

## II.—HEDONISM AMONG IDEALISTS (II.).

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III. I return to point (1) of section 102, the author's contention that "the idea of Perfection cannot give us any criterion of moral action".

What has been said above, first as to the true nature of a good criterion as (a) essential and not extraneous and (b) concrete and not abstract, and secondly as to the true process of judgment which is parodied by Hedonic calculation, belongs in substance to the present argument. It only needs to be applied to the author's contention in three respects, (a) as to his ruling out the work of a criterion in hindering self-deception; (b) as to the assumption that the idea of perfection can only be applied by comparison in the abstract; and (c) by showing that the process on which we rely is not confined to development of ideals as contrasted with their satisfaction.

(a) The argument of section 104—I am not sure whether it is directed against Green—amounts to ruling out the moral danger of self-deception. Yet I should have expected Mr. McTaggart to accept the principle "*Quicquid petitur, petitur sub specie boni*"; and if so, there is no immoral choice which does not depend at bottom on self-deception. Even apart from this principle, the field of possible self-deception in morals is certainly enormous and extends over almost all, if not quite all, strictly ethical choices. Thus, I submit, it is a serious error of theory to separate the moral and intellectual elements of the choice. But this is, as it seems to me, the essence of Mr. McTaggart's argument. The supposed moral agent—he urges—*ex hypothesi* intends to do right, before he knows what the criterion says. Otherwise, he asks, of what use could a moral criterion be to him? If he is not going to be deterred from a choice by its being shown to be wrong, he can have no use for a criterion that tells him which choice is right and which is wrong. This argument is directed against an alleged fault in the reasoning

of those who advocate the criterion of Perfection. They take their examples, the author affirms, not from a choice between two courses alike *prima facie* moral, but from a choice between courses one of which is stated as good or in the name of good, and the other as either defiant or neglectful of morality. In such a case, he agrees, the idea, or one might suggest, the mere name of perfection is enough to distinguish between them. But he contends, for the reason above mentioned, this is no test of the value of the criterion to a moral agent desirous to do right. His perplexity can only be between courses both of which appeal to him in the name of right. A criterion which only warns him against a choice which by its statement is immoral—a criterion which = “Do what you believe to be right and not wrong”—can be of no service to him.

I do not know whether Green is here aimed at, but his argument will serve to point out what I take to be the defect in Mr. McTaggart's. Green selects,<sup>1</sup> no doubt, as one example of the operation of his criterion, a choice which, *for the critical onlooker*, appears to be a choice between a moral effort and a self-indulgence. But the supposed chooser is to choose I presume by the light of one or other of the criteria in question, and is not to be imagined as in the possession of a moral touchstone prior to their operation. The question then is which of the two criteria will most readily help the supposed chooser to the choice assumed by the critical onlooker to be right. Green alleges that the Hedonic criterion will or may co-operate with the tendencies that make for self-deception, whereas the criterion of perfection, from the fact that it appeals to a standard heterogeneous from personal enjoyment, is more likely to effect a discrimination such as no confusing desires can blur.

It is implied that the choice is one in which a man could hardly go wrong except by serious self-deception. But this, from Green's point of view, makes the case stronger against the Hedonic criterion, which by operating in *pari materia* with the source of confusion, seems to him likely to permit such a confusion to take place even in a case where it should be easily avoided. It does not indeed make the positive case very strong for the criterion of perfection, because the choice selected is a fairly simple one, purposely with a view to its negative bearing against the Hedonic criterion. Nevertheless it suggests, what is Green's principle throughout,<sup>2</sup> that to be habitually preoccupied with an idea of perfection

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, *Prolegomena*, sect. 874.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, sect. 808.

in application to life is the most practical and important safeguard against self-deception in moral choices. The separation of the moral resolve and the intellectual judgment on which Mr. McTaggart founds his objection, rules out this use of a moral criterion, because it supposes that the determination to do right being first and independently made, the chooser is henceforward an unbiassed reasoner in the application of a criterion. But this seems to ignore the whole nature of a moral choice, which is essentially the maintenance of effective insight against blinding influences. In short, then, *even if*, what has yet to be discussed, the criterion of perfection could give little or no guidance in absolutely *bonâ fide* perplexities between courses of conduct with a moral bearing, the fact that it is a safeguard in cases where the perplexity pretends to be but is not absolutely *bonâ fide* is enough to make it cover by far the most important part of the range in which Ethics can be asked for guidance. In all intricate matters of conduct, *e.g.* in law or politics, where varying and important emergencies press upon us, to keep the right principle and not the wrong one before the attention is of the very first practical importance. It makes constantly the whole difference between good and bad work. It may be admitted that if the proposed criterion only contained, as the author contends, such a rule as Do what you really think right, it could not be fertile of detail; though preoccupation even with such a rule is of much more decisive importance in life than might be supposed, because distraction of attention is one of the great instruments of self-deception. But the question, what it contains, is now to be discussed.

