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Frontispiece

RUDOLF EUCKEN

A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

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PREFACE

The name of Eucken has become a familiar one in philosophical and religious circles. Until recent years the reading of his books was confined to those possessing a knowledge of German, but of late several have been translated into the English language, and now the students of philosophy and religion are agog with accounts of a new philosopher who is at once a great ethical teacher and an optimistic prophet. There is no doubt that Eucken has a great message, and those who cannot find time to make a thorough study of his works should not fail to know something of the man and his teachings. The aim of this volume is to give a brief and clear account of his philosophical ideas, and to inspire the reader to study for himself Eucken's great works.

Professor Rudolf Eucken was born in 1846, at Aurich in Frisia. He attended school in his native town, and then proceeded to study at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin. In 1874 he was invited to the Professorship of Philosophy at the University of Jena, and here he has laboured for thirty-eight years; during this period he has been listened to and admired by many of the more advanced students of philosophy of all countries and continents.

His earliest writings were historical in character, and consisted mainly of learned essays upon the classical and German philosophers.

Following upon these appeared valuable studies in the history of philosophy, which brought out, too, to some extent, Eucken's own philosophical ideas.

His latest works have been more definitely constructive. In *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*, and *The Truth of Religion*, he gives respectively a full account of his philosophical system, and of his ideas concerning religion.

Several smaller works contain his ideas in briefer and more popular form.

As a lecturer he is charming and inspiring. He is not always easy to understand; his sentences are often long, florid, and complex. Sometimes, indeed, he is quite beyond the comprehension of his students—but when they do not understand, they admire, and feel they are in the presence of greatness. His writings contain many of the faults of his lectures. They are often laboured and obscure, diffuse and verbose.

But these faults are minor in character, compared with the greatness of his work. There is no doubt that his is one of the noblest attempts ever made to solve the great question of life. Never was a philosophy more imbued with the spirit of battle against the evil and sordid, and with the desire to find in life the highest and greatest that can be found in it.

I have to thank Professor Eucken for the inspiration of his lectures and books, various writers, translators, and friends for suggestions, and especially my wife, whose help in various ways has been invaluable.

Passages are quoted from several of the works mentioned in the Bibliography, especially from Eucken's "The Truth of Religion," with the kind permission of Messrs. Williams & Norgate—the publishers.

ABEL J. JONES.

CARDIFF.

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RUDOLF EUCKEN: A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

Before we proceed to outline Eucken's philosophical position, it will be well if we can first be clear as to the special problem with which he concerns himself. Philosophers have at some time or other considered all the problems of heaven and earth to be within their province, especially the difficult problems for which a simple solution is impossible. Hence it is, perhaps, that philosophy has been in disrepute, especially in English-speaking countries, the study of the subject has been very largely limited to a small class of students, and the philosopher has been regarded as a dreamy, theorising, and unpractical individual.

Many people, when they hear of Eucken, will put him out of mind as an ordinary member of a body of cranks. From Eucken's point of view this is the most unfortunate thing that can happen, for his message is not directed to a limited number of advanced students of philosophy, but is meant for all thinking members of the human race.

The problem he endeavours to solve is far from being one of mere theoretical interest; on the contrary it has to do with matters of immediate practical concern to the life of the individual and of the community. To ignore him will be to fail to take account of one of the most rousing philosophies of modern times.

The apathy that exists in regard to the subject of philosophy is not easy to explain. It is not that philosophising is only possible to the greatest intellects; it is indeed natural for the normal mind to do so. In a quiet hour, when the world with its rush and din leaves us to ourselves and the universe, we begin to ask ourselves "Why" and "How," and then almost unconsciously we philosophise. Nothing is more natural to the human mind than to wonder, and to wonder is to begin to philosophise.

Perhaps philosophers have been largely to blame for the indifference shown; their terms have often been needlessly difficult, their language obscure, and their ideas abstruse. Too often, too, their abstract speculations have caused them to ignore or forget the actual experience of mankind.

Those who have quarrelled with philosophy for these or other reasons will do well to lay their prejudices aside when they start a study of Eucken, for though he has some of the faults of his class, he has many striking and exceptional excellences.

Philosophers in general set out to solve the riddle of the universe. They differ in their statement of the problem, in the purpose of the attempt, and in their methods of attempting the solution. Some will wonder how this marvellous universe ever came into existence, and will consider the question of the existence of things to be the problem of philosophy. Others in observing the diversity of things in the universe wonder what is behind it all; they seek to go beyond mere appearances, and to investigate the nature of that behind the appearances, which they call the reality. In their attempts to solve one or both of these problems, thinkers are led to marvel how it is that we get to know things at all; they are tempted to investigate the possibility of knowledge, and are in this way side-tracked from

the main problem. Others in their investigations are struck with amazement at the intricate organisation of the human mind; they leave the riddle of the universe to study the processes of human thought, and examine as far as they are able the phenomena of consciousness. Then thought itself claims the attention of other philosophers; they seek to find what are the laws of valid thought, what rules must be followed in order that through reasoning we may arrive at correct conclusions. Others become attracted to an investigation of the good in the universe, and their question changes from “What is?” to “What ought to be?” Others interest themselves in the problem of the beautiful, and endeavour to determine the essence of the beautiful and of its appreciation. In this way the subject of philosophy separates out into a number of branches. The study of the beautiful is called *Æ*sthetics; of the good, Ethics; of the laws of thought, Logic; of the mind processes, Psychology; of the possibility of knowledge, the Theory of knowledge; while the deeper problems of the existence of things, of reality and unity in the universe, are generally included under Metaphysics.

It need hardly be pointed out that all these branches are very closely related, and that a discussion of any one of them involves to some extent a reference to the others. One cannot, for example, attempt to solve the great question of reality without touching upon the possibility of knowledge, without some reference to the processes of the human mind, and the standards of the validity of thought, of the good, and of the beautiful.

It is however essential, if one is to appreciate a philosopher, to understand clearly what his main problem is. Therein lies frequently the differences among philosophers—that is, in the special emphasis laid on one problem, and the attention to, or neglect of other aspects. To fail to be clear on this matter frequently means to misunderstand a philosopher.

And it would seem that many critics have failed to appreciate the work of Eucken to the extent they should, because they have expected him to deal in detail with problems which it is not his intention to discuss, and have failed to appreciate what special problem it is that he attempts to solve.

Eucken’s special problem is that of the reality in the universe, of the unity there exists in the diversity of things. In so far as he makes this his problem, he is at one with other philosophers in investigating what may perhaps be considered to be the most profound problem that the human mind has ever conceived. The fact that distinguishes Eucken from a large number of other thinkers is that he starts where they leave off. At a rule, philosophers begin their investigation with a consideration of matter, and proceed by slow degrees to attempt to explain the reality at the basis of it. Some never get further, and dispense with the question of human life and thought as mere aspects or manifestations of the material world. But the problem of life is for Eucken the one problem—he seeks to find the reality beneath the superficialities of human existence, and he has little to say concerning the world of matter. And, after all, it is the problem of life that urgently calls for solution, for upon the solution that is accepted, the life of the individual is to a large extent based. It is, of course, very interesting to meditate and speculate upon the material world, its origin and evolution, but the question is very largely one of mere theoretical interest—a kind of game or puzzle for studious minds. It is the question of life itself that is ultimately of practical interest to every human soul. And this is the problem that Eucken would solve. Hence those who expect to find a closely reasoned philosophy on matter and

its manifestations must look elsewhere, for Eucken has little for them. Eucken's philosophy is a philosophy of life, and he only touches incidentally those aspects of philosophy that are not immediately concerned with his special problem. He refuses to be allured from the main problem by subsidiary investigations, and perhaps rightly so, for one problem of such magnitude would seem to be enough for one human mind to attempt. Eucken is a philosopher who lays foundations and deals with broad outlines and principles; it must be left to his many disciples to fill in any gaps that exist on this account, by attempting to solve the subsidiary problems with which Eucken cannot for the present concern himself.

If Eucken's problem differs fundamentally from that of most other philosophers, perhaps the purpose of his investigations is still a more striking characteristic. He is anxious to solve the riddle of the universe in order that there may be drawn from the solution an inspiration which shall help the human race to concentrate its energies upon the highest ideals of life. The desire to find a meaning which will explain, and at the same time infuse zest and gladness into every department of life has become a passion with him, and in finding that meaning, his great endeavour is to prove the truth of human freedom and personality. He wishes to solve the riddle in order that man may become a better man, the world a better world. His aim is definitely an ethical aim, and his purpose a practical one of the noblest order, and not one of mere intellectual interest.

There is much, too, that is original in his methods—this will become evident in the chapters that follow. He begins with an inquiry into the solutions that have been offered. After careful investigation he finds they all fail to satisfy the conditions which a solution should satisfy. His discussions of these theories are most illuminating, and those who do not agree with his conclusions cannot fail to admire his masterly treatment.

Having arrived at this conclusion, he searches the story of the past, studies the conditions of the present, and gazes into the maze of the future, and finds revealed in them all an eternal something, unaffected by time, which was, is, and ever shall be—the eternal, universal, spiritual his, which then must be the great reality.

Upon this basis he builds a system of philosophy, which he considers to be more satisfactory than the solutions already offered; with which contention, there is little doubt, the majority of his readers will be inclined to agree.

After the brief statement of Eucken's special problem, of the purpose and methods of his investigation, we can proceed to outline his theories in greater detail, beginning in the next chapter with his discussion of the solutions that have in the past been offered and accepted.

CHAPTER II
HAS THE PROBLEM BEEN SOLVED?

What is the meaning, the value, and purpose of life, and what is the highest and the eternal in life—the great reality? This is the question that Eucken would solve. Before attempting a solution of his own, he examines those that have already been offered. His discussion of these theories is remarkable for the fairness, breadth of view, sympathy, insight, and accurate knowledge that is shown. There is no superficial criticism, neither does he concern himself with the inessential details of the theories.

Jest-books tell us of a defendant against whom a claim for compensation was made by a complainant who alleged that the former's dog had bitten him. The defence was, first, that the dog was lame, blind, and toothless; second, that it had died a week before; and third, that the defendant never possessed a dog. A sensible judge would wish to be satisfied in regard to the third statement before wasting time discussing the others; if it proved to be true, then the case would be at an end. The defences of philosophical systems are often similar, and the critic is tempted to waste time discussing details when he should go to the root of the matter. Eucken does not fall into this error. His special method is to seek the idea or ideas which lie at the root of the proposed solution; if these are unsatisfactory, then he does not consider it necessary to discuss them further. Hence his work is free from the flippant and superficial argument so common to-day; he makes a fair and serious endeavour to find out the truth (if any) that is at the basis of the proposed solutions, and does not hesitate to give them their due meed of praise even though he considers them to be ultimately unsatisfactory.

Before a solution can be regarded as a satisfactory one, Eucken holds that it should satisfy certain conditions. It should offer an explanation for life which can be a firm basis for life, it must admit of the possibility of human freedom, and must release the human being from sordid motives—unless it satisfy these conditions, then it cannot be accepted as final.

The solutions of the problem of life that have been offered he considers to be five—Religion and Immanental Idealism, Naturalism, Socialism and Individualism, the first two regarding the invisible world as the reality in life, the others laying emphasis on man's life in the present world. The reader will perhaps wonder how his choice has fallen upon these systems of thought and these alone. The explanation is a simple one: he considers it necessary to deal only with those theories which can form, and have formed, bases for a whole system of life. Mere theoretical ideas of life, especially negative ideas such as those of agnosticism and scepticism, do not form such a basis, but the five chosen for discussion can, and have to some extent, posed as complete theories of life, upon which a system of life can be built.

Has *Religion* solved the question? If it has, then it must have done so in that which must be considered its highest form—in Christianity. Christianity has attempted the solution by placing stress upon a higher invisible world, a world in sharp contrast with the mere world of sense, and far superior to it. It unites life to a supernatural world, and raises mankind

above the level of the natural world. It has brought out with great clearness the contrast between the higher world and the world of sin, and has shown the need for a break with the evil in the world. It has given to man a belief in freedom, and in the necessity for a complete change of heart. It has proved a source of deliverance from the feeling, of guilt, and a comfort in suffering. Indeed, considering all the facts, there seems to be no doubt that, of all the solutions offered, religion has been the most powerful factor in the history of mankind.

Its influence would continue for the present and future, were it not that doubt has been cast upon its very foundations, and had not circumstances arisen to take men's minds away from thoughts of a higher and invisible world, and to concentrate them to a greater extent than formerly upon the world of sense. The progress of the natural sciences has done much to bring about the change. Christianity made man the centre of the universe, for whom all things existed, but the sciences have insisted upon a broader view of the universe, and have deposed man from his throne, and given him a much humbler position. Then as the conception of law became more prominent, and scientists became more and more inclined to explain all things as the result of natural laws, the idea of a personal God in constant communion with, and supervision over mankind, fell into disfavour.

And the study of history has caused questions to be raised. Some historians have endeavoured to show that the idea of an overworld is merely the characteristic of a certain stage in the evolution of mankind, and that the ideas of religion are, after all, little more than the mental construction of a God upon the image of man's own self. History has attacked the doctrinal form of religion, and has endeavoured to show that religions have been very largely coloured and influenced by the prevailing ideas of the time; and the question naturally arises as to whether there is anything more in religion than these temporary elements.

