III.—THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS OF MR. BRADLEY'S PHILOSOPHY.

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Two excellent reasons may be given for this article. The first is the badness of philosophic criticism, which hardly ever troubles to give an intelligible account of the works supposed to be under review. For this again the reasons are in part specific and due to the very general inability of any philosopher to understand any other, in part general and due to the common habit of critics to perform their responsible functions by reading the preface and then proceeding to discourse about familiar doctrines in the author's last book, instead of reviewing the new one. But as prefaces only contain what the author wishes to be believed about his work, and are often written to test or circumvent the critics, they often deceive the latter; also this method of reviewing is evidently apt to bear hardly on any *novelties* the author may have ventured on. It is almost preferable that the critic should practise the egotistic method of discussing the work entirely in relation to his own system. For this may sometimes be enlightening (if there is sufficient affinity between the views implicated, and the critic is not merely a youngster trying to spread himself), and it usually contributes at least to the psychology of criticism, even where it does not produce any adequate likeness to the actual contents of the work so treated.

Now as Mr. Bradley's last book has suffered in both these ways from its reviewers,¹ and there exists a serious danger that some quite important novelties imbedded in his *Essays on Truth and Reality* will be practically overlooked, it seems a public service to call attention to them.

My second reason for this article is that I feel that I owe Mr. Bradley, or at any rate the philosophic public, something like an *amende honorable* for the attitude I have taken up

¹ It is fortunately not necessary to give references or to mention names, as most of the offenders were anonymous, and those who have read both the book and the reviews will easily understand what I mean.

towards Mr. Bradley's philosophy in the past. Not indeed (a) because I repent me of the criticisms passed on some of his doctrines—for most of them still await an answer, as do the criticisms of Mr. Alfred Sidgwick and Captain H. V. Knox, and the pretence that this is so not because they were unanswerable but because they were not worth answering, will deceive no one who is not determined to believe this at all costs. Nor (b) because I failed to acknowledge my debt to Mr. Bradley's writings—for I have always represented my humanism as the logical outcome of the philosophic situation created by his brilliant *reductio ad absurdum* (as it still seems to me) of rationalistic 'idealism'. Nor yet (c) because I have been blind to the pragmatic tendencies of Mr. Bradley's philosophising—for it was just on their account that it seemed to me an appropriate starting-point *en route* to pragmatism.

But what (d) I must joyfully confess is that I did not originally anticipate that Mr. Bradley would himself accompany us on this *route* as far as he has now done. This shows primarily how vastly inferior I am to William James as a practical psychologist. For James was always most reluctant to reply to Mr. Bradley's persistent and copious strictures on himself, not because he thought it difficult to expose the misconceptions in which they abounded, but because he was convinced that it was much better to leave Mr. Bradley to puzzle things out for himself, as he would then in the end convert himself to something remarkably like pragmatism, though very likely he would never forgive those who had forced this development upon him against his will. He was consequently content to predict, *à propos* of the article in *MIND*, No. 72, which forms chapter viii. of the present *Essays*, that some day Mr. Bradley might "take it into his head to revoke" and give away the game of rationalistic philosophy, and to note how very close his views really came to Bergson's (*and his own!*) at the 'watershed,' where they had all originated together in a repudiation of the Hume-Kantian conception of the 'synthesising' function of mind.¹

At the time indeed it seemed that this prediction had failed. For Mr. Bradley promptly repudiated James's suggestion, and ascribed to Hegel the whole honour of engendering his doctrine.² This reply was not quite apposite, because James had alluded to his departure from the *Kantian* tradition, and on closer investigation his disclaimer, despite the vigour of its language, seems far from conclusive.

¹ *Journal of Phil.*, vii., 2, Jan. 20, 1910, pp. 33, 29.

² *Ibid.* 7; *Essays*, p. 152.

The point at issue is, of course, very important. It is nothing less than the radical correction of the assumption of Hume and Kant that experience is given as a series of discrete experiences, demanding philosophic '*synthesis*' (either empirically by 'association' or transcendently by *a priori* 'forms'), and not as a continuous flux, upon which our selective attention and interests perform *coupures*, until it is *analysed* and conveniently transformed into the common-sense world of interacting 'things'. Nowadays this doctrine is chiefly associated with the psychology of James and the metaphysics of Bergson. But it is true, and has not escaped the acuteness of some pragmatists,¹ that this doctrine, though it is not made philosophically prominent, pretty definitely occurs also in Mr. Bradley's *Logic* (1883).²

The question is how it got here. Mr. Bradley regrets that he cannot inform us "when it was that the view in question was first advocated in modern philosophy," but feels "perfectly certain" that he himself "derived it from Hegel".³ But unfortunately he gives neither reasons nor references, and it is on various grounds not impossible that he may be mistaken. The students of Mr. Bradley are familiar with his habit of ascribing vaguely to 'Hegel' many doctrines which affiliate themselves far more obviously to other philosophers, *e.g.* Herbart, and, if they are psychologists, must have noticed how strangely oblivious of the sources of their ideas philosophers can often become. It is difficult to believe, for example, that Aristotle was fully aware of his indebtedness to Plato. Nor, of course, does it follow that because one philosopher (in perfectly good faith) gets a view out of another's stimulation, it is actually contained in that other in a way any one else could have detected. In this case Mr. Bradley's theory has to explain how a view in Hegel which repudiates, not only the Humian psychology but also the Kantian epistemology upon a vital point, came to be overlooked by the whole of the professedly 'orthodox' Anglo-Hegelian School (T. H. Green, the Cairds, etc.)⁴ It is not

¹ Cf. D. L. Murray, *Pragmatism*, p. 10 n., though I must confess I myself did not realise the full extent of Mr. Bradley's divergence.

² P. 456. Cf. also *MIND*, O.S., No. 47 (1887), p. 363.

³ *Ess.*, p. 152.

