upon religion. It is generally thought, at least, that religion is largely concerned with the very fundamental problems of God, Freedom and Immortality. No doubt, the extent to which these conceptions may be held to be involved, varies considerably with different types of religion. The religion of Humanity may be said to raise none of these problems; and it can hardly be denied that it is a genuine religion. It may be doubted also whether Buddhism, which is one of the most widely spread of religions, can be said to contain any quite definite pronouncement on these problems; and certainly some very primitive religions, such as fetichism, do not; nor do some of the newer types of religion that have grown up in our own time. And, if the views that have been suggested in the previous chapters are well founded, it must be admitted that they involve some modifications in the way in which those fundamental conceptions have often been conceived. God, according to the view that has now been set forth, is not to be thought of as an individual person, but rather as a Universal Mind; finding expression in the lives of particular

persons.¹ This, however, may be held to be in harmony with some of the great religions, and very notably with Christianity.² Freedom also has to be thought of, not as a postulate that may be presupposed, but rather as an achievement that may be won. But I think this also is not at all contrary to what has been maintained in many forms of religious teaching. Immortality, in like manner, has been conceived as an attainment that may be reasonably hoped for, both on speculative and on empirical grounds, rather than as a doctrine that can be dogmatically formulated. I think this also is quite in accordance with much that has been taught in Western religion. But religion appears to differ from philosophy in being, not so much a speculative formulation of opinions as an attitude of mind, partly emotional and partly practical. This attitude has taken many different forms, which have been developed in close relation to the general development of the conditions of human life and thought. It may be well to give a brief reference here to the general nature of this development.

2. THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

That there has been an evolution in religion, as well as in other aspects of life, would now be generally conceded. The whole subject has been

¹ In the language of religion, of course, the relationship has usually been expressed, not as that between Universal and particulars, but as that between Father and sons. But the meaning appears to be fundamentally the same.

² Perhaps I may be allowed to state that the interpretation of Christianity that is set forth in the writings of Canon Streeter

very fully and clearly dealt with by Edward Caird in his book with the title of this section; and that book may be profitably supplemented by reference to his companion volume on *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*. The general nature of the evolutionary process may be characterised as growing out of primitive animism and advancing to more and more spiritual forms. Once it has emerged from the lowest forms of animism and from the conception of special Avatars, it tends to become a refined form of Hero Worship, in the sense in which that term was used by Carlyle, ending in the worship of the Divine, as a sublime Hero or ultimate type of spiritual perfection to which it is our chief end to approximate. One defect that tends to cling to this way of thinking is the limitation of the conception of what is most divine to an image of a purely masculine type. This is counteracted in some religions by the addition—sometimes even by the substitution—of an idealised conception of womanhood. Catholic Christianity provides a very notable example in the quasi-deification of Mary the Mother of Jesus. It is also counteracted in a somewhat different way in some of the finest forms of poetry. Dante, who may, I suppose, be taken as the best representative of the higher meaning of Catholic Christianity, took Beatrice as his guide through the intricacies of the spiritual realm. In a less definitely religious way, Shakespeare (who has been characterised as a “blossom of Catholi-

seems to me the clearest and most convincing of those with which I am acquainted. His book on *Reality* may be specially referred to.

cism ") tends, as Ruskin specially noted, to take women as the types of spiritual perfection, culminating in the ethereal conception of Miranda—" You, O you, so perfect and so peerless, are created of every creature's best !" In India, also, not only is the country personified as Mother (*bande mataram*), but Kali (in various forms) is perhaps the most universally worshipped type.¹ It is certainly natural to think of the most perfect expression of disinterested love in the form of Motherhood; and this is, I suppose, one of the things that have been most definitely missed in those forms of Protestant Christianity that are most familiar to us in our own country—most notably, I suppose, in the Puritan movement.

Another loss in that form of Protestant Christianity with which we are most familiar here, is that of the conception of Purgatory. No doubt, this conception, as interpreted by Dante, can only be taken—as so many other religious conceptions must be—as symbolic. I suppose it was in that way that he intended it to be taken. So far as I can see, it is best interpreted for modern thought as meaning simply human life on Earth, tending to sink or to rise towards what may be characterised as Hell or Heaven. Hell, I believe, meant originally little more than the grave; and, in that sense, we may all be said to descend into Hell; but, if we are right in regarding the views of modern Spiritualism as well founded, it is only the bodily organism that so

¹ It must be admitted, however, that some of the characteristics that are commonly ascribed to Kali seem to bear more resemblance to those of Lady Macbeth than to those of Miranda.

descends. The real self may be supposed to rise, by gradual stages, to a more and more perfect form of existence that may be called Heaven. In this way it seems possible to reinterpret some of the conceptions of Catholic Christianity. I observe that a view of this kind is finding its way even into the modern Drama;¹ and it is certainly the only view that appears to be capable of philosophical interpretation.