And this is not all. In the present age the current of human activity is strong. Man is beginning to accomplish things in the material world, and is becoming anxious to accomplish more. His railways cover the lands, his ships sail the seas, and his aeroplanes fly through the air. He has acquired a taste for this world, a zest for the conquest and the utilising for his own pleasure and benefit of the world of nature. And when this occurs, the overworld sinks into the background—he is satisfied with the present, and feels no need, except under special circumstances, of a higher world. The sense world at present makes a strong appeal—and the stronger it becomes, the less he listens to the call of an overworld.

The sciences, history, and the special phases of human activity have drawn attention from a higher, invisible world, and have cast doubts upon its very existence.

As a result of this, "Religion (in the traditional form), despite all it has effected, is for the man of to-day a question rather than an answer. It is itself too much of a problem to interpret to us the meaning of our life, and make us feel that it is worth the living."

In these words Eucken states his conviction that Christianity in its orthodox forms cannot solve the problem of the present. This, however, is not all he has to say concerning religion. He is, in truth, a great believer in religion, and as will be seen, he believes that later it will again step forth in a changed form as "the fact of facts" to wield a power perhaps greater than ever before.

As in the case of religion, *Immanent Idealism* is a theory that gives life an invisible basis, but the invisible has been regarded as that which lies at the root of the present world, and not as a separate higher world outside our own. The Divine it considers not as a personal being apart from the world, but as a power existing in and permeating it, that indeed which gives to the world its truth and depth. Man belongs to the visible world, but inwardly he is alive to the presence of a deeper reality, and his ambition must be to become himself a part of this deeper whole. If by turning from his superficial life he can set himself in the depths of reality, then a magnificent life, with the widest prospects, opens out before him. "He may win the whole of infinity for his own, and set himself free from the triviality of the merely human without losing himself in an alien world." And if he does so, he is led to place greater emphasis upon the high ideals of life than upon material progress. He learns to value the beautiful far above the merely useful; the inner life above mere existence, a genuine spiritual culture above the mere perfecting of natural and social conditions. There is brought into view a new and deeper life in which the emphasis is placed upon the good, the beautiful, and the true. In this way idealism has inspired many men to put forth their energies for the highest aims, has lifted the individual above the narrowness of a life devoted to himself alone, and has produced characters of exceptional beauty and strength. It claims, indeed, to be able to shape the world of man more satisfactorily than religion can, for it has no need for doctrines of the Divine, the Divine being immediately present in the world. But despite its great influence in the past, its power has of late been considerably weakened.

The question of the existence of a deeper invisible reality in the world has become as problematic as the doctrines of religion.

To be a whole-hearted believer in the older forms of idealism it is necessary that the universe be regarded as ultimately reasonable and harmonious, and there must be a belief in the possibilities of great development on the part of the human being. But a serious study of things reveals to us the fact that the universe is not entirely reasonable and harmonious. If it were, then man's effort towards the ideal would be helped by the whole universe, but that is far from being the case; progress means fight, and difficult fight; there is definite opposition to the efforts of man to raise himself. Moreover, there is evil in the world, let pantheists and others say what they will. Eucken refuses to close his eyes to, or to explain away, opposition, pain, and evil—the world is far from being wholly reasonable and harmonious, and idealists must acknowledge this fact. The natural sciences, too, by emphasising the reign of law, tend to limit more and more the possibilities of the human being, ultimately robbing him of all freedom—hence of all possibility of creation. And how can one be an enthusiastic devotee of idealism if he is led to doubt man's power to aim at, fight towards, or even choose the highest?

Idealism was at its height in those red-letter days when a high state of culture had been attained, and great personalities produced masterpieces in art, music, and literature. The progress of the sciences and of man's natural activity has directed the spirit of the age towards material progress; the ideals of mankind tend to become external and superficial, and the interest in the invisible world falls to a minimum.

To some extent, too, idealism breathes of aristocracy—a most unpopular characteristic in a democratic age. Experience shows that man is raised above himself only in rare cases,

and that the great things in the realms of art, music, and literature are very largely the monopoly of the few, and these mainly of the leisured classes. Hence the appeal of idealism to certain types of men and women must necessarily be a feeble one.

Then, again, there is the general indifference of mankind to lofty aims; this militates against the power of idealism even more than in the case of religion, for while in the latter there is the idea of a personal God who is pleased or displeased urging men to renewed effort, the teachings of idealism may appear to be mere abstractions, and can, as such, possess little driving-power for the ordinary mind.

Idealism, too, seems to be a mere compromise between religion and a life devoted to sense experience, and like most compromises it lacks the enthusing power of the original ideas.

Finally, the whole theory leaves us in uncertainty—"that which was intended to give a firm support, and to point out a clear course to our life, has itself become a difficult problem."

But Eucken has more to say concerning idealism, even though in a different form from the theories of the past. Indeed, his philosophy is generally classed amongst the idealisms. Eucken makes a great endeavour, however, to avoid the difficulties and objections to the idealistic position; later we shall see that a great measure of success has crowned his efforts.

Having discussed the two solutions that place special stress on the invisible world, he proceeds to deal with the theories which emphasise the relation of the life of man to the material world.

He first treats of *Naturalism*, that solution of the problem that makes the sense experience of surrounding nature the basis of life, subordinating even the life of the soul to the level of the natural, material world.

Nature in the early ages had been superficially explained, often in the light of religious doctrine. Man gave to nature a variety of explanations and of colouring, depending largely upon his ideas of the place of nature in relation to himself and to the invisible world. But such anthropomorphic explanations could not long survive the progress of the sciences, for a scientific comprehension of nature could only be attained by getting rid of all human colouring, and by investigating nature entirely by itself, out of all relation to the human soul. Man then investigated nature more and more as an object apart from himself.

The first result of these investigations was to impress upon him the reality of nature as something independent, and to increase on a very large scale his knowledge of, and control over nature. When man began to formulate and understand nature, he began, too, to invent machines to profit from the knowledge he gained. Hence followed a marvellously fruitful period of human activity, an activity which at first strengthened man in his own soul, and gave him increased consciousness of independence and power. While he was compelled to admit the greatness of the natural world, he became more and more convinced that he himself was far greater, for could he not put the laws of nature to his own use and profit? Hence the gain to man at this stage of the development of the sciences was very great, for he had come to appreciate more than before the superiority of the human soul over the material world. Hence resulted a more robust type of life, "a life

energetic, masculine, pressing forward unceasingly." Matters, however, were not destined to remain long at this stage. As man's knowledge of the processes of nature increased further, a twofold result followed. On the one hand, the sense world of nature became increasingly absorbing in interest; on the other hand, laws were formulated and nature was conceived of as being a chain of cause and effect, a combination of mechanical elements whose interactions were according to law, and could be foretold with the utmost precision.

These two factors worked in the same direction, namely, that of rendering less necessary the conception of a spiritual world. The interest of mankind became so concentrated upon material things that the interest in the invisible decreased, while the mechanical, soulless elements with their ceaseless actions and reactions in definite order, and according to inviolable law, were held sufficient to account for the phenomena of nature. The keynote was "relation to environment"; a constantly changing environment, changing according to law, called for ceaseless readjustment, and the adaptation to environment was held to be the stimulus to all activity in the natural world.

The later development of biology, and the doctrine of the evolution of species, gradually extended this conception of nature to include man himself.

What he had regarded as his distinctive characteristics were held to be but the product of natural factors, and his life was regarded, too, as under the domain of rigid, inviolable law. There was no room for, and no need of, the conception of free, originative thought. Thought was simply an answer to the demand that the sense world was making, entirely dependent upon the external stimulus, just as any other activity was entirely dependent on an external stimulus. So thought came to be regarded as resulting from mere sense impression, which latter corresponded to the external stimulus. It is obvious that the idea of the freedom of the human soul, and of human personality as previously understood, had to go. Man was simply the result of the interaction of numerous causes—and like the rest of nature, involved no independent spiritual element. Everything that was previously regarded as spiritual was interpreted as a mere adjunct to, or a shadow of, the sense world. Such a conception accounted for the whole of nature and of man, and so became an explanation of the universe, a philosophy.

In such a theory self-preservation becomes the aim of life, the struggle for existence the driving-power, and adaptation to environment the means to the desired end. Hence it comes about that only one standard of value remains, that of usefulness, for that alone can be regarded as valuable which proves to be useful towards the preservation and enjoyment of the natural life. The ideas of the good, the beautiful, and the true, lose the glory of their original meaning, and become comparatively barren conceptions. Hence at a stroke the spiritual world is wiped away, the soul of man is degraded from its high position, the great truths of religion are cast aside as mere illusions.

The naturalistic explanation possesses the apparent advantage of being a very simple one, and hence attracts the human mind with great force in the early stages of mental culture. All the difficulties of the conception of a higher world are absent, for the naturalistic position does not admit of its existence. It gives, too, some purpose to life, even though that purpose is not an ideal one.

Eucken is not reluctant to give the theory all the credit it deserves, and he is prepared to

admit that it fulfils to some extent the conditions which he holds a satisfactory solution should fulfil.

He goes, however, immediately to the root of the matter, and finds that the very existence of the theory of naturalism in itself is an eloquent disproof of the theory. The existence of a comprehensive scientific conception involves an activity which is far superior to nature itself, for it can make nature the object of systematic study. An intellect which is nothing more than a mirror of sense impressions can get little beyond such sense impressions, whereas the highly developed scientific conception of nature that obtains to-day is far beyond a mere collection of sense impressions. Nature, indeed, is subdued and mastered by man; why then degrade man to the level of a universe he has mastered? To produce from the phenomena of nature a scientific conception of nature demands the activity of an independent, originative power of thought, which, though it may be conditioned by, and must be related to, sense impressions, is far above mere sense impressions.

Naturalism, in directing attention to the things that are experienced, fails to take proper account of the mind that experiences them; it postulates nature without mind, when only by the mind processes can man become aware of nature, and construct a naturalistic scheme of life. “To a thorough-going naturalism, naturalism itself is logically impossible.” Hence the impossibility of the naturalistic theory as an explanation of life.

Then it fails to provide a high ideal for life, and to release man from sordid motives. It gives no place for love, for work for its own sake, for altruistic conduct, or for devotion to the high ideals of life. The aim of life is limited to this world—man has but to aim at the enjoyment and preservation of his own life. The mechanical explanation of life, too, does away with the possibility of human freedom and personality, and it is futile to urge man to greater efforts when success is impossible. It is a theory which does justice merely to a life of pleasure and pain, its psychology has no soul, and its political economy bases the community upon selfishness.

In this way Eucken disproves the claim of naturalism; in doing so he points out that a satisfactory solution must take account of the life of nature in a way which religion and idealism have failed to do.

Of late years *Socialism* and *Individualism* have come into prominence as theories of life. Eucken attributes the movements in the first instance to the receding into the background of the idea of an overworld which gave meaning and value to life. When doubt was thrown upon religion and idealism, when confidence in another world was shaken, man lost to an extent his moral support. Where could he turn now for a firm basis to life? He might, of course, turn from the invisible world to the world of sense, to nature. But the first result of this is to make man realise that he is separate from nature, and again he fails to find support. He is an alien in the world of nature, and disbelieves the existence of a higher world. When both are denied him he turns naturally to his fellow-men—here at least he can find community of interest—here at least he is among beings of his own type. Hence he confines his attention to the life of humanity, and in this, the universe of mankind, he hopes to find an explanation of his own life, and a value for it.

The progress of humanity, then, must become the aim of life—all our strength and effort

must be focussed upon human nature itself. But an immediate difficulty arises. Where are we to find Man? “Is it in the social community where individual forces are firmly welded together to form a common life, or among individuals as they exist for themselves in all their exhaustless diversity?” If we put the community first, then the social whole must be firmly rooted in itself and be independent of the caprice of its members. The duty of the individual is to subordinate himself to the community—this means socialism. If, on the other hand, the great aim is to develop the individual and to give him the maximum of opportunity to unfold his special characteristics, we arrive at an opposing theory—that of individualism.

In the history of society we find an age of socialistic ideas followed by one of individualistic ideas, and vice versa, and there is much that is valuable in each, in that it tends to modify and disprove the other’s extreme position.

The present wave in the direction of *socialism* arises, to an extent, in reaction from the extremely individualistic position of previous ages. Man is now realising that the social relations of life are of importance as well as the character of his own life. He realises the interdependence of members of a community, and the conception of the State as a whole, a unit, instead of a mere sum of individuals, grows up. The modern industrial development and the organisation of labour have, too, emphasised the fact that the value of the individual depends largely upon his being a part of society. His work must be in co-operation with the work of others to produce the best effect; for in such co-operation it produces effects which reach far beyond his own individual capacity. Hence his life appears to receive value from the social relations, and the social ideal is conceived. The development of the individual no longer becomes the aim but rather the development of the community. In setting out the development of society as his aim, the individual makes considerable sacrifices. All that is distinctly individual must go, in character, in work, in science, and art, and that which is concerned with the common need of society must receive attention. This means undoubtedly a limitation of the life of the individual, and often entails a considerable sacrifice; but the sacrifice is made because of the underlying belief that in the sum of individual judgments there is reason, and that in the opinion of the majority there is truth. This socialistic culture finds in the present condition of society, plenty of problems to hand, and in its treatment of these problems a vigorous socialistic type of life is developed. The most pressing problem is concerned with the distribution of material and spiritual goods. Material goods and the opportunity for spiritual culture that go with them have been largely a monopoly of the aristocracy. Now arises a demand for a more equal distribution, and this is felt to be a right demand, not only from the point of view of justice, but also for the sake of spiritual culture itself. So it is that the movement for the social amelioration of the masses starts. The welfare of humanity is its aim, and all things, religion, science, and art, must work towards this end, and are only of value in so far as they contribute towards it.