⁴ I will first quote from the friendly pen of Prof. J. Watson the general confession that "in so far as such writers as Mr. Green and Mr. Caird are concerned, I think I may venture to say that as they undoubtedly conceive of the problem of philosophy very much as Kant conceived it, and seek to solve it by a method similar, if not identical, with his, whatever applies to Transcendentalism applies in all respects to Critical Idealism as well" (*Kant and His English Critics*, p. 3). For Green, indeed, reality

clear *prima facie* that Mr. Bradley is right against them, though I admit that he is a much greater philosopher. It seems more credible that Mr. Bradley may actually have developed his doctrine out of Aristotle, whose *συνεχόμενον* is obviously a denial of 'psychological atomism' and certainly a continuum.

In view, however, of the apparent logical connexion of this view with other departures of Mr. Bradley's from 'idealist' orthodoxy, a still more obvious derivation may be suggested. If the psychical datum is conceived as continuous, it follows at once that judgments, 'ideas,' and in general reality and rationality, must be products of *selection*, and that the primary function of intelligence must be to *make* such selections, and that as such a selective agency, a 'soul' cannot be dispensed with. Now it is a curious fact that both these corollaries are (sometimes) found in Mr. Bradley, although intrinsically this whole body of doctrine fits remarkably ill into his metaphysical scheme. He is (a) unwilling to admit the 'uselessness' of the soul, though he does not claim originality for his 'Darwinian' counter-speculations.¹ (b) He emphasises, from first to last, the dependence of intelligence on discrimination,² and of judgment and truth on selection,³ though he hardly attempts to show how this is compatible with his metaphysical dogma that truth must 'somehow' reside in the whole. It is further to be noted that so long ago as 1879 a faithful reader of MIND might have found all these

consists essentially of relations and he is for ever seeking for "the principle of union which renders them possible," and so nature "as the source of a connected experience" and our knowledge of it (*Prolegomena*, p. 14). He actually says (p. 13) that "motion has no meaning, except such as is derived from a synthesis of the different positions successively held by one and the same body," which is the exact opposite of Bergson's contention. He protests against those who assume 'facts' without a synthesis of events into objects, "because no such work of *synthesis* is thought to be required of consciousness at all," and insists that "every object we perceive is a congeries of related facts of which the simplest component . . . requires in order to its presentation the action of a principle of consciousness . . . upon successive appearances, such action as may hold the appearances together, without fusion, in an apprehended fact" (pp. 69, 70, italics mine). Cf. finally the following from A. Seth's (Pringle-Pattison) *From Kant to Hegel* (p. 9). "By presenting the categories as the knot which binds man and the world together . . . Idealism becomes independent of the weakness of some of the individual arguments which Kant brings forward against Hume. It becomes unimportant for philosophy to insist on the *a priori* origination of conceptions. The conceptions remain the same, though the whole psychology of associationism be admitted."

¹ MIND, N.S., iv., No. 14, p. 176.

² MIND, O.S., No. 47, p. 377.

³ *Logic*, p. 459; *Ess.*, pp. 328, 330, 333, 345, etc.

ideas, clearly expressed in their proper logical and biological setting, in the remarkable articles which preluded the appearance of James's *Principles of Psychology*.¹ This may be merely a 'coincidence,' and if so Mr. Bradley will no doubt be delighted to establish this; but it shows that James had better reason to expect a 'revoke' from Mr. Bradley than from the ordinary run of 'idealists' who had never shown any perception either of the difficulties of their own position or of the elegance of the alternative.

It is clear then that there is much in Mr. Bradley to which justice is not usually done, either by his friends or by his opponents. As however I cannot here review the whole of Mr. Bradley's collection of essays in full detail (as it deserves), I shall practically omit (1) the large part of the book which consists of reprinted articles from *MIND*. These I used for years to comment on conscientiously as they came out,² and I have little to add, as they have hardly been altered at all. Both sets of articles dealt, more or less directly, with the pragmatic controversy, and Mr. Bradley's share of it is (superficially) distinguished by quite a virulent animus against what he calls pragmatism. But a pragmatist soon discovers both that what is attacked is not any pragmatism any one has ever held, and also that each successive outburst is the precursor of further concessions to the genuine article, so that their cumulative effect is to drive Bradleyism ever closer to pragmatism. Both for this reason then, and for others which will appear, the whole of this material may safely be left to the future historian of philosophy in the twentieth century, who (if he is not a German)³ will find that it throws much light on the logical transition from absolutism to pragmatism and humanism.

(2) I do not feel it incumbent on me either to expound or to answer Mr. Bradley's criticisms on Mr. Russell's theories. For in part this subject has already been dealt with very fully (quantitatively at least), in part it seems to me that the relations between these views must remain purely 'external' and there is little likelihood that either will ever get near enough to the other to deal it a mortal blow.⁴

¹ Cf. especially "Are we Automata?" in O.S., iv., No. 13, and "The Sentiment of Rationality" in No. 15.

² Cf. Nos. 52, 63, 67, 73, 76, 85.

³ A perusal of Dr. T. B. Muller's *Kennisleer van het anglo-amerikaansch Pragmatisme* leads me to hope that he may be a Dutchman.

⁴ I do not reckon as such the objection that the 'coherence' theory of truth contradicts itself by asserting the absolute truth of the partial truth that no partial truths are wholly true, or otherwise, that having presupposed the absolute truth of the evidence on which it accepted its ideal of

(3) Lastly, I do not propose to reply specifically to Mr. Bradley's extensive criticisms on William James. Some of these are new, but most are old, and as the old ones did not seem to James to be worth answering, I should scarcely be acting in the spirit of our departed master if I concerned myself with them minutely. I will merely remark that in general their force seems to be greatly impaired by Mr. Bradley's fondness for mere verbalism (*e.g.* pp. 338-339), by his apparent inability even to conceive empirical verification and what is meant by a thing's 'coming true' (*e.g.*, p. 146), and by the very insufficient provision of exact references and quotations.¹ But it is pretty well recognised that Mr. Bradley's genius does not lie in reproducing the views of others.

I.