3. THE PLACE OF OUR EARTH.

The view that has now been suggested of the condition of human life on Earth as being best conceived under the image of Purgatory, may help to reconcile us to some recent astronomical discoveries to which reference has already been made. Many people (notably Flammarion² and Sir Francis Young-husband³) have liked to think of the vast expanse of the stellar system as containing many habitations for people more or less similar to ourselves. The view that has now been made current, according to which our Earth is to be regarded as having been formed by what may be briefly characterised as an accidental collision, and as being the only planet thus produced that appears to be suitable for habitation by beings at all similar to ourselves, renders it very doubtful whether there are other planets of a similar kind circling round other suns, and whether, even if there are such planets, they would be habitable by beings like ourselves. If life on earth may be characterised

¹ Especially in the play called *The Last Enemy*.

² *Dreams of an Astronomer, La Planète Mars, etc.*

³ *Life in the Stars.*

as Purgatory, such a conclusion may not be altogether to be regretted.

With regard to the apparently accidental origin of our Earth, it can hardly be necessary to say much. From the point of view of the Universal Mind, it seems clear that there cannot be any such thing as an accident. Indeed, even from the point of view of the spatio-temporal system, such a conception would appear to be excluded. Everything that happens must be supposed to be contained within the general plan. Even if we regard human life as a Drama, it may be pointed out that most dramas turn, to some extent, on what may be characterised as accidental circumstances. The play of *Othello*, for instance, involves in its plot the accidental dropping of a handkerchief by Desdemona. Indeed, if there were no accidents (in the sense in which the term is commonly understood) the great Drama of human life would hardly be possible at all. If everything went smoothly the prospect would be as "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable" as the end that is depicted by Sir James Jeans in *Eos*. Certainly that problem need not detain us here. And it may be added that, if our life on Earth is to be regarded as Purgatory, as has been suggested, one Purgatory may suffice.

But another objection may be raised. It may be thought that, if this general view is to be accepted, the immense assemblage of suns that appear to be scattered throughout the spatial system, must be regarded as a worthless superfluity. This hardly seems to follow. If the Earth is Purgatory and the Grave is Hell, perhaps we need also some visible

image of what is meant by Heaven; and certainly the sun and the stellar system have always appealed to the human mind as the most impressive representation of the glory of God that could well be imagined. Kant, it will be remembered, classed it along with the moral law as the two great types of what is meant by the sublime. Still, some may think that it is a somewhat unnecessary extravagance. The answer is, I think, that, if it were less, it would lose its sublimity with the advance of knowledge; whereas, in fact, the more we know of it, the more sublime does it appear. In any case, it can hardly be supposed that the Universal Mind has any need to economise! It might be more plausible to urge, not that there is too much glory in the heavens, but that there is too much pain on earth. But in tragedy also there is a certain sublimity which perhaps could not well be spared. At any rate, it is generally recognised that great tragedies are the most sublime forms of art. Even in Milton's despoite, *Paradise Lost* is generally preferred to *Paradise Regained*. Still, it is no doubt true that it is our business to try to mitigate the pain that is found on earth. It is largely for that purpose that our creative energies have to be exercised; and "if our virtues did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike as if we had them not." The problem of evil is not, in reality, a serious difficulty. Without some forms of evil, the noblest forms of goodness could hardly have any existence. This, as I have already noted, has been eloquently urged in many well-known writings, and need not be further emphasised here.

4. THE PRACTICAL ASPECT OF RELIGION.

I believe I am right in saying that there is a very decided tendency, in the teaching of religion at the present time, to lay a diminishing emphasis on special doctrines and an increasing one on character and conduct. It is, no doubt, possible to over-emphasise this antithesis. If work is worship, thought is at least an important form of work; and it is a form that usually results in the formation of beliefs. But beliefs are often—perhaps even usually—in the well-known phrase of Emerson, “good for this trip only.” It is a mistake to try to stereotype them; and this, I suppose, is now almost everywhere acknowledged. I am not sure that there is not now rather more danger of thinking that it is of no importance to try to arrive at the truth about cosmic problems at all. The pursuit of truth may be an endless quest; but at least we may hope to get gradually nearer to it. It has sometimes been said that the pursuit of truth is preferable to the attainment of it; and that might be true if there were any real danger of getting to the end of the pursuit. Even then, I fancy the content of it would be so great and varied that we should not be likely to weary in the contemplation of it. The contemplation of it in its completeness would be, to all intents, its continual rediscovery. It could not be a passive contemplation. At any rate, there is no immediate danger! Even if anyone had discovered the whole truth, it would remain for everyone else to rediscover it for himself. If Hegel’s philosophy, for instance,

contained the whole truth—which obviously it does not—it would still be necessary for everyone else who wished to attain it to think it out afresh for himself. There is no real danger of finality.