Now it is a fundamental principle of a logical socialistic system that truth must be found in the opinions of the masses, and the average opinion of mankind must be the final arbiter of good and evil. The tendency of the masses as such is to consider material advancement the most cherished good. Hence, inevitably, a thorough-going socialism must become materialistic, even though at an earlier stage it was actuated by the desire for opportunities of spiritual culture.

A genuinely socialistic culture, too, makes the individual of value only as a member of society. This, Eucken affirms, is only true in the most primitive societies. As civilisation progresses, man becomes conscious of himself, and an inner life, which in its interests is independent of, and often opposed to society, develops. His own thought becomes important to man, and as his life deepens, religion, science, art, work &c., become more and more a personal matter.

All such deepening of culture, and of creative spiritual activity, is a personal matter. From this deepening and enriching of the inner life of the individual proceeds creative spiritual activity, which attempts spiritual tasks as an end in themselves, and which gradually builds up a kingdom of truth and spiritual interest which immeasurably transcends mere human standards. All these are historical facts of experience; the socialistic system finds no place and no explanation for them, and consequently it cannot be regarded as a sufficiently comprehensive explanation of the problem. To a man who has once realised these individual experiences, the merely human, socialistic system becomes intolerable.

Again, if considerations of social utility limit creative activity, the creations of such activity must be meagre in nature. Spiritual creativeness is most fruitful when it is concerned with tasks that are attempted for their intrinsic value, and is not fettered by the thought of their usefulness to society.

It is, too, a dangerous thing to look for truth in the opinion of the majority, for this is such a changing phenomenon that only a part, at most, can be permanent truth. The course of history has taught us, too, that great ideas have come to individuals and have been rejected by the masses for long periods of time.

The immediate effect of the failure of socialism is the encouragement of *individualism*, for indeed some of the arguments against the former are arguments in favour of the latter. Individualism opens up a new life, a life which is free, joyous, and unconventional.

But can individualism give a meaning and value to life as a whole? Man cannot from his own resources produce a high ideal which compels him to fight for higher development, and it is not possible for him from an individualistic standpoint to regard himself as a manifestation of a larger life. His whole life must be spent in the improvement of his own condition. Even in the case of strongly marked personalities, they can never get beyond themselves and their own subjective states, for they must always live upon themselves, and eternally reflect upon their own doings.

But such a view of life cannot satisfy man; he is a contemplative being, and he must find some all-inclusive whole, of which he is a part. If he fails to find it, life for him must become a blank, and he must fall a prey to boredom and satiety. Man’s life is not to be confined to his own particular sphere, his life must extend far beyond that—he must concern himself with the infinite in the universe; “He must view life—nay, more, he must live it—in the light of this larger whole.” A life based upon individualism then, will seem, even in the case of strong personalities, to be extremely narrow. How much more so will this be true of the ordinary man, who takes little interest in his own individuality, or pleasure in its development?

Thus it is that both forms of humanistic culture—socialism and individualism—fail to

give a real meaning to life. “Socialistic culture directs itself chiefly to the outward conditions of life, but in care for these it neglects life itself.” Individualistic culture, on the other hand, endeavours to deal with life itself, but fails to see life as a whole, or as possessing any real inwardness.

Both types of culture are apt to deceive themselves in regard to their own emptiness, because, unconsciously, they make more out of man than is consistent with their assumptions. “They presuppose a spiritual atmosphere as a setting for our human life and effort. In the one case, this cementing of a union between individuals appears to set free the springs of love and truth; in the other, each single unit seems to have behind it the background of a spiritual world whose development is fostered by means of its individual labour.” In this way life acquires in both cases a meaning, but it does so only by departing from both positions, and taking up what is, at least partly, an idealistic position.

The theories, too, can only be made really plausible by idealising man to an unwarrantable extent. The socialist assumes that a change of material surroundings will be immediately followed by a change in the character of man, and that men will work happily together for the sake of the community. The individualist asks us to believe that man is naturally noble and highminded, and cares only for the higher and better things. But experience, says Eucken, does not justify us in placing so much faith in humanity. “Do we not see the great masses of our population possessed by a passion that sweeps all before it, a reckless spirit of aggressiveness, a disposition to lower all culture to the level of their interests and comprehension—evincing the while a defiant self-assertion? And on the side of individualism, what do we see? Paltry meanness in abundance, embroidered selfishness, idle self-absorption, the craving to be conspicuous at all costs, repulsive hypocrisy, lack of courage despite all boastful talk, a lukewarm attitude towards all spiritual tasks, but the busiest industry when personal advantage is concerned.”

The theories of socialism and individualism can never be adequate explanations of the great problem of life, for life cannot have a real meaning if man cannot strive towards some lofty aim far higher than himself, and such a goal the two humanistic theories do not provide for him.

Religion, Idealism, Naturalism, Socialism, Individualism, while calling attention to important facts in life, all fail in themselves to form adequate theories to explain life. We have given the main outlines of Eucken’s arguments, but such a brief summary cannot do justice to his excellent evaluations of these theories—these the reader may find in his own works.

CHAPTER III
ANOTHER SEARCH FOR TRUTH

The result of the inquiry into the solutions of the problem offered in the past is to show that they are all inadequate to explain and to give an ideal to the whole of life. Perplexed as to the truth of the existence of a higher world, man looked to the natural world for a firm basis to life. Here he failed to find rest—rather, indeed, he found less security than he had previously felt, for did not naturalism make of him a mere unconscious mechanism, and deny the very existence of his soul? Then he turned to humanity, and the opposing tendencies of socialism and individualism came into evidence. Each hindered the other, each shook his traditional beliefs, and each failed to give him a satisfactory goal for life. Socialism concerned itself with external social relations, but it gave life no soul. Then individualism confined man to his own resources, and there resulted an inner hollowness which became painfully evident. Socialism and individualism fail to provide a sure footing. Instead of finding certainty, man has fallen into a still deeper state of perplexity.

What shall he do? Must he once again leave the realistic systems of Naturalism, Socialism, and Individualism, and return to the older systems of Religion and Idealism? Was he not wrong in giving up the thought of a higher invisible world? Has not the restriction of life to the visible world robbed life of its greatness and dignity? This it certainly has done, and there is little wonder that the soul of mankind is already revolting, and shows a tendency once again to look towards religion and idealism for a solution of life.

But the educated mind can never again take up exactly the same position as it once did in regard to religion and idealism. The great realistic theories have made too great a change in the standard of life, and in man himself, to make it possible for him to revert simply to the old conditions, and the older orthodox doctrines of religion can never again be accepted as a mere matter of course. But the great question has again come to the forefront—is there a higher world, or is the fundamental truth of religion a mere illusion? This is the question that calls for answer to-day, an answer which must be different, as man is different, from the answers that were given in the past. A satisfactory answer is impossible without understanding clearly the relation between the Old and the New, and without taking account of the great, if partial, truths that the realistic schemes of life have taught mankind.

To accept unreservedly Naturalism, Socialism, and Individualism is impossible, for these rob life of its deeper meaning. To return to the older doctrines without reserve is equally impossible.

Shall we ignore the question? This would be a fatal mistake. Some throw themselves into the rush of work, and endeavour to forget the deeper problems of life—but “the result is a life all froth and shimmer, lacking inward sincerity, a life that can never in itself satisfy them, but only keep up the appearance of doing so.” There must be some decision; for is not society being more and more broken up into small sections, possessing the most variable standards of life, and evaluating things in a diversity of ways? Such an inward

schism must weaken any effort on the part of humanity to combine for ideal ends. Perhaps he of narrow vision, who sees nothing in life but sensuous pleasure, is happy—but it is the happiness of the lower world. Perhaps, too, he of the superficial mind is happy, who sees no deep contradictions in the solutions offered, and is prepared to accept one to-day and another tomorrow—but his happiness is that of the feeble mind.

What then can be done? Shall we despair? Never! The question is far too urgent. To despair is to accept a policy that spells disaster to the human race. The immediate environment is powerless to give life any real meaning. We must probe deeper into the eternal—and it is from such investigations that Eucken outlines a new theory of life.

But before we proceed to deal with Eucken's contribution to the problem, it will be profitable to stay awhile to consider how it is that we can obtain truth at all, and what are the tests that we can apply to truth when we think we have attained it. It is the problem of the possibility of knowledge, really, that we have to discuss in brief. Eucken himself does not pay much direct attention to this difficult question, for, as has been already pointed out, he refuses to be drawn from his main problem. It is impossible, however, to appreciate Eucken without understanding clearly the position he takes up in this matter.

What is truth? How can we know?—these are entrancing problems for the profound thinker, and have been written upon frequently and at great length. But we can do little more at present than give the barest outline of the positions that have been taken up. Every search for truth must assume a certain position in this matter; in studying Eucken's philosophy it is of the first importance—more so perhaps than in the case of most other philosophers—to keep in mind clearly from the outset the position he implicitly assumes.

The simplest theory of knowledge is that of *Empiricism*, which holds that all knowledge must be gained through experience of the outside world, and of our mental states. We see a blue wall, we obtain through our eyes an impression of blueness, and are able to make a statement: "This wall is blue." This, of course, is one of the simplest assertions that can be made, and consists merely in assigning a term—"blue"—the meaning of which has already been agreed upon, to a colour that we appear to see on a wall. The test of the truth of this assertion is a simple one—it is true if it corresponds with fact. If the same assertion is made in regard to a red wall, then it is obviously untrue. Our sense impressions give rise to a great variety of such expressions. We state "the wall is blue" as a result of an impression obtained through the organs of sight; then we speak of a pungent smell, a sweet taste, a harsh sound, or a rough stone, on account of impressions received respectively through the organs of smell, taste, hearing, and touch. But, of course, all such assertions are superficial in character—there is little more in them than the application of a conventional term to an observed phenomenon, they avail us little in solving the mysteries of the universe.

Strictly speaking, this is for the empiricist the limit of possible knowledge, but he would be a poor investigator who would be content with this and no more. The empiricist tries to go a distinct step in advance of this. The scientist observing the path of a planet travelling round the sun, finds that its course is that of an ellipse. He studies the path of a second planet, and finds that this also travels along an elliptical orbit. Later he finds that all planets he is able to observe travel in the same kind of path—then he hazards a general statement, and says, "All planets travel round their suns in elliptical orbits." But now he

has left the realm of certainty for that of uncertainty. There may be innumerable planets which he cannot observe that take a different course. He hazards the general statement, because he assumes (sometimes without knowing that he does so) that nature is uniform and constant, that it will do to-day as it did yesterday, and does in infinite space as it does in the visible universe.

The knowledge that is possible to the empiricist, then, is merely that which is derived from direct experience, and simple summations or generalisations into a single assertion of a number of similar assertions, all of which were individually derived from experience. This is the position scientists as such, and believers in the theory of naturalism, take up as to the possibility of the knowledge of truth to the human mind. They are entirely consistent, therefore, when they arrive ultimately at the agnostic position, and contend that our knowledge must necessarily be confined to the world of experience, and that nothing can be known of the world beyond. But they are fundamentally wrong in overestimating the place of the sense organs, and forgetting that while these have a part to play in life, they do not constitute the whole of life.

A far more satisfactory theory is that of *Rationalism*. It is a theory that admits that the human mind has some capacity for working upon the data presented to it by the sense organs. Man is no longer quite so helpless a creature as empiricism would make him. He is able to weigh and consider the facts that are presented to the mind. The method rationalism uses to arrive at truth is that of logical deduction, and the test of truth is that the steps in the process are logically sound. We may start from the data “All dogs are animals” and “Carlo is a dog,” and arrive very simply at the conclusion “Carlo is an animal.” The conclusion is correct because we have reasoned in accordance with the laws of logic, with the laws of valid thought. All logical reasoning is, of course, not so simple as the example given, but it may be stated generally that when there is no logical fallacy, a correct conclusion may be arrived at, provided, too—and herein lies the difficulty—provided that the premises are also true. These premises may be in themselves general statements—how is their truth established? They may be, and often are, the generalisations of the empirical sciences, and must then possess the same degree of uncertainty that these generalisations possess. Some philosophers have contended that certain general ideas are innate, but few would be found nowadays to accept such a contention. At other times mere definitions of terms may serve as premises. One might state as a premise the definition “A straight line is the shortest distance between two points,” and the further statement that “AB is a straight line between A and B,” and conclude that the line AB represents the shortest distance between two points A and B. In a manner similar to this Euclid built his whole mathematical system upon the basis of definitions and postulates, a system the complexity and thoroughness of which has caused all students of mathematics at one time or another to marvel and admire. But, of course, a definition is little more than assigning a definite term to a definite thing. It is when we begin to consider the premises that are necessary for arriving at the profound truths of the universe that we find the weakness of rationalism. How are we going to be provided with premises for this end? Shall we begin by saying “There is a God” or “There is no God”? How is the pure reasoning faculty to decide upon the premises in the matter of the great Beyond? We may weigh the arguments for and against a certain position, and we may think that the probability lies in a certain direction, but to decide finally and with certainty

by mere cold logical reasoning is impossible. We may bring out into prominence through logical reasoning truths that were previously only implicit, but to arrive at absolute truth with regard to the invisible world, through intellect alone, has long been admitted to be an impossibility. The illusion of those who would believe that truth which was not already implied in the premises could ever be obtained by mere intellectual reasoning has long since been dispelled.