There remain however substantial parts of Mr. Bradley's book which are both constructive and new. They consist of an introduction (pp. 1-18) and particularly of the concluding chapters (pp. 409-473), and what I propose to discuss is

'coherence,' it proceeds to destroy this essential premiss by concluding that no partial truth is absolute. For though this objection itself seems fatal and has never been met, it seems to rest merely on ordinary logic and to be independent of any special philosophy. As a matter of fact it was first urged by Mr. Russell in one form (*Arist. Soc. Proc.*, 1907), and by Capt. Knox in another (*Quarterly Rev.*, No. 419, pp. 390-394), and it now seems open to *any one* to urge it.

¹ Though one gratefully notes that as a rule Mr. Bradley has become kinder to his readers in these matters. But, as might have been expected, their gain is sometimes his loss; as *e.g.* when a specific reference to his *Logic*, pp. 518-519 enables them to judge just how much foundation there is for his claim to have anticipated Mr. Sidgwick's difficulty about the ambiguity of the middle term (p. 368 n.). The reference shows that he had come upon the formal basis of Sidgwick's discovery, but had no conception of its far-reaching logical importance, and regarded it merely as a piece of 'sceptical' ingenuity. For whereas to Sidgwick's mind the liability of the middle to ambiguity shows that there cannot be any 'formally valid' inference, and the conclusion of every argument has always to be verified empirically in fact in every case; to Mr. Bradley's it shows that syllogisms cannot be 'used,' that unforeseen conditions must 'destroy' our reasoning, that terms between which the connexion fails for a special purpose cannot be 'really connected' at all, and that a logical process which is liable to error is 'sure' to be vitiated. *I.e.* he has not grasped that syllogisms are made to be used, that deductions are intended to predict, and that there is no harm in correcting premisses. Hence the ambiguity for him pre-exists in the eternal being of universals, instead of being produced by the combination of the premisses for a special purpose, and he is still under the spell of the rationalistic delusion that where there is 'risk of error' there can be no genuine truth.

how far they should lead us to modify our estimates of Mr. Bradley's philosophy.

We note to begin with that the subjects discussed are far more interesting than the dreary subtleties to which philosophies usually restrict themselves, and indeed quite sensational. 'God and the Absolute,' 'the Reality and Personality of God,' 'the Fear of Death and the Desire for Immortality' and the possible reality of dream-worlds, strike quite a refreshingly human note at the end of 400 pages of highly technical discussion, which had, apparently, exhausted the patience of all his reviewers. Nor are the results less sensational: for they amount in effect to something very like a series of palinodes and an abandonment of important positions taken up in *Appearance and Reality* and elsewhere.

Not that Mr. Bradley formally withdraws what he said before; in view of the infinite elasticity of his Absolute in accommodating any amount of incongruities in their 'relative truth,' that would be quite unnecessary. He simply *adds* some surprising novelties. If to others these things seem incompatible with the older dicta, that only shows that they still retain an undue respect for the Principle of Contradiction, and a 'one-sided' hankering after consistency. But this principle (though it is good enough to build a metaphysic of Appearance and Reality on) has no terrors for the philosophic adept. He has ceased to listen to "a one-sided cry for clearness and consequence" (p. 124), he is "emancipated once and for all from the narrowness of all one-sided attempts at consistency," and despises "a blind appeal to theoretical consistency, and an uncritical faith in the ultimate Validity of some undiscussed Law of Contradiction" (p. 133)¹. "To suit his varying purpose," therefore, he is able "from time to time to make statements which, as they are made, contradict one the other" (p. 337). As for metaphysics, he has "seen far too much" of them "to think of staking vital issues on the result of speculative inquiry" (p. 132), and is ever "willing to concede that my metaphysics may be wrong" though "nothing could persuade me that my instinct is not right" (p. 268).

It will probably be admitted that these candid confessions which he had thoughtfully made in the earlier part of his work leave Mr. Bradley a very free hand, and are intellectually disarming. It becomes merely stupid to object to anything he says on the score of inconsistency, and particularly when

¹ Cf. also p. 67 n., pp. 123, 343 n.

he himself objects to others on this score.¹ It is better to observe whither Mr. Bradley's 'instincts' conduct him.

II.

In chapter xv. he begins by repeating that the Absolute is not God. God has no meaning outside of the religious consciousness, and that essentially is practical. The Absolute cannot be worshipped, because there cannot be a practical relation between it and the finite will: if you try to worship it you forthwith transform it into something which is *less* than the Universe. Hence is inferred a fundamental inconsistency in religion. For God must be perfect—in any but an 'imperfect' religion. A God good but limited, though he could be worshipped and might even evoke a special loyalty, cannot give *assurance* that in the end he may not be beaten, and this entails a loss to the religious (? timid) mind. We get then this dilemma that, if God is perfect, religion must contain inconsistency, while if consistency is sought, God must be limited and this mutilates the substance of religion. But why need we attempt to avoid self-contradiction? Has religion really got to be consistent theoretically? Is ultimate theoretical consistency attainable anywhere? Is is not once for all ridiculous? No truths are more than useful mythology anywhere, and only these inconsistent ideas can serve our various purposes. Religious 'truths' then are no worse than the others, and those of them which best express our highest religious needs, and their satisfaction, must certainly be true. To test them we need merely ask whether they really answer to our need; any other criterion is mistaken and dangerous.

It will readily be perceived that this argument, which has been summarised almost in Mr. Bradley's own words, makes some striking points. (1) It should severely shock the genuine seekers after a rational religion to learn that the quest is doomed to failure, and that religion is essentially a pragmatic business. Unfortunately no religion has yet been convinced either by Mr. Bradley or by any one else of the correctness of this diagnosis, and many of them even persecute the pragmatists they have among them.

(2) It is made quite clear *why* God cannot be identified with the Absolute. The Absolute is not only not worth worshipping, but whoever tries to do so finds that he *ipso facto* limits it, and turns it into something *less* than the Universe. This should cut off one of the chief sources of philosophic hypocrisy.

¹ *E.g.* p. 318.