But, in any case, it can hardly be maintained that the contemplation of ultimate truth constitutes the whole of religion. The amelioration of the general conditions of life is one of the great ends of life and so is the creation of beauty; and the religious attitude can hardly be indifferent to these ends. How they are to be pursued, it hardly falls within the scope of such a book as this to determine. It is now, I think, pretty generally recognised that the view of human life as a whole that has been generally adopted in India, as involving three main aspects—the cultural, the economic and the political—is substantially sound. Religion belongs primarily to the cultural side; but it cannot be altogether indifferent to the other two. It may be held to consist primarily in the contemplation of the Cosmos as a process directed towards the achievement of the supreme good; but it also involves the recognition that that good is only achieved through the direction of the will towards it. It is chiefly for this reason that religion calls for a somewhat extensive organisation; and it is clearly desirable that that organisation should be national and eventually international. The consideration of this, however, belongs rather to social philosophy than to the study of cosmic problems. It must suffice here to indicate its importance. To discuss it further would involve some consideration of the economic and political aspects of life, as well as the more purely cultural.

It may not be out of place, however, to add a few remarks on the educational aspect.

5. THE FREE MAN'S WORSHIP.

If the view taken throughout this book is to be accepted, much of what is commonly taught in churches will disappear or become greatly transformed. I have tried to suggest by the reinterpretation of Purgatory what sort of transformation might be expected. It is clear, I think, that some such transformation is rapidly taking place within the existing religious organisations. What is chiefly important is that we should be careful, according to the German phrase, not to empty out the child along with the bath-water. Much of what was taught as dogma may be retained, at least for a time, as metaphor or symbol. I think it would now be generally admitted that Mr. Bertrand Russell was somewhat premature in his account¹ of what the "Free Man's Worship" would include—or rather of what it would exclude. He conceived, as I understand him, that it would simply involve the recognition of the supreme values and devotion to them. This may certainly be admitted, if it is liberally interpreted. But the supreme values seem, as I have previously urged, to include the idea of Reality as ultimately determined by them. This is what is involved in Plato's conception of the Good as that at which all things—or perhaps rather *the All of things*—are aiming. I take this to be sub-

¹ See the brilliant Essay with this title in his *Philosophical Essays*.

stantially identical with Mr. Alexander's conception of the Universe as aiming at the realisation of Deity; and it would certainly seem that it is only through identification with this aim that we can achieve our "freedom." But, of course, it is true that the possibility of regarding the Universe in this way is due to a large extent to scientific conceptions of the spatio-temporal system that had not been definitely developed at the time when Mr. Russell wrote his famous Essay. I may add that I think the possibility of interpreting the Universe as aiming at the Good is hardly sufficiently realised in the teaching of what is commonly known as "Ethical Religion." Beauty, as well as moral goodness, is emphasised in that religion; but it seems to me that the time has come when it is possible to recognise, with a considerable degree of assurance, that the tendency towards Good is, by no means, foreign to "Nature." Such a worship of Nature as was taught by Wordsworth can hardly be regarded as foreign to the spirit of religion. It remains true, however, that the cultivation of Good Will is its fundamental aim. This appears to mean co-operation with the underlying purpose of the Universe. That purpose may be said to become conscious of itself in human life. Of course, it only gradually becomes conscious of itself; and it appears to be the object of religion to develop it. The complete development of it, no doubt, involves not only the purely spiritual impulse that is supplied by religion but also co-operation in the political and economic aspects of life. But the inspiring influence must be an essentially religious one.

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION.

The general view to which we thus appear to be led with regard to the significance of Religion, is that it consists essentially in the recognition of a supreme purpose in the Universe—the purpose of realising the highest Good—and the belief that it is possible for human beings, in some degree, to apprehend that purpose and to co-operate in its fulfilment. In what particular ways this may best be done, it is a large part—perhaps, in a sense, even the whole—of the purpose of human life to discover.

I seem now to have completed what I, perhaps somewhat rashly, undertook to do. Setting out from the general conception of the Universe as a Cosmos, it has been my object to try to see what particular conceptions are involved in that general one, and what the bearing of them is upon the practical life of humanity. To carry the discussion farther, would be to enter upon some of those more detailed studies that can be better treated in books specially devoted to them. The object of the present survey has been to call attention to the most fundamental problems and to remove some of the most obvious difficulties in the way of their solution. I am very far from supposing that all the difficulties have been cleared away. I hope at least that I have not concealed or obscured the difficulties. For their complete removal, the co-operation of the special sciences (including psychical research) is required; and happily there is now no real opposition between the results of the special sciences and the demands of speculative thought.