Perhaps it comes as a shock to the reader who has always insisted upon a clear intellectual understanding and a rigid reasoning upon all things, to find within what narrow limits, after all, the intellect itself has to work—it can do little more than make more or less certain generalisations concerning the world of experience, and then to argue from these, or from definitions that it itself has framed. Of course some of the ancient philosophers did try through a course of rigid reasoning to solve the great problems, and for a long time it was customary to expect that all philosophers should proceed in the same way.

Modern philosophers, of whom William James, Bergson, and Eucken are conspicuous examples, have appreciated the futility of such a task, and have sought other means of solving the problem. The mistake in the past has been to forget that the intelligence is but one aspect of human life, and that the experience of mankind is far more complicated a matter than that of mere intellect, and not to be solved by intellect alone. Intellect has to play a definite part in human life, but it does not constitute the whole of life. Life itself is far greater than intellect, and to live is a far more important thing than to know. The great things are life and action; knowledge is ultimately useful in so far as it contributes to the development of life and the perfection of action. Philosophers have for too long a period made knowledge an aim in itself, and have neglected to take proper account of the experiences of mankind. Their intellectual abstractions have tended to leave actual life more and more out of consideration, with the result that they have been baffled at every turn. The more we think about it, the more we become convinced that the mysterious universe in which we live will only divulge just enough of its secrets to enable us to act, and this it gives us with comparatively little trouble on our part. If we consider an ordinary piece of wood, we find it is hard and offers a certain resistance, and our knowledge of these elementary facts enables us to put it to use, but we shall never really solve the mysteries of its formation and growth. These lead of course to very interesting speculations, but their solution seems to be as far off as ever. We can know little but that which we require for life. The making of life and action the basis of truth rather than trusting to the intellect alone, is the great new departure in modern philosophy.

One of the theories of knowledge that springs from laying emphasis upon life and action is that of *Pragmatism*, of which the late Professor William James was one of the greatest exponents. Pragmatists contend that the test of truth is its value for life—if the fact obtained is the most useful and helpful for life, then it is the true one. Suppose we are endeavouring to solve the great question, “Is there a God?” We weigh the arguments for and against, but find it difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion, because the arguments on both sides seem equally plausible. How are we to decide? We cannot postpone the decision indefinitely—we are forced to make a choice, for upon our decision depends our aim and ideals in life. We are faced with a “forced option,” and must choose one or the other. We ask ourselves the question, “Which will be of the greatest help to our lives—to

believe that there is, or that there is not a God?" and we decide or will to believe the option that will help life most. It is a striking theory, but space forbids our discussing it in detail.

The position Eucken adopts is that of *Activism*. In common with pragmatism it makes truth a matter of life and action rather than of mere intellect, and considers fruitfulness for action a characteristic of truth. He differs from the pragmatic position in that he contends that truth is something deeper than mere human decision, that truth is truth, not merely because it is useful, that reality is independent of our experience of it, and that truth is gained intuitively through a life of action.

The riddle of the universe is solved for Eucken through life and action. While continual contemplation and thought is apt to paralyse us, "action is the best defensive weapon against the dangers and trials of human existence." "Doubt is not cured by meditation, but by action." He believes that we can attain certainty through action of much that cannot be justified on rational grounds. If we wish to understand the vital truths of life we must concentrate our souls on a good purpose—the activity that follows will bring its revelation. The problems of life are solved by the life process itself. By acting in a certain way, man comes into intimate relationship with the great reality of life, and then he comes to know, not so much *about* reality, as *within* reality. The ant in whom such complex instincts are developed, knows probably nothing at all *about* its little world, but knows everything necessary *within* its little world. It does not err, it does the right thing at the right time, and that because it is in tune with its universe, hence acts from pure instinct in the right way. If intellect were to enter into the case, its actions might become less reliable, and it would blunder far oftener. In the case of man, his thinking capacity often militates against successful instinctive and habitual actions—the moment we start to consider, we hesitate and are lost. In the same way, if the soul of man is brought into tune with the great reality, it has but to act, and though it may never know all *about* reality and be able to frame abstract theories of the universe, still it may know *with* or *within* reality, and be thus enabled to act in the best way under various circumstances. This is the theory of activism; it lays great stress upon action, and upon intuition through action, and while it does not ignore the intellect, it holds that when the intellect fails there is a possibility of the practical problem of life being solved through a life of action, when life is directed towards the highest ideals. The danger of an activistic position, of course, is to undervalue the reasoning powers of man. Some critics hold that Eucken does this; the reader must judge for himself, but in doing so it will be well to remember that before trusting to intuitive revelation, Eucken demands the setting of one's face towards the highest and best.

In the next chapter we can follow Eucken in his search for the great reality in life.

CHAPTER IV
THE PAST, PRESENT, AND THE ETERNAL

In investigating the problem of human life, Eucken lays great stress upon the history of man in past ages—this is one of the special aspects of his philosophy. The fact is, of course, not surprising; he who would explain the life of man would be unwise to ignore the records of the past life of the human race. The thinker who examines the present only, is apt to be narrow in his ideas, to fail to look upon events in their proper perspective, and to be unduly affected by the spirit of the age in which he lives—the student of history avoids these pitfalls.

Moreover, man does not become aware of the depth of his own soul, until he has "lived into" the experience of the past. This is what the profound investigator of history does; he lives again the life of the hero, he feels with him as he felt upon special occasions, and in this way there is revealed to him a profundity and greatness of human experience, of which he would have been largely unaware if he had trusted to his own experience alone, and to the superficial examination he is able to make of the experiences of those living men with whom he comes into contact. In this way he is able in a sense to appropriate the experience of the greatest personalities unto himself, and enrich considerably the contents of his own soul.

Through a study of history, too, we become aware of the intimate connection that exists between the present and the past. The present moment is a very transient thing; its roots are in the past, its hopes in the future. "If all depends on the slender thread of the fleeting moment of the present, which illumines and endures merely for a twinkling of an eye, but to sink into the abyss of nothingness, then all life would mean a mere exit into death…. Without connection there is no content of life." We are apt to look on the past as something dead, but it exists in living evidence in our souls to-day. It oppresses us or stimulates us to action, it tyrannises over us or inspires us to higher things. It has been customary to look upon the past as irrevocable. Recent writers, of whom Maeterlinck and Eucken are striking instances, have endeavoured to show how the past can be remoulded and changed. The past depends upon what we make of it to-day; if we despise our evil conduct in former days, then the past itself is changed and conquered. The mistake that is made is to regard the past as a thing complete in itself; what appears to be finished is really only completing itself, and we must take a view of the whole of a thing, and not merely the parts that have already manifested themselves. Through such considerations we become more and more aware of the ultimate connection between the past and present, and of the part the present can play in the remaking of the past.

Our investigations of history leads us, too, to differentiate between the temporary and the eternal in the realm of thought. We find at a certain period of history a trend of thought that can largely be accounted for by the special conditions of life at the time, and which disappears at a later age. But in addition to this we become aware of truths that have found a place in the thoughts of various ages and countries, and we are led to regard these as the eternal truths—expressions of an eternal ever-present reality. This eternal present we find

to be something independent of time, something that breaks the barriers between the past, present, and future. “Thought,” says Eucken, “does not drift along with time; as certainly as it strives to attain truth it must rise above time, and its treatment must be timeless.” The beliefs of any age are too much coloured by the special circumstances of that age to express the whole of truth, yet beneath the beliefs of the ages there is often an underlying truth, and this underlying truth is the eternal truth, which is not affected by time, and at the basis of which is the eternal reality.

This eternal truth persisting through a variety of temporary and more or less correct expressions of it is to be observed in a marked manner in the moral ideas of mankind. What a variety of ethical doctrines have been expounded and believed, yet how striking the similarity that becomes apparent when they are further examined! In practice, the standard of morality has often been based on mere utility, but it has taken a higher and more absolute basis in the mind of man. Ideas concerning morality have generally been nobler than can be accounted for by environment, and by the subjective life of the individual. Why this ultimate consistency in the moral aspirations of the ages, why a categorical imperative, and why does conscience exist in the human being?—these facts cannot be accounted for if there is no deeper basis for life than the life of humanity at any definite period of time.

The unchangeable laws of logic, too, are instances of the eternal truth. The principles of the validity of thought are entirely independent of individuals, of the passage of time, and of the environment of man. “Our thought cannot advance in the definite work of building up science without producing and employing a definite logical structure, with fixed principles; these principles are immanent in the work of thought, they are above all the caprice and all the differences of the individuals.” Whence again this consistency in a changeable and subjective world?

The marvellous influence that ideas have exerted upon man again points to the persistence and power of the eternal. Is it not strange how it is that man often serves but as a mere instrument for the realisation of an idea, and how he is often carried away by an idea to do things which are against his own personal interests and desires? And when he and his generation have passed beyond human sight, we often find a new generation direct their endeavours in the same way, and we wonder what is behind such a continuity in the struggles of mankind.

The history of great personalities in the realms of literature, art, and science show in a remarkable way how men have risen above the influences of their time, and beyond the cramping tiredness of the mere flesh. Could a great thinker like Aristotle be entirely conditioned by flesh and environment? And what of the great artists and poets who have conquered the chains of mortal finitude and breathed of higher worlds? Every one of them is a convincing testimony of the possibility of mankind transcending the material, and taking unto itself of the resources of a deeper world.

Then the dissatisfaction of the ages with their limited knowledge of truth cannot but tell of a great eternal something that stirs at the basis of the human soul. The people of to-day find the various systems of the day inadequate; they search for something higher, and the mere fact that they search beyond matter and the mere subjective human qualities is in itself a testimony to the existence of a world higher than the material and subjective.

What is it that makes it possible for one human being to “live into” the experience of others who lived long ago, and for the present to conquer and alter the past? How can we account for the eternal trait in thought, for the unchanging laws of logic, for the consistency of moral ideals, and their transcendence over flesh and immediate circumstances? What is the force behind the idea, and how can we account for the continuous struggle of mankind in certain directions? And, finally, what is it that makes it possible for men to rise beyond themselves, to shake away the shackles of matter and vicinity, and to delve deep into the profounder world?

If we can find what it is that makes all this possible, then surely we have found the greatest thing in the world—the reality. And Eucken’s answer is clear and definite. It must be something that persists, is eternal and independent of time, and it must extend beyond the individual to a universal whole. This must be “the Universal Spiritual Life,” which, though eternal, reveals itself in time, and though universal, reveals itself in the individual man, and forms the source from which the spiritual in man “draws its power and credentials.”

This, then, is the result of Eucken’s search for reality—he has found it to exist in a Universal Spiritual Life. Of course he has not arrived at his conclusion by a system of rigid proof; it has already been pointed out how impossible it is to arrive at the greater truths of life in such a manner.

He has done, however, that which can be reasonably expected in such cases. To begin with, he has given us a striking analysis of the essential characteristics of human life, and he has found there a yearning and a void. He has given us a masterly discussion of eternal truth as contrasted with the temporary expressions of it. He has taught us how the present can overcome the past, and how man can ascend beyond the subjective and material. And he has led us to feel that reality must lie in the eternal that appears to be at the basis of the highest and greatest in man.

Moreover, he has given a fair and thorough treatment of the solutions that have been offered in the past. He has shown how inadequate they are to explain life. He has shown how the modern solutions “cannot perform their own tasks without drawing incessantly upon another kind of reality, one richer and more substantial.” This in itself shows “beyond possibility of refutation that they do not fill the whole of life.” He has demonstrated how the acceptance of these systems depends upon an implicit acceptance of a higher life. “The naturalistic thinker ascribes unperceived to nature, which to him can be only a coexistence of soulless elements, an inner connection and a living soul. Only thus can he revere it as a higher power, as a kind of divinity; only thus can he pass from the fact of dependence to a devotional surrender of his feelings. The socialist bases human society, with its motives mixed with triviality and passion, on an invisible community, an ideal humanity…. The individualist in his conception exalts the individual to a height far more lofty than is justified by the individual as he is found in experience.” All these assume more or less unconsciously the existence of that “something higher” which they attempt to deny.