(3) It manifestly makes extraordinary concessions to the notion of a finite God, who is now acknowledged not only to be thinkable, but adorable and superior, *in theoretic consistency*, to the God of 'perfect' religion. All of these are contentions of a philosophic pluralism for which formerly Mr. Bradley could not express sufficient contempt. True, the finitist theology is still rejected, but with what perfunctory arguments! They reduce themselves to a refusal to alter an arbitrary *definition* of 'religion'. For all that "mutilating the substance of religion" really means is that when you have (rashly) defined religion as the worship of an omnipotent Whole and discovered that this will not do, because the Whole cannot be worshipped, you *must change your definition* into something more in accord with the facts of the situation.

(4) And Mr. Bradley also betrays the shabby and pettily human motives of the refusal to do this. A finite God yields no absolute '*assurance*'; and even a verbal and nugatory assurance *a priori* is better than merely empirical grounds of confidence. The prejudice here revealed is identical with that which prompts the demand of Formal Logic for *formally valid* 'proof,' and its refusal to look at the real reasoning which *runs the risk* of failure. But there seems little reason for dubbing this refusal either 'religious' in the one case or 'logical' in the other. In both cases it resembles rather an instinctive prompting of moral cowardice and intellectual obtuseness. At any rate, when its nature is thus nakedly displayed, we may trust that it will be bravely repudiated by the sturdy old Norse spirit that prefers to run the risk of 'dying with Odin' when *Ragnarök* breaks out, to being ignobly saved by an illusory transmutation into an Absolute that neither knows nor cares.

(5) But the most glaring feature in Mr. Bradley's argument is its aggressive affinity to pragmatism. It even seems at first sight an *ultra-pragmatism*, which exults in those very excesses which the austerer scientists and philosophers have from the first denounced as demoralising and destructive of the most elementary standards of intellectual honesty. It not only seems to make mere emotional satisfactoriness the primary source of religious 'truths,' and makes no mention of any empirical or objective *testing*,¹ but sanctions the completest autonomy of every sort of truth-claim and a complete disregard of the duty of synthesising the various sorts of 'truths'. So long as they do not claim to be absolute, 'truths' have a licence to be as inconsistent as

¹ Though this is not perhaps made quite clear.

they please. Provided, of course, that they can be said to 'work' in any way. For we unmistakably encounter in Mr. Bradley the notorious equating of truth and use, which such desperate attempts have long been made to fasten on to pragmatism. "*Whatever* ideas really are required," he calmly declares, "are true."¹ In short the despotism of the one (unknowable) Absolute Truth rests upon an absolute anarchy among the common herd of its subjects. The reason for this paradox is that nothing is ultimately true but the One and to relative 'truths' everything is permitted.²

Could these deliverances be surpassed by any pragmatist? He would certainly be ill-advised to try, and should rather quote *Timeo Danaos*, and scrutinise Mr. Bradley's offers of support. He will then note that their doctrine seems to ignore the scientific source of pragmatism in that unwearying watching of events and critical revision of truth-claims of all sorts, which assure the progress of the sciences, and therefore will *not* abandon the hope of scientifically verifying and synthesising them all. Nor will his failure to attain absolute truth goad him into disregard of intellectual consistency. He will point out to Mr. Bradley that there is no need to despair of the ultimate consistency and complete unification of scientific doctrine because of the survival-value of 'true' beliefs, and that his apparent laxity in allowing all sorts of 'satisfaction' to put in their claims to *be tested*, only recognises the actual facts of human knowing, and redounds to the benefit of the so-called 'theoretic' interest itself, if it aims at an adequate description of the functioning of our intelligence.

Nor will he admit that Mr. Bradley has outbid him in the eyes of the intelligently religious or surpassed him in pragmatism. He will explain rather that Mr. Bradley's present position forms the last halting place but one before true pragmatism is reached, and its exaggerations are reduced to reason. For if we premise that one of the best roads to pragmatism issues from the gradual dissipation of the great illusion about the absoluteness of truth, and that we may begin by discovering that there is an apparently arbitrary (*i.e.* selective), and therefore man-made and 'fictitious,' side to *some* truths, and that this is essential to their function and the very source of their usefulness and value, it is tempting to

¹ P. 433. Similarly, p. 123, "I agree that any idea which in *any way* 'works,' has in some sense truth" (*italics mine*, in both cases). Miss Stebbing should take note of this (*cf.* *MIND*, No. 83, 84, 86, 88).

² It is curious that the doctrine of 'degrees' of truth should no longer be appealed to, to introduce some semblance of order.

proceed to the excessive declaration that *all* 'truths' are 'fictions' and that the way of 'knowledge' always leads away from 'reality'. Now this is the position which has been reached by Prof. Vaihinger,¹ and long before, by Nietzsche.² But Mr. Bradley here has *not quite* got to it. He is willing enough to describe all 'relative' truths as useful 'fictions'; but he still thinks that absolute truth *ought* to exist, and so clings to the belief that the Absolute must have it, seeing that no one else can. To the critic this position naturally seems an unreasonable prejudice, but it is Mr. Bradley's *choice*, and cannot be attacked by logic.

What however a critic is entitled to demur to is the tacit assumption, made both by Prof. Vaihinger and (at this point) by Mr. Bradley, that because 'truths' are 'fictions,' no one need trouble about them further. For surely the *values* of such 'fictions' may be discriminated, and are very various. They can therefore be arranged in an order of merit from a purely human point of view. Further, a system of the purposes to which the various truths minister may be gradually built up. And when we watch the persistence and devotion with which the sciences build up their systems, it may suddenly occur to us that after all the impracticable assumption that truth must *not* depart from the given by subjecting it to human manipulations was nothing but an arbitrary prejudice, which led only to an unjust depreciation of the most precious truths as 'fictions'. We can, therefore, uproot this prejudice and abandon this assumption, if we resolve to *cancel* the otiose notion of 'absolute' truth altogether. Our 'relative truths' (*alias* 'fictions') thereupon become truths *optimi juris*, and their failure to be absolute no longer counts against them. In that moment true pragmatism is born, and can proceed to appraise the claims of the conflicting 'truths,' so far as the state of human knowledge permits.

III.