INDEX

- ABSOLUTE, 17, 28, 33, 39, 47, 76
 Alexander, 9, 17, 27, 42, 44, 54, 65, 86, 118
 Appearance, 18
 Appreciation, 13
 Archer-Hind, 28
 Aristotle, 8
 Axiological argument, 41

 Benevolence, 13, 47
 Bergson, 63 *sq.*
 Berkeley, 32, 37
 Body and mind, 85
 Body, subtle, 87
 Bosanquet, 21, 35, 76, 82
 Bose, 65
 Bradley, 18, 20, 30, 33, 38, 48, 93, 106
 Broad, 86
 Browning, 74
 Buddhism, 12

 Caird, 20, 45, 82, 110
 Chance, 3, 43 *sq.*
 Choice, 44
 Christianity, 13, 87 *sq.*, 109 *sq.*
 Clémenceau, 32
 Contingency, 3, 9, 43, 70
 Cosmos, 3 *sq.*
 Creation, 27, 35, 47, 49
 Creative evolution, 63 *sq.*
 Creative imagination, 45 *sq.*
 Creative intelligence, 35

 Dante, 110 *sq.*
 Darwin, 62
 Das Gupta, 89
 Degrees of truth and reality, 20, 30
 Deity, 54, 103
 Demiurge, 27
 Descartes, 36, 61
 Dunne, 75, 102

 Earth, place of, 57, 112
 Eddington, 54
 Einstein, 102
 Election, natural, 11
 Emergence, 65
 Emerson, 3, 66, 115
 Energy, 52, 56
 Eternity, 80
 Evil, 16
 Evolution, 8, 60, 63, 69, 71, 72, 109
 Existence, 21, 36, 51

 Fawcett, 27, 44 *sq.*, 68
 Finitude, 9, 59
 Flammarion, 58, 75, 96, 112
 Freedom, 71, 77

 God, 17, 25, 28
 Goethe, 11
 Good, 5, 10, 29, 39
 Green, T. H., 39

 Hegel, 5, 7, 20, 40, 44, 55, 101
 Heraclitus, 102
 Hicks, 54
 Hobhouse, 6
 Huxley, 76

 Idealism, 31, 33
 Imagination, 45, 67
 Immortality, 87, 109
 India, 33, 89
 Individuality, 69 *sq.*
 Infinity, 101 *sq.*
 Intelligence, creative, 35

 James, 90
 Jeans, 56 *sq.*, 113
 Johnson, 103
 Jones, 20, 34, 43, 82, 96

 Kant, 38, 102, 114
 Karma, 73

- Laird, 10, 62, 70
 Lamarck, 61
 Leibniz, 37, 71
 Love, 12 *sq.*
 Lucretius, 36

 Mass, 56
 McTaggart, 7, 19, 21, 32, 75, 81
 Mentalism, 31
 Milton, 74, 114
 Mind, 24 *sq.*; and body, 85, 87
 Modes of creation, 49
 Moore, 6, 21, 48
 Morgan, 65
 Muirhead, 20, 64
 Murray, 93

 Natural election, 11
 Natural selection, 62
 Number, 23, 100

 Oakeley, 85
 Objectivity of value, 15
 Ontological argument, 40

 Particular and universal, 100
 Paul, 74
 Perry, 11
 Personality, 37, 81
 Philosophy, 1, 51, 108
 Plato, 3, 5, 20, 27, 40, 43, 60
 Prediction, 74
 Psychical research, 90
 Purgatory, 111

 Radhakrishnan, 33
 Ranade, 33
 Realism, 31
 Reality, 18, 21, 30
 Recurrence, 104
 Reincarnation, 87 *sq.*
 Religion, 108, 109, 119
 Ruskin, 10, 111
 Russell, 59, 117
 Rutherford, 9

 Schiller, 23, 43
 Science, 51
 Self-subsistent life, 20
 Shakespeare, 25, 45, 48, 99,
 110
 Shankara, 33
 Sherrington, 64
 Sidgwick, 31, 90
 Sorley, 11, 16, 41, 74
 Spatio-temporal system, 8 *sq.*
 Speculative philosophy, 1 *sq.*
 Smuts, 64
 Spinoza, 2, 17, 42
 Spiritualism, 94 *sq.*
 Stace, 40
 Subtle body, 87
 Survival, 78 *sq.*

 Tagore, 33 *sq.*
 Taylor, 28
 Telepathy, 92
 Temporal process, 75
 Thomson, 60
 Time, 76, 102
 Truth, 30

 Ultimate good, 39
 Ultimate values, 16
 Universal mind, 25, 32, 36, 38,
 97
 Universals, 5, 21, 100
 Urban, 4, 30

 Validity, 23
 Valuation, 11
 Value, 10, 15, 16, 41, 47
 Vedanta, 33

 Ward, 55, 91
 Weismann, 61
 Whitehead, 7, 55
 Wordsworth, 83 *sq.*
 Worship, 117 *sq.*

 Younghusband, 58, 112

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