So far, then, we have seen how Eucken proves the inadequacy of the realistic conceptions of life, and how they really depend for their acceptance upon the assumption of a Universal Spiritual Life. We have still to see how he attempts to prove that basing

human life upon an eternal spiritual life satisfies the conditions he himself has laid down for a satisfactory solution of the problem. He has to show that the theory gives a satisfactory explanation of human life, that it gives a firm basis for life, that it releases man from being governed by low motives, and admits of the possibility of human personality, freedom, and creation. We shall see in the chapters that follow that he makes a convincing case for accepting the belief in the Universal Spiritual Life as the basis of human life and endeavour.

CHAPTER V
THE “HIGH” AND THE “LOW”

Eucken makes the recognition of the existence of a Universal Spiritual Life the starting-point of his constructive work. He takes up a position which he calls the nöological position. Many theories take up a materialistic position; they assert the reality of the material world, and endeavour to explain the world of matter as something independent of the human mind. Other theories assert the superiority of mind over matter, and endeavour to examine the mind as though it were independent of the material world. These two types of theories have been in continual conflict; the one has attempted to prove that thought is entirely conditioned by sense impressions received from the material world, the other regards the phenomena of nature as really nothing other than processes of the mind.

Eucken finds reality existing in the spiritual life, which while neither material nor merely mental, is superior to both, admits the existence (in a certain sense) of both, and does away with the opposition between the rival types of theories. Eucken does not minimise or ignore the existence of the natural world. The question for him is not the independent existence of the worlds of nature and mind—this he admits; he is concerned rather with the superiority of the spiritual life over the merely material and mental.

The natural life of man has been variously viewed in different ages. The writer of the Pentateuch described man as made in the image of God, and the natural man was exalted on this account. Some of the old Greek philosophers, too, found much in nature that was divine. Christianity took a different view of the matter—it exalted the spirit, and emphasised the baseness of the material. The growth of the sciences made man again a mere tool of laws and methods, but it considered matter as superior to mind, mind being entirely dependent upon impressions received from matter. The question continually recurs—which is the high, which is the low? Shall nature triumph over spirit, or spirit over nature?

Pantheism replies to the question by denying that there is anything high as distinguished from the low. There is but one; and that one—the whole universe—is God. There is no evil in the world, says pantheism, everything is good—if we could understand things as they really are we should find no oppositions in the universe, and no contradictions in the nature of things. The world as it is, is the best of all possible worlds—there is perfect harmony, though we fail to appreciate it. Other optimistic theories, too, deny the existence of evil and pain, and try to explain our ideas of sin to be mere “points of view.” If we could see the whole, they tell us, we should see how the parts harmonise, but now we only see some of the parts and fail to appreciate the harmony. In this way they try to explain away as unreal the phenomena of evil and pain.

But Eucken has no patience with such theories. For him the oppositions and contradictions of life are too real and persistent. The antagonisms “stir us with disgust and indignation.” Evil cannot be considered trivial, and must not be glossed over; it is in the world, and the more deeply we appreciate the fact the better it will be for the human soul.

Man in his lower stages of development is just a child of nature, and his standards of

life are those of the lower world. He seeks those things that satisfy the senses, he attempts the satiation of the lower cravings. In the realm of morals his standard is utility—that is good which helps him to obtain more pleasure and to avoid pain. In social life his conduct is dictated by custom—this is the highest appeal. The development of man along the lines of nature ends at this point—and if nothing more is to happen, then he must remain at a low level of development. Matter and mind cannot take him beyond—the mind as such only helps towards the further satisfaction of the lower demands of man.

But there is something far greater in highly developed manhood than the petty and selfish. Man is capable of conceiving and adopting higher standards of morality than those of utility and pleasure, and it is the spiritual life that enables him to do this. It is the spiritual that frees the individual from the slavery of the sense world—from his selfishness and superficial interests—that teaches him to care less for the things of the flesh, and far more for the beautiful, the good, and the true, and that enables him to pursue high aims regardless of the fact that they may entail suffering and loss in other directions. This, then, is the "High" in the world; the natural life is the "Low."

But what is the relation of the natural to the spiritual life? In the first place, the spiritual cannot be derived from the natural, inasmuch as the former is immensely superior to the latter, and that not merely in degree, but in its very essence. The spiritual is entirely on a higher plane of reality, and there cannot be transition from the natural to the spiritual world. The natural has its limitations, and beyond these cannot go. So far as the natural world is concerned man can never rise above seeking for pleasure, and making expediency and social approbation the standards of life, hence there is little wonder that those ethical teachers who make nature their basis, deny the possibility of action that is unselfish and free. "The Spiritual Life," however, as Eucken says, "has an independent origin, and evolves new powers and standards."

Neither do the two aspects run together in life in parallel lines. On the contrary, the spiritual life cannot manifest itself at all until a certain stage of development is reached in nature. It would seem impossible to conceive of the animal rising above its animal instincts and tendencies; its whole life is conditioned by its animal nature and its environment. Man stands at the junction of the stages between the purely natural and the purely spiritual. On the one hand, he is a member of the animal world, he has its instincts, its desires and its limitations; on the other hand, he has within him the germ of spirituality. He belongs to both worlds, the natural and the spiritual. He cannot shake off the natural and remain a man—to separate the two means death to man as we know him. But there is a great difference between his position in the natural world and his position in the spiritual world. He seems to be the last word in the world of nature, he has reached heights far beyond those reached by any other flesh and blood. He is, so far as we know, the culminating point of natural evolution—the final possibility in the natural world. But the stage of nature only represents the first stage in the development of the universe.

There is an infinitely higher stage of life, the spiritual life. And if man is the final point of progress in the world of nature, he is, in his primitive state, only at the threshold of the spiritual world. But he is not an entire stranger to the spiritual—the germ is in him, and the spiritual is consequently not an alien world for him. If the spiritual were something entirely foreign it would be vain to expect much progress through mere impulses from

without. On the contrary, it is the spiritual that makes man really great, and is the most fundamental part of his nature.

The two stages of life, then, are present in man—the natural and the spiritual; the former highly developed, the latter, at first, in an undeveloped state.

Now the great aim of the universe is to pass gradually from the natural to the spiritual plane of life. This does not mean that the latter is the product of the former stage, for this is not the case. It means that the deeper reality in life is the spiritual, and that the spiritual develops through the natural in its own particular way. And this particular way is not a mere development but a *self*-development. The aim of the spiritual is to develop its own self through the human being. In this way man is given the possibility of developing a self —a personality in a very real sense.

Thus we arrive at some idea of the relation there exists between the spiritual and the natural, and of the place of the spiritual and the natural in man. The spiritual is neither the product nor an attribute of the natural. Man is the border creature of the two worlds; he represents the ultimate possibility of the one, and possesses potentialities in regard to the other. The great object of his life must be to develop, through making use of and conquering the life of nature, his higher self into a free, spiritual, and immortal personality. The progressive stages in this direction must be dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI
THE ASCENT TO FREEDOM AND PERSONALITY

In the previous chapter we found that man in his primitive stage is largely a creature of the lower world. His desires are those of the animal kingdom, his ideal is utility, and social approbation his God. At this stage he is a mere nothing, no better than a slave to his passions and to the opinions of his fellow-beings. He possesses neither freedom nor personality—for he is but a tool in the hands of other impulses and forces. There is no controlling self—he is not a lord in his own kingdom. Some men do not get beyond this very low level, but for ever remain mere shuttlecocks driven hither and thither by more or less contradictory impulses.

The germ of the higher world that resides within him may sometimes make itself felt, but "so long as there is a confused welter of higher and lower impulses, … so long is there an absence of anything essentially new and lofty."

Man's aspirations for things that are higher, are at the outset very sluggish and vague, for a being that is so much dominated by the natural world is apt to concentrate its attention upon it and to remain contented with it.

But there comes a time in the lives of perhaps most men when a distinct feeling of dissatisfaction is felt with the life of natural impulse and of convention. The man feels—perhaps in a vague way at first—that there is something too merely animal in the sense world, or that there is an intolerable emptiness and hypocrisy in a life of slavish devotion to the opinions of society. Perhaps he feels that his passions govern him, and not he his passions. The higher life stirs within him, and he begins to question the rightness of things. He learns to appreciate for the first time that the natural impulses may not be the noblest, and that custom may not be an ideal guide. His soul is astir with the problem of life—the result very largely depends upon the solutions that are presented to him. Perhaps the naturalistic solution is made to appeal to him, and he is taught to trust nature and it will lead him aright. Or maybe the pantheistic theory is accepted by him, and he is led to believe that the world as it is is entirely good, and that he has but to live his life from day to day, and not worry himself about the ultimate end and purpose of things. Or other optimistic theories of life that deny the existence of evil may influence him. All these solutions may give him temporary peace of mind, and perhaps indeed form efficient stumbling-blocks to any further spiritual progress.

But the spiritual beginnings within us often show remarkable vitality. They may under certain conditions lead us to appreciate the existence of a distinct opposition in the world—the opposition between the lower world and the higher self. Man finds that the natural is often low, evil, and sordid, and at this stage the higher spiritual world makes a strong appeal to him. By degrees he comes to feel the demands of the lower world to be a personal insult to him. What is the lower material world that it should govern him, and he a *man*? The claims of pleasure and utility to be standards of conduct strike him as arrogant, and he revolts against the assumption that higher aims can have no charm for him. His previous acceptance without consideration of the moral standard of the

community he now looks upon as a sign of weakness on his part—for is he not himself, a person with the power of independent judgment and evaluation? It is the first great awakening of the spiritual life in man, when his whole soul is in revolt against the low, sordid, and conventional. What shall he do? There is only one course that is worthy of his asserting personality—he must break with the world. Henceforth he sees two worlds in opposition—the world of the flesh on the one hand, the world of the spirit on the other, and he arrays himself on the side of the higher in opposition to the lower. When he does this the spiritual life in him makes the first substantial movement in its onward progress—this movement Eucken calls the *negative movement*. It does not mean that the man must leave the world of work and retire into the seclusion of a monastery—that means shirking the fight, and is a policy of cowardice. Neither does it mean a wild impatience with the present condition of the world—it means rather that man is appreciating in a profound way the oppositions that exist, and is casting his lot on the side of right. He renounces everything that hinders him from fighting successfully, then goes forth into the thick of the battle. The break must be a definite one and made in a determined manner. "Without earnestness of renunciation the new life sinks back to the old … and loses its power to stimulate to new endeavour. As human beings are, this negation must always be a sharp one."

The negative movement, then, is the first substantial step in the progress of the spiritual life. The man's self breaks out into discontent with nature, and this is the first step to the union of self to the higher reality in life. The break with the world is in itself of course but a negative process. This must attain a positive significance. If the self breaks away from one aspect of life, it must identify itself more intimately with another. This occurs when the individual sets out definitely on a course of life in antagonism to the evil in the world.

When this takes place, there arises within him a *new immediacy* of experience. Hitherto the things that were his greatest concern, and that appealed to him most, were the pleasures of the natural world. But these things appeal to him no longer as urgent and immediate—but as being of a distinctly secondary character. A new immediacy has arisen; it is the facts of the spiritual world that now appeal to him as urgent and immediate. "All that has hitherto been considered most immediate, as the world of sense, or even the world of society, now takes a second place, and has to make good its claim before this spiritual tribune…. That which current conceptions treat as a Beyond … is now the only world which exists in its own right, the only true and genuine world which neither asks nor consents to be derived from any outside source."

This new immediacy is the deepest possible immediacy, it is an immediacy of experience where the self comes into contact with its own vital principle—the Universal Spiritual Life—and brings about a fundamental change in the life of the individual. The inner life is no longer governed by sense impressions and impulses, but the outward life is lived and viewed from the standpoint of the inward life.

But a new immediacy is not all that follows in the train of the negative movement—on the contrary, the highest possible rewards are gained, for freedom, personality, and immortality are all brought within the range of possibility.

Once a human being decides for the highest he is on the highroad to complete freedom. The freedom is not going to be won in a moment, but must be fought for by the individual

through the whole course of his life. His body is always with him, and will at times attempt to master him—he must fight continually to ensure conquest. Difficulties will arise from various quarters, but he is not going to depend only upon his own resources. All his activity involves in the first place the recognition of the spiritual world, but more than this, he appropriates unto himself of the spiritual world—this in itself is an act of decision. And the more we appropriate unto ourselves of the Universal Spiritual Life, the more we decide for the higher world, the freer we become. Indeed, "it is this appropriation … of the spiritual life that first awakens within the soul an inward certitude, and makes possible that perfect freedom … so indispensable for every great creative work." By continually choosing and fighting for the progress of the Universal Spiritual Life, it comes to be our own in virtue of our deed and decision. Hence man has attained freedom—the lower world no longer makes successful appeal. He has become a part of the spiritual world, and his actions are no longer dictated by anything external, but are the direct outcome of his own self. He has freely chosen the highest, and continually reaffirms his choice—this is perfect freedom.

Man gains for himself, too, a personality in the true sense of the term. Eucken does not mean by personality "mere self-assertion on the part of an individual in opposition to others." He means something far deeper than this. "A genuine self," says Eucken, "is constituted only by the coming to life of the infinite spiritual world in an independent concentration in the individual." Following a life of endeavour in the highest cause, and continual appropriation of the spiritual life, he arrives at a state of at-one-ness with the universal life. "Man does not merely enter into some kind of relation with the spiritual life, but finds his own being in it." The human being is elevated to a self-life of a universal kind, and this frees him from the ties and appeals of the world of sense and selfishness. It is a glorious conception of human personality, infinitely higher than the undignified conceptions of naturalism and determinism.