We return to Mr. Bradley's account of the personality of God. A personal God is not of course ultimate for metaphysics. But he may yet be so for religion (though some religions do without one). The real presence of God's will in ours must not however be denied or impaired by this religious sentiment. For that is more vital still. Hence genuine religion exhibits a 'pantheism' " which

¹ Cf. *MIND*, No. 81, pp. 100-103.

² Cf. *Quarterly Review*, No. 434, pp. 162-165.

is not less there because it expresses itself by what in fact is an inconsistent polytheism". Religion is once more revealed as consisting of necessary inconsistencies.

This passage accords somewhat better with *Appearance and Reality*, though the postulate of personality is treated with far more respect, and no longer as a mere device of intellectual dishonesty.¹ In the next section, which discusses immortality, the modifications are more marked. The arguments, with the exception of the demand of personal affection, all leave Mr. Bradley "not merely unconvinced but cold," and he doubts whether it is much use arguing about the subject. Nevertheless his intellectual tone has improved—apparently through the influence of Dr. Mc Taggart, like himself, an 'atheistic' absolutist. He concedes that if any one's religion demands a genuine personal existence after death, the belief is "so far right, and under this condition may be called true" (p. 439, 'ultra-pragmatism' again!). He condemns as "one-sided and unsatisfactory" his notorious article in the *Fortnightly Review*,² and 'fully recognises' that "in some present attempts to communicate with the dead there is much which deserves sympathy". And he has given practical expression to this change of attitude by joining the Society for Psychical Research some six or seven years ago. Nay, so complete has been his change of mind that he even considers that the official Roman Catholic view that (unauthorised) psychical phenomena are to be ascribed to the Devil deserves serious consideration (p. 440 n.).³

IV.

Proceeding to pp. 443-447, we get an interesting excursus on the relations of life, metaphysics and common-sense which is marked by great candour and a further advance towards pragmatism. Mr. Bradley points out that the Universe "refuses to divide itself into well-defined objects and clean-cut distinctions". The demand therefore for them by "what counts itself as sound sense and clear thinking must mutilate and distort the living whole". Thus common-sense can never be reconciled to metaphysics, nor can metaphysics cure man's intellectual unrest, though Mr. Bradley holds that

¹ Cf. *App. and Real.*, p. 532.

² Dec., 1885.

³ Like Mr. H. S. Shelton in *Science Progress*, Jan., 1914, p. 410. One wonders after that what Mr. Bradley thinks of a recent case of the excommunication of a priest for working miracles (not fraudulently but) without his bishop's leave!

for him "it has in principle broken down the unnatural barrier between beauty and truth, between poetry and fact" (p. 444). It is admitted however that this may all rest on personal feeling, and that others may conclude from it to theoretic scepticism. Even this may free us from "the tyranny of intellectual prejudices" and "the superstitious idolatry of abstract consistency. For such a scepticism all our truths, without exception, are mere working ideas," *i.e.* "are there to serve our living interests" (p. 445). For such a view prose and 'fact' may be more fanciful than poetry or art. "Everything in short in life will be tried, and condemned or justified, solely on the ground of our highest human interests" (p. 446). In addition however to such a "mere collection of working ideas" we need "some kind of working creed," in order "to recognise and justify in due proportion all human interests, and at the same time to supply the intellect with that to which it can hold with confidence". It is not in the power of philosophy to supply such a new religion, though a critical philosophy may "in some sense justify and support our faith". Mr. Bradley declines to surmise whether and how "we shall get this new religion," but will not declare it impossible.

It is clear that this argument presents remarkable analogies with the ideas of thinkers like Prof. Bergson (as regards the distortion which comes from conceptualising), Prof. J. A. Stewart (as regards the affinity between metaphysics and poetry), and Mr. A. J. Balfour (as regards the imperative need for a religion). Moreover in his description of the intellectual attitude flowing from 'theoretical scepticism' Mr. Bradley comes nearer to pragmatism than he ever did before, and indeed only just stops short of it. For (a) he gives up the single exception to the pragmatic nature of truths he had insisted on before, *viz.* the alleged Absolute's absolute truth, and allows that *all* our truths may be taken as working ideas. (b) He appears to recognise the need for *testing* truth-claims, and judging them accordingly.

These two advances would together entail complete pragmatism, if (1) we were also allowed to re-name the doctrine and to re-value its products, discarding the term 'scepticism' and the imputation of 'fiction'. This however Mr. Bradley will not let us do. But why should the fortunate fact that ideas 'work' convert them into 'fictions,' and why should our willingness to use them for what they are worth constitute 'scepticism'? Surely real 'theoretical scepticism' does not look beyond the intrinsic quality of the idea it finds intellectually defective and has nothing to do

with their 'working'. Any reference to 'working' must at once import considerations alien to pure contemplation, and transcend pure scepticism, which does not seem to concern itself with the *use* of ideas at all, and least of all with use for the purpose of harmonising or organising human life and action. Indeed it is precisely in its abstraction from the *use* of ideas that the essential error of scepticism appears to consist in pragmatic eyes. A pragmatist would also regard with some suspicion the apparent vagueness and dangerous laxity of Mr. Bradley's idea of 'working'.

(2) Mr. Bradley also does not seem to extricate himself very successfully from the difficulty of *combining* his two views that the Universe is a 'living' whole, and that "life as a whole is liveable, because we select arbitrarily those ideas which seem best to suit the occasion" (p. 443). It seems to follow (a) that conceptual interpretation, because selective, is 'mutilation,' and (b) that nevertheless, unless we select, we cannot *live*. Thus the 'life' of the Universe depends on *forgoing* selection, that of man on *insisting* on it. Life therefore appears to be hopelessly divided against itself, and the 'life' of the Universe consists of a perpetual self-mutilation.¹

But why not escape from this singularly awkward situation by reconsidering the assumptions which led to it? Why not take the 'life' primarily to be explained as *our own*, and *suspend our postulation of 'The Universe,'* until we have inquired what right we have to make it in the precise form that produces the *impasse*? It may then turn out either that no unity of the Universe need be conceived in such a way as to stultify our whole cognitive procedure, or even that the supposed intellectual necessity of assuming the unity of the Universe was a mistake altogether. After all, once we begin to question the self-evidence and absolute truth of monistic metaphysics, we need not shrink from observing that they never seem concerned to show that there is a practicable *route* from the empirical unity of human experience (such as it is) to the cosmic validity of our notion of 'The Universe'. If