And if man wins a glorious personality, he may gain immortality too. Unfortunately, Eucken has not yet dealt fully with this question, but he is evidently of the opinion that the spiritual personalities are immortal. As concentration points or foci of the spiritual life, he believes that the developed personalities are at present and in prospect possessors of a spiritual realm. But there will be no essential or sudden change at death. That which is immortal is involved in our present experience. Those who have developed into spiritual personalities, who have worked in fellowship with the great Universal Life, and become centre-points of spirituality, have thus risen supreme over time and pass to their inheritance. Those who have not done so, but have lived their lives on the plane of nature, will have nothing that can persist.

Hence it is that the negative movement leads to freedom, personality, and immortality; the neglect to make the movement consigns the individual to slavery, makes a real "self" impossible, and at death he has nought that a spiritual realm can claim. The choice is an all-important one; for, as a recent writer puts it, "In this choice, the personality chooses or rejects itself, takes itself for its life-task, or dies of inanition and inertia."

CHAPTER VII
THE PERSONAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

In the last chapter the ascent of the human being from serfdom to freedom and personality was traced. In doing so it was necessary to make frequent reference to the Universal Spiritual Life.

When we turn to consider the characteristics of the Universal Spiritual Life, many problems present themselves. How can we reconcile freedom and personality with the existence of an Absolute? What is the nature of this Absolute, and in what way is the human related to it? What place should religion play in the life of the spiritual personality? These are, of course, some of the greatest and most difficult problems that ever perplexed the mind of man, and we can only deal briefly with Eucken's contribution to their solution.

Can a man choose the highest? This is the form in which Eucken would state the problem of freedom. His answer, as already seen, is an affirmative one. The personality chooses the spiritual life, and continually reaffirms the decision. This being so, it is now no longer possible to consider the human and the divine to be entirely in opposition. And the more the spiritual personality develops, so much the less does the opposition obtain, until a state of spirituality is arrived at when all opposition of will ceases—then we attain perfect freedom. "We are most free, when we are most deeply pledged—pledged irrevocably to the spiritual presence, with which our own being is so radically and so finally implicated." Thus freedom is obtained in a sense through self-surrender, but it is through this same self-surrender that we realise spiritual absoluteness. Hence it is that perfect freedom carries with it the strongest consciousness of dependence, and human freedom is only made possible through the absoluteness of the spiritual life in whom it finds its being.

English philosophers have dealt at length with the question of the possibility of reconciling the independence of personality and the existence of an Absolute. From Eucken's point of view the difficulty is not so serious. When he speaks of personality he does not mean the mere subjective individual in all his selfishness. Eucken has no sympathy with the emphasis that is often placed on the individual in the low subjective sense, and is averse from the glorification of the individual of which some writers are fond. Indeed, he would prefer a naturalistic explanation of man rather than one framed as a result of man's individualistic egoism. The former explanation admits that man is entirely a thing of nature; the latter, from a selfish and proud standpoint, claims for man a place in a higher world. There is nothing that is worthy and high in the low desires of Mr. Smith—the mere subjective Mr. Smith. But if through the mind and body of Mr. Smith the Absolute Spirit is realising itself in personality—then there is something of eternal worth—there is spiritual personality. There will be opposition between the sordidness of the mere individual will and the divine will, but that is because the spiritual life has not been gained. When the highest state of spiritual personality has been reached, then man is an expression—a personal realisation of the Absolute, is in entire accord with the absolute, indeed becomes himself divine.

This does not rob the term personality of its meaning, for each personality does, in some way, after all, exist for itself. Each individual consciousness has a sanctity of its own. But the being-for-self develops more and more by coming into direct contact with the Universal Spiritual Life.

Here, then, we arrive at something that appears to be a paradox. We have the phenomenon of a being that is free and existing for itself, yet in some way dependent upon an absolute spiritual life. We have, too, the phenomenon of a human being becoming divine. How is it really possible that self-activity can arise out of dependence? Eucken does not attempt to explain, but contends that an explanation cannot be arrived at through reasoning. We are forced to the conclusion, we realise through our life and action that this is the real state of affairs, and in this case the reality proves the possibility. “This primal phenomenon,” he says, “overflows all explanation. It has, as the fundamental condition of all spiritual life, a universal axiomatic character.” Again he says, “The wonder of wonders is the human made divine, through God’s superior power.” “The problem surpasses the capacity of the human reason.” For taking up this position, Eucken is sharply criticised by some writers.

When we approach the problem of the nature of the Absolute in itself, the main difficulty that arises is whether God is a personal being. God, says Eucken, is “an Absolute Spiritual Life in all its grandeur, above all the limitations of man and the world of experience—a Spiritual Life that has attained to a complete subsistence in itself, and at the same time to an encompassing of all reality.” The divine is for Eucken the ultimate spirituality that inspires the work of all spiritual personalities. When in our life of fight and action we need inspiration, we find “in the very depths of our own nature a reawakening, which is not a mere product of our activity, but a salvation straight from God.” God, then, is the ultimate spirituality which inspires the struggling personality, and gives to it a sense of unity and confidence. Eucken does not admit that God is a personality in the sense that we are, and deprecates all anthropomorphic conceptions of God as a personal being. Indeed, to avoid the tendency to such conceptions he would prefer the term “Godhead” to “God.” Further considerations of the nature of God can only lead to intellectual speculations. For an activistic philosophy, such as Eucken’s philosophy is, it would seem sufficient for life and action to know that all attempts at the ideal in life, originate in, and are inspired by, the Absolute Spiritual Life, that is by God.

We cannot discuss fully the relation of human and divine without, too, dealing with the ever urgent problem of religion. This is a problem in which Eucken is deeply interested, and concerning which he has written one of his greatest works—*The Truth of Religion*—a work that has been described as one of the greatest apologies for religion ever written.

What is religion? Most people perhaps would apply the term to a system of belief concerning the Eternal, usually resting upon a historical or traditional basis. Others would include in the term the reverence felt for the Absolute by the contemplative mind, even though that mind did not believe in any of the traditional systems. Some would emphasise the fact that religion should concern itself with the establishment of a relationship between the human and the Divine.

But Eucken does not find religion to consist in belief, nor in a mere attitude towards the mysteries of an overworld. In keeping with the activistic tone of his whole philosophy he

finds religion to be rooted in life, and would define religion as an action by which the human being appropriates the spiritual life.

The first great concern of religion must be the conservation—not of man, as mere man, but of the spiritual life in the human being, and it means "a mighty concentration of the spiritual life in man." The essential basis that makes religion possible is the presence of a Divine life in man—"it unfolds itself through the seizure of this life as one's own nature." Religion must be a form of activity, which brings about the concentration of the spiritual life in the human soul, and sets forth this spiritual life as a shield against unworthy elements that attempt to enter and to govern man.

The essential characteristic of religion must be the demand for a new world. "Religion is not a communication of overworld secrets, but the inauguration of an overworld life." Religion must depend upon the contradiction and opposition that exists in human life, and upon the clear recognition of the distinction between the "high" and the "low" in life. It must point to a means of attaining freedom and redemption from the old world of sin and sense, and to the possibility of being elevated into a new and higher world. It must, too, fight against the extremes of optimism and pessimism, for while it will acknowledge the presence of wrong, it will call attention to the possibility of deliverance. It must bring about a change of life, without denying the dark side of life; it must show "the Divine in the things nearest at hand, without idealising falsely the ordinary situation of life."

The great practical effect of religion, then, must be to create a demand for a new and higher world in opposition to the world of nature. For this new life religion must provide an ultimate standard. "Religion must at all times assert its right to prove and to winnow, for it is religion—the power which draws upon the deepest source of life—which takes to itself the whole of man, and offers a fixed standard for all his undertakings." Religion must provide a standard for the whole of life, for it places all human life "under the eternity." It is not the function of religion to set up a special province over against the other aspects of his life—it must transform life in its entirety, and affect all the subsidiary aspects.

But religion is not gained, any more than human freedom, once for all time—it must be gained continually afresh, and sought ever anew. Thus the fact of religion becomes a perpetual task, and leads to the highest activity.

Eucken speaks of two types of religion—Universal and Characteristic Religion. The line of division between them is not easy to draw, but the distinction gives an opportunity for emphasising again the essential elements of true religion.

Universal Religion is a more or less vague appreciation of the Spiritual, which results in a diffused, indefinite spiritual life. The personality has appreciated to some extent the opposition between the natural and the spiritual, and has chosen the spiritual. He adopts a new attitude or mood, towards the world in consequence, and that is an attitude of fight against the world of nature. But everything is vague; the individual has not yet appreciated the spiritual world as his own, and feels that he is a stranger in the higher world, rather than an ordinary fully privileged citizen. He has not yet associated himself closely enough with the Universal Spirit, everything is superficial, there is hunger and thirst for the higher things in life, but these have not yet been satiated.

Some people never get beyond this vague appreciation of the spiritual until perhaps some great trial or temptation, a long illness or sad bereavement falls to their lot. Then they feel the need for a religion that is more satisfying than the Universal Religion with which they have in the past been content. They want to get nearer to God; they feel the need of a personal God who is interested in their trials and troubles. They are no longer satisfied with the conception of a God that is far away, they thirst for His presence. This feeling leads the individual to search for a more definite form of religion, in which the God is regarded as supremely real, and reigns on the throne of love. The personality enters into the greater depths of religion, and it becomes a much more real and powerful influence in his life. He has no longer a mere indefinite conception of a Deity, but he thinks of God as real and personal. Instead of adopting a changed attitude towards the world of nature, he comes to demand a new world. He is now a denizen of the spiritual world, and there results “a life of pure inwardness,” which draws its power and inspiration from the infinite resources of the Universal Spiritual Life in which he finds his being. This type of religion Eucken calls *Characteristic Religion*.

The historical religions would seem to represent, to some extent, the attempts of humankind to arrive at a religion of this kind. A further distinction arises between the historical forms of religion, of which one at most, if any, can express the final truth, and the Absolute form of religion, which if not yet conceived, must ultimately express the truth in the matter of religion.

Eucken is never more brilliant than he is in the examination he makes of the historical forms of religion, for the purpose of formulating the Absolute and final form; some account of this must be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII
RELIGION: HISTORICAL AND ABSOLUTE

In examining the various historical forms of religion, Eucken, as we should expect, is governed by the conclusions he has arrived at concerning the solution of the great problem of life, and especially of the place of religion in life.

A religion which emphasised the need for a break with the world, and of fight and action for spiritual progress, the possibility of a new higher life of freedom and of personality, and the superiority of the spiritual over the material, and which presented God as the ultimate spiritual life, in which the human personality found its real self, would thus meet with highest favour, while a form of religion that failed to do so would necessarily fail to satisfy the tests that he would apply.

He does not spend time discussing various religions in detail, but deals with them briefly in general, in order to show that the Christian religion is far superior to all other religions, then he makes a critical and very able examination of the Christian position. He considers it necessary to discuss in detail only that form of religion that is undoubtedly the highest.

The historical religions he finds to be of two types—religions of law and religions of redemption. The religions of law portray God as a being outside the world, and distinct from man, One who rules the world by law, and who decrees that man shall obey certain laws of conduct that He lays down. Failure to obey these laws brings its punishment in the present or in a future life, while implicit obedience brings the highest rewards. To such a God is often attributed all the weaknesses of the human being, sometimes in a much exaggerated form—hence His reign becomes one of fear to His subjects.

A religion of law assumes that man is capable of himself of obeying the law, and is responsible for his mode of life; it assumes that man is capable through his own energy of conquering the world of sin, and of leading the higher life.

Religions of this type possess of course the merit of simplicity, transparency, and finality. The decrees, the punishments and rewards are given with some clearness and are easily understood; there is no appeal and little equivocation. They served a useful purpose in the earlier ages of civilisation, but cannot solve the problem for the complex civilisation and advanced culture of the present age. They place God too far from man, and attribute to man powers which he cannot of himself possess. The conceptions of the Deity involved in them are too anthropomorphic in character—too much coloured by human frailties.

The religions of law have had to give place to those of a superior type—the religions of redemption. These religions appreciate the difficulty there exists for humankind of itself to transcend the world of sin, and are of two types—one type expressing a merely negative element, the other a negative and positive element.

The typical negative redemptive religion is that of Buddhism. Buddhism teaches us that the world is a sham and an evil; and the duty of man is to appreciate this fact, and to deny the world, but here the matter ends—it ends with world-renunciation and self-

renunciation. There is only a negative element in such a religion, no inspiration to live and fight for gaining a higher world. This, of course, cannot provide a satisfactory solution to the problem, for no new life with new values is presented to us. It is a religion devoid of hope, for it does not point to a higher life. “A wisdom of world-denial, a calm composure of the nature, an entire serenity in the midst of the changing scenes of life, constitute the summit of life.”

Christianity teaches us that the world is full of misery and suffering, but the world in itself is really a perfect work of Divine wisdom and goodness. “The root of evil is not in the nature of the world, but in moral wrong—in a desertion from God.” Sin and wickedness arise from the misuse and perversion of things which are not in themselves evil. Christianity calls for a break from the wickedness of the world. It calls upon man to give up his sin, to deny, or break with, the evil of which he is guilty. But it does not expect man to do this in his own strength alone—God Himself comes to his rescue. Unlike Buddhism, it does not stay at the denial of the world, but calls upon man to become a citizen of a higher world. This gives a new impetus to the higher life; man finds a great task—he has to build a kingdom of God upon the earth. This demands the highest efforts —he must fight to gain the new world, and must keep up the struggle to retain what he has gained. The inferiority of Buddhism as contrasted with Christianity is well described by Eucken in the following words: “In the former an emancipation from semblance becomes necessary; in the latter an overcoming of evil is the one thing needful. In the former the very basis of the world seems evil; in the latter it is the perversion of this basis which seems evil. In the former, the impulses of life are to be entirely eradicated; in the latter, on the contrary, they are to be ennobled, or rather to be transformed. In the former, no higher world of a positive kind dawns on man, so that life finally reaches a seemingly valid point of rest, whilst upon Christian ground life ever anew ascends beyond itself.”

From such considerations as these, Eucken comes to the conclusion that of the redemptive religions, which are themselves the highest type, Christianity is the highest and noblest form, hence his main criticism is concerned with the Christian religion. This does not mean that he finds neither value nor truth in any other form of religion. His general conclusion with regard to the historical religions is that they “contain too much that is merely human to be valued as a pure work of God, and yet too much that is spiritual and divine to be considered as a mere product of man.” He finds in them all some kernel of truth, or at least a pathway to some part of truth, but contends that no religion contains the whole truth and nothing but the truth. “As certainly,” he says, “as there is only one sole truth, there can be only one absolute religion, and this religion coincides entirely in no way with any one of the historical religions.”

Eucken’s great endeavour in his discussion of the Christian religion is to bring out the distinction between the eternal substance that resides in it and the human additions that have been made to it in different ages, between the elements in Christianity that are essentially divine and those essentially human. Divested of its human colourings and accretions, Christianity presents a basis of Divine and eternal truth, and this regarded in itself, can well claim to be the final and absolute religion.

The conclusion he has come to with regard to the eternal truth as contrasted with the temporary colourings of Christianity, with the essential as contrasted with the inessential,

can best be outlined by taking in turn some of the main tenets and characteristics of the Christian faith.

Eucken's conception of the negative movement is very much akin to the Christian idea of *conversion*. The first stage is merely a movement away from the world, but after a time, in the continuous process of negation, the negative movement attains a positive significance; when this stage is arrived at Eucken would apply the term conversion. He would not limit the negative movement to one act or to one point in time; the movement towards a higher world must be maintained—the sustaining of the negative movement being a test of the reality of conversion. The process of conversion is not a process to be passively undergone, or to originate from without, but is a movement starting in the depths of one's own being.

As already pointed out, Eucken believes in *redemption*. The past is capable of reinterpretation and transformation, because we can view our past actions in a new light and so change the whole, since the past is not a closed thing, definite in itself, but a part of an incomplete whole. He considers, however, that the Christian doctrine of redemption makes it too much a matter of God's mercy, instead of placing stress upon the part that man himself must play. The possibility of redemption in his view follows from the presence and movement of the spiritual life in man, not merely from an act of the founder of Christianity, and he avers that while traditional Christianity emphasises the need for redemption from evil, it does not emphasise sufficiently the necessary elevation to the good life that must result.

Closely bound up with the Christian doctrine of redemption is that of *mediation*. Eucken believes that the Christian conception of mediation resulted from the feeling of worthlessness and impotence of man, and the aspirations which yet burned within him after union with the Divine. The idea of mediation bridges the gulf, "a mid-link is forged between the Divine and the human, and half of it belongs to each side; both sides are brought into a definite connection which could be found in no other way." Eucken acknowledges that such a mediation seems to make access to the Divine easier, gives intimacy to the idea of redemption, and offers support for human frailty. But he points out that there is an intolerable anthropomorphism involved in the idea, that it removes the Divine farther away from man, and that the union of Divine and human is held to obtain in one special case only—that of Christ. He urges that in a religion of mediation, one or other, God or Christ, must be chosen as the centre. "Concerning the decision there cannot be the least doubt; the fact is clear in the soul-struggles of the great religious personalities, that in a decisive act of the soul the doctrinal idea of mediation recedes into the background, and a direct relationship with God becomes a fact of immediacy and intimacy."

So Eucken will have nothing to do with the idea of mediation in its doctrinal significance—pointing out that "the idea of mediation glides easily into a further mediation." "Has not the figure of Christ receded in Catholicism, and does not the figure of Mary constitute the centre of the religious emotional life?"

He does, however, lay great store by the help that a man may be to other men in their upward path: "The human, personality who first and foremost brought eternal truth to the plane of time, and through this inaugurated a new epoch, remains permanently present in

the picture of the spiritual world, and is able permanently to exercise a mighty power upon the soul … but all this is far removed from any idea of mediation."

Eucken believes in *revelation*, but through action, and not through contemplation. To the personality struggling upward, with its aims set towards the highest in life, the spiritual life reveals itself. He does not confine revelation to certain periods in time, and believes that such revelation comes to all spiritual personalities.

He holds, too, that the spiritual personalities are themselves revelations of the Universal Spiritual Life, and that the Spiritual Life does reveal itself most clearly in personalities.

How the revelation comes he does not discuss in any detail, but he is very certain that it comes through action and fight for the highest.

It is perhaps largely due to his activistic standpoint that Eucken does not deal with *prayer*. In the *Truth of Religion*, which deals very fully with most aspects of religion, and purports to be a complete discussion of religion, no treatment of prayer is given. He speaks of the developing personality as drawing upon the resources of the Universal Spiritual Life, but this appears to be in action, and not in prayer or communion.

He is ever suspicious of intellectual contemplation, and this leads him to attribute less importance than perhaps he should to *mysticism*, to prayer, adoration, and worship. He admits that mysticism contains a truth that is vital to religion, but complains that it becomes for many the whole of religion. Its proper function is to liberate the human mind from the narrowly human, and to emphasise a total-life, the great Whole. It fails, however, "because it turns this necessary portion of religion into the sole content. To it, religion is nothing other than an absorption into the infinite and eternal Being—an extinguishing of all particularity, and the gaining of a complete calm through the suspension of all the wear and tear of life."

Eucken's discussion of *faith and doubt* is very illuminating. He protests against the conception of faith which concerns itself merely with the intellectual acceptance of this or that doctrine. This narrows and weakens its power, confining it to one department of life; whereas faith is concerned with the whole of life.

Faith is for Eucken "a conviction of an axiomatic character, which refuses to be analysed into reasons, and which, indeed, precedes all reasons … the recognition of the inner presence of an infinite energy."

If faith concerns itself with, and proceeds from the whole of life, it will then take account of the work of thought, and will not set itself in opposition to reason. But it will lead where reason fails. It is not limited by intellectual limitations, though it does not underrate or neglect the achievements of the intellect. Faith enables life to "maintain itself against a hostile or indifferent world; … it holds itself fast to invisible facts against the hard opposition of visible existence."

The vital importance of such faith to religion is clearly evident; and bound up with this is the significance of doubt. Doubt, too, becomes now, not an intellectual matter, but a matter for the whole of life. "If faith carries within itself so much movement and struggle, it is not surprising … if faith and doubt set themselves against each other, and if the soul is set in a painful dilemma." Eucken considers it to be an inevitable, and indeed a necessary

accompaniment of religious experience, and his own words on the point are forcible and clear. “Doubt … does not appear as something monstrous and atrocious, though it would appear so if a perfect circle of ideas presented itself to man and demanded his assent as a bounden duty. For where it is necessary to lay hold on a new life, and to bring to consummation an inward transformation, then a personal experience and testing are needed. But no proof is definite which clings from the beginning to the final result, and places on one side all possibility of an antithesis. The opposite possibility must be thought out and lived through if the Yea is to possess full energy and genuineness. Thus doubt becomes a necessary, if also an uncomfortable, companion of religion; it is indispensable for the conservation of the full freshness and originality of religion—for the freeing of religion from conventional forms and phrases.”

Eucken’s views on *immortality* have already been dealt with. He does not accept the Christian conception of it, for he seems to limit the possibility to those in whom spiritual personalities have been developed, and he evidently does not believe that the “natural individuality with all its egoism and limitations” is going to persist.

In discussing the question of *miracle,* Eucken weighs the fact that a conviction of the possibility of miracle has been held by millions in various religions, and particularly in Christianity. He considers that the question of miracle is of more importance in the Christian religion than in any other, one miracle—the Resurrection—having been taken right into the heart of Christian doctrine. He finds, however, that the miracle is entirely inconsistent with an exact scientific conception of nature, and means “an overthrow of the total order of nature as this has been set forth through the fundamental work of modern investigation.” He does not consider such a position can be held without overwhelming evidence, and does not feel the traditional fact to have this degree of certainty, or to be inexplicable in another way. He considers that the explanation of the miracle probably lies in the psychic state of the witnesses.

Eucken shows in general extreme reluctance to make a historical event a foundation of belief, and this no doubt accounts to some extent for his attitude with regard to miracles. He points out that “the founders of religion have themselves protested against a craving after sensuous signs,” and that this protest “is no other than the sign of spiritual power and of a Divine message and greatness.” He considers that the belief in, and craving for, sensuous miracle is an outcome of a “mid-level of religion,” where belief is waning and spirituality declining. While, thus, he does not believe in sensuous miracle, he acknowledges and lays the greatest stress on one miracle—the presence of the Spiritual Life in man. It is, indeed, this miracle that renders others unnecessary.

In discussing the doctrine of the *Incarnation*, Eucken attempts to get at the inner meaning—the truth which the doctrine endeavours to express, and he finds this to consist in the fact of the ultimate union of the human and Divine, and this truth is one that we dare not renounce. He criticises the attempt that is made in Christianity to show that such union only obtained once in the course of history. Incarnation is not one historical event, but a spiritual process; not an article of belief, but a living experience of each spiritual personality.

He considers as injurious to religion in general the Christian conception of the *Atonement*. He believes that the idea that is to be expressed is that of the nearness of God

to man in guilt and in suffering. In endeavouring to express this close intimacy the idea of suffering was transferred to God himself. The anthropomorphic idea of reconciliation and substitution thus arose, and this Eucken considers to have done harm. “The notion that God does not help us through His own will and power, but requires first of all His own feeling of pity to be roused, is an outrage on God and a darkening of the foundation of religion.” So Eucken objects to the attempt to formulate the mystery into dogma. “All dogmatic formulation of such fundamental truths of religion becomes inevitably a rationalism and a treatment of the problem by means of human relationships, and according to human standards.” “It is sufficient for the religious conviction to experience the nearness of God in human suffering, and His help in the raising of life out of suffering into a new life beyond all the insufficiency of reason. Indeed, the more intuitively this necessary truth is grasped, the less does it combine into a dogmatic speculation and the purer and more energetically is it able to work.”

The conception of the *Trinity* is again an attempt to express the union of Divine and human, “the inauguration of the Divine Nature within human life.” The dogma, however, involves ideas of a particular generation, and so threatens to become, and has indeed become, burdensome to a later age which no longer holds these ideas. Further, the doctrine of the Trinity has mixed up a fundamental truth of religion with abstruse philosophical speculations, and this has provided a stumbling-block rather than a help.

At the same time, Eucken lays the greatest stress on the *personality of Jesus*. He considers the personality of Jesus to be of more importance to Christianity than is the personality of its founder to any other religion. “Such a personality as Jesus is not the mere bearer of doctrines, or of a special frame of mind, but is a convincing fact, and proof of the Divine life, a proof at which new life can be kindled over anew.” And again: “It is from this source that a great yearning has been implanted within the human breast … a longing for a new life of love and peace, of purity and simplicity. Such a life, with its incomparable nature and its mysterious depths, does not exhaust itself through historical effects, but humanity can from hence ever return afresh to its inmost essence, and can strengthen itself ever anew through the certainty of a new, pure, and spiritual world over against the meaningless aspects of nature and over against the vulgar mechanism of a culture merely human.” But while he would appreciate the depth and richness of the personality of Jesus, he protests against the worship of Jesus as divine, and the making of Him the centre of religion. The greatness of Christ is confined to the realm of humanity, and there is in all men a possibility of attaining similar heights.

Christianity is, in Eucken’s view, much more closely bound up with historical events than any other religion, and it thus suffers more severe treatment at the hands of historical criticism than any other religion. Eucken considers such historical criticism to be of great value. In Christianity as in other religions we find the eternal not in its pure form, but mixed with the temporal and variable, and historical criticism will help in the separation of the temporal from the eternal elements. In so doing it does an immense service, for it frees religion from fixation to one special point of time, and enables us to regard it as ever developing and progressing to greater depths.