¹ The same difficulty arises for Mr. Bradley in a logical context also. He teaches both that (human) truth must select and abstract and rest on the assumption of the (inevitably risky) irrelevance of much that is 'given,' and that (conceivably absolute) truth has to be all-inclusive and can treat *nothing* as irrelevant (cf. pp. 328-333). But these two positions seem to be clearly incompatible (cf. *MIND*, No. 82, pp. 162-166), and Mr. Bradley advances no argument for the connecting link between them, that "truth, compelled to select, is therefore forced to remain for ever defective" (p. 330). This is merely to *assume* that the defects of its *origin* for ever preclude it from attaining *validity*.

then this assumption is found to lead to insuperable conflicts with the facts of life, it *may* be preferable to give up the assumption rather than the intellectual functions of philosophy. Thus genuine pragmatism can set a higher value upon 'reason' than *soi-disant* rationalism.

V.

Chapter xv. concludes with two 'supplementary notes' dictated by 'anxiety to be frank,' about the reality and personality of God and 'our fear of death and desire for immortality'. The former reaffirms that the essence of religion is practical, and speaks of the religious consciousness in terms that might have come straight out of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Not even the Jacobin 'polytheism' is missing, when Mr. Bradley does not "deny the possibility or the existence of one or more finite persons, such as to serve as the object of religion, or at least of some religion" (p. 449). In one sense God's personality is even a 'necessary' (= needed) truth, if without it religion remains imperfect, if religion's claim must be perfectly satisfied and it is "the supreme belief on which we have to act". This argument from personal need is sound as an argument (*i.e.* postulate), though it may be false in fact (*i.e.*, empirically unverifiable).

The pragmatic quality of these pronouncements can hardly be disputed, though few pragmatists would affirm so unreservedly the pragmatic value for all men of the extant religions.

The second note may best be described as reading like an answer to such a *questionnaire* as that circulated by the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research some years ago. As such it is a psychological document of the highest value, and should do something to shake the foolish convention that it is bad form for a philosopher ever to touch on anything intimate and important. I take the liberty of quoting: "to die and go we know not where, to survive as ourselves, and yet to become we know not what—such thoughts must bring disquiet" (p. 459). Yet to infer that this disquiet can be removed by any religion that "will assure us that all evil is really overcome" seems to argue excessive reliance on the ambiguity of 'assure'. *Credat Judæus*, but hardly a philosopher!

VI.

But the crowning mercy in the way of novelties, at all events for the purposes of this paper, comes in the last

chapter, on 'My Real World'. It deals with the bearing of dream-experiences on the problem of reality, and closely parallels both the thought and the expression of my own speculations on the same topic. That I should be endorsed in a characteristic line of thought by Mr. Bradley will no doubt excite widespread surprise; but my own surprise was immeasurably greater at finding a favourite doctrine which I had been preaching for a quarter of a century without ever so much as eliciting a word of comment, favourable or otherwise from friend or foe and which I had therefore good reason to regard as universally unpalatable, suddenly supported most effectively in the least probable quarter. In view of this situation it will be well to analyse carefully what Mr. Bradley says and to quote for the parallels.

Mr. Bradley begins by referring to "an old familiar doubt as to dreaming and waking.¹ A man is led at times to ask whether his real life may not be a dream and his dreams reality. . . . Is there not another world within which I might suddenly wake, and from which I should look back upon *this* life as unreal? Such doubts and surmises, far from being irrational, are in my opinion even justified."² Our 'real' life, according to Mr. Bradley, is the universe of things which are continuous in space with our bodies and in time with their 'states' and 'actions'. But 'the body' is that of waking life, and that it should have "an exclusive or even a superior reality" is not evident. "For admittedly in dream, in mere imagination, and in states of hypnotism and madness, I find myself with other bodies" (p. 461).

The objection that the waking world is more rational, is answered by a denial, in view "of certain dreams and some hypnotic and other abnormal conditions" that it is always the wider and more comprehensive state. On the contrary the waking mind is bounded and contracted for practical purposes.³

¹ It seems first to appear in the *Theatetus*, 158, significantly enough in a Protagorean context; but a mind like Plato's could hardly be expected to discuss seriously so anarchical a thought.

² Cf. "While it lasts a dream has all the characteristics of reality. . . . But if the rough touch of death awoke us from the lethargy of life . . . would not our earthly life appear a dream, the hallucination of an evil nightmare?" (*Riddles of the Sphinx*, new ed., p. 280). "How may reality be distinguished from a consistent dream? And seeing that experience presents us with transitions from an apparently real (dream) world into one of superior reality, how can we know that this process may not be repeated, to the destruction of what now seems our real world?" (*Stud. in Humanism*, p. 202).

³ Cf. "Dreams (while we dream them) have all the marks of an independent reality, are immersed in a space and a time of their own, and

Moreover abnormal or dream states which seem inferior in and by themselves may not be so in relation to a different environment. "What we call our real environment may be indeed the merest fraction of the universe, and such as it is, it might . . . be altered to-morrow" (p. 464). Minds starting from another basis may have worlds "better and more real than mine". If "in hypnotism, madness or dream my world becomes wider and more harmonious than the scheme which is set up from my waking self, then does not what I dream become at once a world better and more real?"¹

"The thought of other, of even an indefinite number of other, unknown worlds and lives" "as real as my own or more real" seems therefore to be possible. "Into one or more of these orders from time to time I may enter in my dreams." Even now "I may be leading a different life somewhere else." "We may have many lives sundered wholly"; cf. Gautier's *La Morte Amoureuse*, p. 466.²

Curiously enough, however, Mr. Bradley does *not* draw from his recognition of these facts the corollary to which they seem directly to conduct, viz. that to find any empirical confirmation of the theory of a single Absolute embracing and harmonising the whole Universe, is desperately difficult. It is easy enough of course to postulate an Absolute which accomplishes *ex officio* whatever it is invented for. But how about confirming this postulate by the facts? How *e.g.* is this chaotic assemblage of dream-worlds, infinite in

contain personages just as external to us, and as uncontrollable in their actions as those of waking life" (*Studies*, p. 383). "Nor can I imagine what justified me once in dreaming that I was a beautiful woman well over eight feet high" (*ib.*, p. 477). "Dream-worlds are of inferior value for our purposes, and are therefore judged unreal" (*ib.*, p. 473).