Eucken emphasises that the *historical basis* of Christianity is not Christianity itself, is not essentially religious; and he quotes Lessing, Kant, and Fichte to support him in his

contention that a belief in such a historical basis is not necessary to religion, and may even prove harmful to it. The historical basis is, of course, useful as bringing out into clear relief the personality of Jesus, and the other great spiritual personalities associated in His work, and Eucken lays stress upon the use that history can be to Christianity in giving records of the experiences of great spiritual personalities in all ages, but it is important that the history is here a means to an end, and not an end in itself, and that the importance lies in the spiritual experience and not in the historical facts.

When one considers how little Eucken has to say concerning worship, and how little emphasis he places upon historical and doctrinal forms in religion, one wonders how it is he attaches so much importance to the functions of the *Church*. He points out that a Church is necessary to religion, that it seems to be the only way of making religion real and effective for man. “The Church seems indispensable in order to introduce and to hold at hand the new world and the new life to man in the midst of his ordinary existence; it is indispensable in order to fortify the conviction and to strengthen the energy in the midst of all the opposite collisions; it is indispensable in order to uphold an eternal truth and a universal problem in the midst of the fleetingness of the moment.” In the past, however, much harm has been done to religion by the Church. This has arisen from several reasons. To begin with, it tends to narrow religion, which is concerned with life, to the realm of ideas, and to tie down religion by connecting it with a thought-system of a particular age. Further, the necessary mechanical routine, and the appointment of special persons to carry out this routine, tends to elevate the routine and these special persons to a far higher place than they should occupy. Again, spiritual things have been dragged into the service of personal ambition, and bound up with human interests. The most serious danger, however, is that religion, from being an inward matter, tends to become externalised.

Despite this, an organised Church cannot be dispensed with, and Eucken points out what changes are necessary to make the Church effective. One important point he makes clear, namely, that as the Church must speak to all, and every day, and not only to spiritually distinguished souls, and in moments of elevated feeling, then the teaching of the Church will always lag behind religion itself, and must be considered as an inadequate expression of it.

It is necessary that there should be no coercion with regard to men’s attitude towards the Church, and men should be free to join this or that Church, or no Church at all.

Then there must be more freedom, movement, and individuality within the Church. What the Church holds as a final result of the experience of life cannot be expected as the confession of all, especially of the young. “How can every man and every child feel what such a mightily contrasted nature as Luther’s with all its convulsive experiences felt?”

Then the Church must not so much teach this or that doctrine as point to the Spiritual Life, set forth the conditions of its development, and be the representative of the higher world. Thus, and thus only, Eucken thinks that the Church can fulfil its proper function, and avoid being a danger to religion.

Eucken’s *appreciation of Christianity* is sincere. Viewing it from the standpoint of the Spiritual Life, he finds that it fulfils the conditions that religion should fulfil. It is based on freedom, and on the presence of the Divine in humanity, even to the extent of a complete

union between them. The ideal of the Christian life is a personal life of pure inwardness, and of an ethical character. He speaks of the “flow of inner life by means of which Christianity far surpasses all other religions,” and of the “unfathomable depth and immeasurable hope which are contained in the Christian faith.”

In Christianity the life of Christ has a value transcending all time, and is a standard by which to judge all other lives. There is, too, in Christianity a complete transformation or break, which must take place before any progress or development can take place.

“There is no need of a breach with Christianity; it can be to us what a historical religion pre-eminently is meant to be—a sure pathway to truth, an awakener of immediate and intimate life, a vivid representation and realisation of an Eternal Order which all the changes of time cannot possess or destroy.”

At the same time, there are changes necessary in the form of Christianity, if it is to answer to the demands of the age, and be the Absolute Religion. It must be shorn of temporary accretions, and must cast aside the ideas of any one particular age which have now been superseded. No longer can it retain the primitive view of nature and the world which formerly obtained, no longer must it take up a somewhat negative and passive attitude, but, realising that religion is a matter of the whole life, must energetically work itself out through all departments of life. It must remedy wrong, not merely endure it. It must proceed from a narrow and subjective point of view to a cosmic one, without at the same time losing sight of the fact that religion is an inward and personal matter. It must take account to the full of the value of man as man, and of the possibilities latent in him, and take account of his own activity in his salvation.

The Christian ideal of life must be a more joyous one, of greater spiritual power, and the idea of redemption must not stop short at redemption from evil, but must progress to a restoration to free and self-determining activity. Since an absolute religion is based on the spiritual life, the form in which it is clothed must not be too rigid—life cannot be bound within a rigid creed. With its form modified in this way, Eucken considers that Christianity may well be the Absolute Religion, and that not only we can be, but we *must* be Christians if life is to have for us the highest meaning and value.

CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION: CRITICISM AND APPRECIATION

We have attempted to enunciate the special problem with which Eucken deals, and to follow him in his masterly criticisms of the solutions that have been offered, in his further search for the reality in life, in his arguments and statement of the philosophy of the spiritual life, and finally in his profound and able investigation into the eternal truth that is to be found in religion. In doing so, we have only been able in a few cases to suggest points of criticism, and sometimes to emphasise the special merits of the work. It was necessary to choose between making a critical examination of a few points, and setting forth in outline his philosophy as a whole. It was felt that it would be more profitable for the average reader if the latter course were adopted. Thousands who have heard the name of Eucken and have read frequent references to him are asking, “What has Eucken really to say?” and we have attempted to give a systematic, if brief, answer to the question. Having done this it will be well to mention some of the main points of criticism that have been made, and to call attention again to some of the remarkable aspects of the contributions he has made to philosophy and religion.

Several critics complain of the obscurity of his writings, of his loose use of terms, and of his tendency to use freely such indefinite and abstruse terms as “The Whole,” “The All,” &c., and of his tendency to repeat himself. Of course, if he is guilty of these faults, and he certainly is to some extent, they are merely faults of style, and do not necessarily affect the truth or otherwise of his opinions. In the matter of clarity he is very variable; occasional sentences are brilliantly clear, others present considerable difficulty to the practised student. His more popular works, however, are much clearer and easier to understand than the two standard treatises on *The Truth of Religion* and *Life’s Basis and Life’s Ideal*. His tendency to repetition is by no means an unmixed evil, for even when he appears to be repeating himself, he is very often in reality expressing new shades of meaning, which help towards the better understanding of the first statements.

The slight looseness in the use of terms, and a certain inexactness of expression that is sometimes apparent, must of course not be exaggerated; it is by no means serious enough to invalidate his main argument. It gives an opportunity for a great deal of superficial criticism on the part of unsympathetic writers, which, however, can do little harm to Eucken’s position. One has to remember that it is difficult to combine the fervour of a prophet with pedantic exactness, and that an inspired and profound philosopher cannot be expected to spend much time over verbal niceties.

Of course one would prefer absolute clarity and exactness, but we must guard against allowing the absence of these things to prejudice us against the profound truths of a philosophical position, which are not vitally affected by that absence.

Frequent criticism is directed towards the incompleteness of Eucken’s philosophy. He does not introduce his philosophy with a systematic discussion of the great epistemological and ontological problems. Philosophers have often introduced their work

in this way, and it has been customary to expect an introduction of the kind. To do so, however, would be quite out of keeping with Eucken's activistic position, as it would necessarily involve much intellectual speculation, and he does not believe that the problem of life can be solved by such speculation. It is unfortunate that he has so little to say concerning the world of matter. Beyond insisting upon the superiority of the spiritual life, which he calls the "substantial," over matter, which he calls the merely "existential," he tells us very little about the material world. Rightly or wrongly, thinkers are deeply interested in the merely existential, in the periphery of life, in the material world, but for the solution of this problem Eucken contributes little or nothing. His sole concern is the spiritual world, and although we should like an elaboration of his views on the mere periphery of life, we must not let the fact that he does not give it, lead us to undervalue his real contributions. Another serious incompleteness lies in the fact that he pays little attention to the psychological implications of his theories. Until he does this, his philosophy cannot be regarded as complete. Eucken, however, would be the last to claim that his solution is a finished or final one; he is content if his work is a substantial contribution to the final solution.

Objection has been taken to the fact that he starts upon his task with a definite bias in a certain direction. He candidly admits from the outset that his aim is to find a meaning for life, and in doing this he of course tacitly assumes that life has a deep and profound meaning. Strict scientists aver that the investigator must set out without prejudice, to examine the phenomena he observes; and Eucken's initial bias may form a fatal stumbling-block to the acceptance of his philosophy by these, or indeed, by any who are not disposed to accept this fundamental position. If we deny that life has a meaning, then Eucken has little for us; but if we are merely doubtful on the matter, the reading of Eucken will probably bring conviction.

Many critics point to the far-reaching assumptions he makes. He assumes as axiomatic certainties and insoluble mysteries the existence of the spiritual life in man, the union of the human and divine, and the freedom of the spiritual personalities, though in a sense dependent upon the Universal Spiritual Life. This of course does not mean that he is in the habit of making unjustifiable assumptions. This is far from being the case; on the contrary, he takes the greatest care in the matter of his speculative bases. There are some fundamental facts of life, however, which according to Eucken are proved to us by life itself; we feel they must be true, but they are not truths that can be reasoned about, nor proved by the intellect alone. These are the three great facts mentioned above, which, while not admitting of proof, must be regarded as certainties.

His contention that they cannot be reasoned about has led to the further charge of irrationalism. The question that has to be decided is, whether Eucken in emphasising the fact that great truths must be solved by life and action, is underestimating the part that intellect must play in life. The decision must be largely one of individual opinion. Many critics are of the opinion that he does lay too little stress upon the intellectual factor in life. In actual fact, however, the fault is more apparent than real, for Eucken does in fact reason and argue closely concerning the facts of life. The charge, too, is to some extent due to the fact that he continually attacks the over-emphasis on the intellectual that the people of his own race—the Germans—are apt to place. With the glorification of the intellect he has no sympathy, for he feels there is something higher and more valuable in life than thought—

and that is action.

These are the main points of criticism that have been raised—the reader must judge for himself how seriously they should be regarded. But before arriving at a final opinion he must think again of the contributions Eucken has indubitably made to philosophy and religion, of which we shall again in brief remind him.

He has given us a striking examination of the various theories of life, and has ably demonstrated their inadequacy. He has displayed great scholarship in his search for the ultimate reality. He has found this reality in the universal life, and has urged the need for a break with the natural world in order to enter upon a higher life. He has traced the progress of the spiritual life, and has given us ultimately a bold vindication of human personality and of the freedom of the spiritual being.

He has raised philosophy from being mere discussions concerning abstract theories to a discussion of life itself. In this way philosophy becomes not merely a theory concerning the universe, nor merely a theory of life, but a real factor in life itself—indeed it becomes itself a life. Thus has he given to philosophy a higher ideal, a new urgency—by his continued emphasis upon the spiritual he has given to philosophy a nobler and a higher mission. He has placed the emphasis in general upon life, and has pointed out the inability of the intellect to solve all life's problems. He has given to idealistic philosophies a possible rallying-point, where theories differing in detail can meet on common ground. As one eminent writer says: "The depth and inclusiveness of Eucken's philosophy, the comprehensiveness of its substructure and its stimulating personal quality, mark it out as the right rallying-point for the idealistic endeavour of to-day."

And what does he give to religion? Many will reply that he has given us nothing that is not already in the Christian religion. Therein lies the value and strength of Eucken's contributions. He has given a striking vindication of the spiritual content of Christianity as against the effects of time changes. He has attempted to bring out the contrast between what is really vital, and what are merely temporary colourings and accretions. He makes many of the main elements of Christianity acceptable without the need of a historical basis or proof. Not only does he present the Christian position as a reasonable view of the problem of life, but as the only solution that can really solve the final problem. He has cleared the decks of all superfluous baggage, and has laid bare a firm basis for a practical, constructive endeavour.

He has given us in himself a profound believer in the inward and higher nature of man, and in the existence of the spiritual life. As one critic says: "The earnestness, depth and grandeur, humility and conscious choice of high ideals, have raised his work far above mere intellectual acuteness and minuteness."

In Eucken we have one of the greatest thinkers of the age—some would say *the* greatest—setting his life upon emphasising the spiritual at a time when the tendency is strongly in materialistic directions. He has gathered around him a number of able and whole-hearted disciples in various countries, and future ages may find in Eucken the greatest force in the revulsion of the twentieth century (that is already making itself felt) from the extreme materialistic position, to take religion up again, and particularly the Christian religion, as the only satisfying solution of humanity's most urgent problem.

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The English reader should first read:

The Meaning and Value of Life (A. & C. Black), which is a good introduction to Eucken's philosophy; and

The Life of the Spirit (Williams & Norgate).

He can then proceed to study Eucken's three comprehensive and important works:

Life's Basis and Life's Ideal, in which he gives a detailed presentation of his philosophy (A. & C. Black).

The Truth of Religion, in which he gives his ideas on religion (Williams & Norgate).

The Problem of Human Life, in which he makes a searching analysis of the philosophies of the past (Fisher Unwin).

The student will be much helped in his study by the following books:

Eucken and Bergson, by E. Hermann (James Clark & Co.).

Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life, by Professor W.R. Boyce Gibson (A. & C. Black).

When he has studied these he will probably be anxious to read other works of Eucken's, of which translations have already appeared, or are soon to appear.

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