¹ "A world so much better, more beautiful, coherent and rational, and in two words *more real*" (*Humanism*, p. 22). "All our distinctions between the 'real' and 'unreal' are *intrinsic*: it is the dream world's character itself that leads us to condemn it. And if in our dreams we found ourselves transported into worlds more coherent, more intelligible, more beautiful and more delightful than that of daily life, should we not gladly attribute to them a superior reality?" (*Humanism*, p. 367). All the religions "must contend that phenomena which would ordinarily be classified as unreal may, properly, belong to a world of higher reality" (*Studies*, p. 479).

² "The coexistence of an indefinite plurality of real worlds, of infinitely various kinds and degrees of completeness, complexity, extent, coherence, pleasantness, rationality, etc., was quite conceivable. Habitually, no doubt, we were confined to *one* of these, but occasionally we were enabled . . . to make fleeting incursions into these other worlds . . . and to return and say (falsely) that it was all a dream" (*Studies*, pp. 481-482, and cf. *Humanism*, p. 366). Instead of Gautier I referred to stories from Dumas, Kipling and Bulwer Lytton (*Stud.*, pp. 478, 480).

number and quality, ever to be truly unified? Does not their existence cast a serious doubt on our glib assumption that our multifarious worlds all form parts of the Universe and that this human notion of ours can be successfully applied to a reality that overflows our categories in every direction?

To Mr. Bradley as to me, however, the evidence of dream-worlds seems to "bear specially on the question as to what we call death" (p. 467). For it is only "on the assumption that our real world is the sole reality" that there is "any valid argument at all for sentience and death". And even though in principle everything finite is subject to chance and change and dissolution, "it does not follow that finite beings are unable to endure, as themselves, for an indefinite time". "Death may be an overmastering impression, but it is certainly no necessary truth," and may be "a mockery" (pp. 467).¹

VII.

It is clear, therefore, that the resemblances here between Mr. Bradley's thought and mine are extremely close. They must however be set down to coincidence; for have we not Mr. Bradley's word for it that he does not read what I write?² This however renders the coincidence all the more remarkable, because it shows in what a thoroughly empirical way Mr. Bradley is now willing to handle the facts. He desires his new treatment to be taken as a 'commentary' on the doctrines of *Appearance and Reality*. A 'commentary' of this kind is rather upsetting to its text, especially to those who have not themselves lived through the psychical transition from the one to the other. But it is perhaps as much as any one can fairly be expected to say who is making essential modifications in a position to which he stood committed in print. At any rate it actually involves so complete a transvaluation that it brings us back to our initial question—has Mr. Bradley 'revoked' as James predicted?

This question even now is not an easy one to answer definitely. For Mr. Bradley's moods are somewhat variable,

¹ The bearing of the reality of dream-worlds on the meaning of death is very similarly estimated in *Humanism*, pp. 368-372, and *Riddles*, pp. 378, 382, which also speaks of the 'overwhelming' and 'unanswerable impressiveness of death'.

² Cf. *MIND*, No. 66, p. 226.

and will be judged variously according to the reader's bias. Nor can it be predicted whether intellectualistic readers are more likely to be moved to indignation, or to a blind refusal to credit their champion's apostasy. Still if any of them should hold that Mr. Bradley's *had* 'revoked,' or at least had so exposed his hand that the game was up, one could well understand what was meant. He has certainly laid his cards on the table in all sincerity.

Nevertheless, if I had myself to say whether Mr. Bradley had revoked, I should answer 'not quite'. Even in the most advanced position taken up in these *Essays* he is not strictly quite a pragmatist.¹ So long as a thinker continues to cast a slur on our human knowledge as being 'practical makeshift' or 'fiction' and to hanker, however ineffectually, after a generically different sort of truth, he should not strictly be called a pragmatist.

I hasten, however, to add that I have no desire to exaggerate the importance of this difference. The points on which Mr. Bradley can now be quoted as agreeing with pragmatism seem far more numerous and important than the differences for which he still contends. It will be well to enumerate the chief ones.

(1) There is now agreement about the nature of truth, though not quite about its nomenclature. There are not actually in existence any truths which are absolute. Mr. Bradley declares that all truths are 'relative'; we prefer to say that all are 'improvable'. True, the pragmatist gets at his belief in the 'relativity' of truth empirically, by observing the process of truth-claiming and the working of the sciences, whereas Mr. Bradley may still hold (as he originally did) that it is deducible as a necessary consequence from the conception of the Absolute. But this does not alter the result that in point of fact no truths are absolute. Not even the metaphysical doctrine, which affirms that an Absolute may, or must, exist. For as a philosophic doctrine this is a truth-claim like any other, and like any other, afflicted with incompleteness, liable to error, and capable of improvement. Mr. Bradley's own additions and improvements to his doctrine would establish so much at least, even if it were not manifestly a confusion of thought to imagine that a human opinion *about* the Absolute could participate in the absolute truth of the Absolute's own opinion of itself.

¹ This is not to say, of course, that he will not appear such to intellectualists. For these hardly ever have any clear and strict conception of pragmatism, and so have no eye for such fine differences as I should recognise.

(2) It is now agreed that all truths are useful;¹ i.e. all are instruments of life.

(3) Likewise that all are selective.²

(4) Likewise that all truth is personal. And this not only in the sense that personal feeling may enter into, and taint, even our final 'theoretical' conclusions, and that therefore a plurality of philosophic answers to the same question is theoretically possible,³ but also in the sense that common truth is not strictly a fact, but a *façon de parler*.⁴

(5) It is now agreed that the whole of man's nature must be taken into account by philosophy and that 'intellectual satisfaction' is *not* the whole of it. The truths of religion and poetry, so far from being inadmissible in a philosophic context, now seem to afford more anchorage to the philosophic soul than merely theoretical consistency.⁵ Even where we still read that "the theoretical criterion, for myself, is in theory supreme" (p. 317), it is reduced to a 'special want,' and its 'supremacy' has become a mockery and a tautology. For it exists only 'in theory' and bestows on it no right to the control of life. Practically there is some ground for the apprehension that the disparagement of 'theoretical consistency' may impair, in those who are too readily satisfied with Mr. Bradley's extremer statements, that intelligent control of the instinctive impulses and appetites which is the true biological function of the 'reason'. This function however is equally incompatible with the rationalistic analyses of the 'reason' as 'pure' and independent of vital value and with irrationalistic revolts against the government of the soul which it has taken the struggles of æons to evolve; and it is entirely mistaken to jump from

¹ "I agree that in the end no truth can be wholly idle. A truth that makes no difference to truth is to my mind an impossibility" (p. 122). "According to this practical creed there is in the end no truth for us save that of working ideas" (p. 132). Cf. also p. 445. I do not repeat quotations I have already given above.

² Cf. p. 329. f.

³ Cf. "For many persons metaphysics would issue . . . in theoretical scepticism . . . and this may be the intelligent outcome of a sincere metaphysical endeavour," p. 445.

⁴ "The personal diversity of the individuals is not superfluous but essential" for . . . "it brings with it fresh quality" and "even so far as truth is common to the individuals, it must be taken none the less as modified in each case by its fresh context," p. 121. "Our sense of value, and in the end for every man his own sense of value, is ultimate and final" p. 132. "There is a sense in which we may maintain that every truth, however old, is new at any time when it is affirmed. And, for myself, I agree that in this sense no judgment ever is repeated," p. 334.

⁵ Cf. the passages quoted above, *sub* iv.

the non-existence of absolute truth to the conclusion that henceforth one truth-claim must be as good as another. To declare that action is the test of thought is not to deny that it is usually better to look before we leap.

(6) Mr. Bradley, however, is no longer disposed to dispute the imperativeness of action. "If I am to live at all I must act" he now declares (p. 465), and he would probably also admit that every thought is an *act*,¹ though not perhaps the corollary that therefore the alternatives to every thought should always be considered.

(7) As regards the 'making of truth' we learn that "the creations of the intellect everywhere are real. The substantiated terms and relations into which analysis breaks up the continuity of the given, are no mere errors or simple instruments" (p. 473). This clearly revokes "there is no tenable point of view from which I can be properly said to make truth" (p. 338).

VIII.

What then remains to constitute any difference of principle between Mr. Bradley's developed views and pragmatism? Nothing, it would seem, but the Absolute, which remains to the end as the *caput mortuum* of the time when absolute truth and theoretical consistency seemed the *ne plus ultra* of philosophy.

But it is a very much modified Absolute, notable for "its insistence and emphasis on an all-pervasive relativism," and not to be mistaken for "that false absolutism" which asserts the reality of one-sided distinctions (p. 470). This is no longer an Absolute to conjure with. It is no longer a God-engulfing soul-destroying monster that brooks no equal and no other. It has become a 'tender-minded,' 'irenical' creature, like Royce's Absolute (which is of course the prototype of James's), that has accommodation for anybody and anything: in short it has become quite harmless.

But has it thereby as greatly bettered its intellectual, as it has its moral, position? The trouble is that it appears to have become not merely harmless, also quite useless. It is no longer possible to say what its functions are, either (a) theoretically or (b) practically.

(a) It is no longer an imperious necessity of thought, forced upon the mind by a supreme craving for theoretical consistency. It no longer even pretends to satisfy this craving, nor is the craving itself the *ultima ratio* of human in-

¹ Cf. p. 328.

telligence. Intellectually indeed its position is getting very precarious. Even if we do not insist too severely either on the flaw in its pedigree, *viz.* the awkward self-contradiction of trusting a 'relative' truth to reveal an absolute, or on the difficulty it obviously has in escaping from the pragmatist objection that a functionless entity is meaningless and cannot really be accepted, it is avowedly only one out of several intellectual alternatives. Mr. Bradley himself admits that one of these, theoretical scepticism, is quite legitimate and an intelligent interpretation of the situation.¹ A contented acceptance of 'relativity' unaccompanied by theoretical 'despair,' would seem to be another. In short the Absolute seems to be merely a metaphysical overbelief which happens at present to please Mr. Bradley best, for reasons that are probably historical.

(b) The practical functions of the Absolute are equally hard to discover. It seems more otiose even than the Absolute in James's *Pragmatism* that merely issued free passes (that cost it nothing) to cheap trippers bent on a "moral holiday". It explains nothing, not even how it comes to be dissociated into finite centres, and still less why these finite centres should be forever warring with each other.² It helps nobody, nobody at least who is not already convinced that it helps. All its positive functions, even that of giving the general assurance that all is well 'somehow,' have now been transferred to 'religion,' and so fall to what must presumably still be called a 'lower' level—though it is the highest there is for man. In short it is intrinsically nugatory and continues to exist simply because it is wanted. To want this sort of Absolute may not do you any good, but it assuredly does no one else any harm.

The epistemological value of the Absolute therefore is no longer negative. It has risen to zero. The Absolute no longer vetoes every intelligible account of human knowledge. Hence the pragmatist strike against the Absolute must be solemnly called off. The Absolute has *abdicated* and resigned all its functions. Its 'tyrannis' no longer drives to revolt all who deem themselves free and responsible agents. And to quarrel with a prodigal father about an issue of this kind seems to be worse than an irreverence, an irrelevance. Rather let us agree that the *Essays in Truth and Reality* are as fine a sepulchral monument as the Absolute deserves, even though it be of necessity a cenotaph.

¹ Cf. p. 445.

² Cf. p. 350 n.