(b) In *bonâ fide* moral difficulties, the author argues, preoccupation with the idea of perfection can give no guidance. For the supreme good, as we learn its nature from Metaphysic, cannot be realised perfectly by any action in a world of matter, time and space. Nor can we determine by comparison which of alternative ends, or which division of resources between competing purposes, will realise it least imperfectly. For, in the supreme good, choice is precluded. No element of perfection is wanting and each is there to the full. But choice is the essence of our position.<sup>1</sup> In all ends, which we can conceive as moral ends, there is some good; complete good in none. Our question is which good to select and which to sacrifice, and how to compromise be-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Taylor has put the same point very effectively in *The Problem of Conduct*, but I have not the reference.

tween them. And this a comparison with perfection, where all good is present in fulness but in shapes wholly different from those we know, can never tell us. The attempt to demonstrate it leads to sophistry. We insist that the element, which happens to interest us most, forms a link between a certain action and perfection. And we neglect the fact that other elements, absent in this action, are present in others which we happen to dislike.

1. If the means of guidance is to be such an abstract comparison as Mr. McTaggart suggests, I think his conclusion follows. It is impossible, as Plato points out, to go without intermediate steps from the most abstract universal to the most concrete particular. The attempt to do so involves Eristic, i.e., either the refusal to ascribe predicates, or the assertion that one predicate is as true as another. This is what Mr. McTaggart imputes to the Perfectionist views. But as constantly happens in philosophical discussions, Perfectionists would retort the accusation, and say that the intermediate steps are needlessly cut away and Eristic introduced by the operation of his theory.

The whole issue turns on the refusal to recognise our imperfect experience as a stage in which the idea of perfection is active, relatively to the capacities of that stage. By recognising this idea only in the abstract shape which presents itself as the result of metaphysic, and failing to insist that this abstract shape is imperfect until charged with the life and power of all reality, the idea of Perfection is made a particular instead of a universal. It becomes a hard atom, which takes up an attitude of exclusion to the world whose core it should be. Thus the attempt to obtain moral guidance from it takes the shape of a comparison with it, and becomes parallel to an attempt to obtain scientific knowledge from inspecting the principle of the Uniformity of Nature. In each case we have taken the principle apart from the stages in which its nature is revealed, and have thus incapacitated ourselves for seeing it embodied, though imperfectly, at every stage of our experience.

Our answer then to the argument drawn from the abstractness of our idea of perfection, by which it fails to show how it includes our reality, would be that in looking for moral guidance we begin at the other end. It may be true—I at least am not disputing it—that the central workings of our thought, which experience cannot undo, compel us to a result which may be stated in the abstract as Mr. McTaggart's view of Hegel's Absolute is stated. But the inevitable abstractness of this result, where experience fails

to fill up the outline of thought, is a positive loss if it debars us from recognising the working of the idea within the tissue of experience. We know that its work will be imperfect, because our experience is imperfect. But that is no reason against its being definite and right as far as it goes. The shape it takes would not do for ultimate reality; but the shape it takes for ultimate reality will not do for the given stage of experience. Thus in science Biology or Chemistry may be likened to growing forms, whose general life principle, when taken out in the abstract, becomes the Uniformity of Nature.<sup>1</sup> But so taken out in the abstract, though interesting for Logic and Philosophy, it is useless to the sciences. They *are* it, in shapes dictated by experience at every moment, but when it is separated from these they cannot use it. So with the moral life. Its shape at any moment is the idea of perfection working in experience down to that moment, as a striving after the completest harmony possible under all the conditions, in other words after what we really want. Taken out and pushed home in the abstract, it becomes useless, for this particular work. The forms which it had generated in the matter of experience have then been cancelled as inadequate to the whole, and therefore all links are cut between Perfection and human life. But they were not inadequate to the part; on the contrary, the effort which generated them is the same as, and an essential part of, that which as an *anticipatio naturæ*, regarding only the central lines of experience, leads to the abstract conception of ultimate reality. The "tacking" of Dialectic makes no difference to this adequacy. Mistakes may be necessary; but they are necessary only as efforts after harmony, and, as the strivings of reason, are relatively good. Indeed, everything but ultimate reality as such may be treated as a mistake. But there are mistakes and mistakes. Our object is to make only that mistake which our whole experience cannot help us to avoid.

The point may be put more simply by saying that we test courses of action not by the abstract metaphysical idea of the supreme good, but by the tests by which that idea itself is obtained—and which therefore form the rule of the entire process of practical experience—the dialectic of desire. The essence of the test at every point is the resolution of contradictions. Our action is precisely parallel to that by which scientific theories are remodelled and adapted; and,

<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, of course, the Absolute. But I take it at a stage when the distinction of Knowledge and Practice still persists.

like scientific theories, our morality is no doubt in the main a working habit or tradition, in course of constant re-adjustment.

I am convinced that the reiteration of such phrases as "choice" and "preference" is fatal to understanding the nature of the moral criterion. All voluntary action is "choice" in the sense that it is willed; but the phrase suggests the selection of one ready-made course of conduct out of a number, as if there were hundreds before us on the counter of a shop. Thus the question why you choose "it," or which course you "like best," acquires a predominance unknown in real life. For, in fact, action is construction, rationality, invention of individual solutions for individual problems by modification of existing systems. This is what, I think, Green really meant<sup>1</sup> when he insisted that while nothing could follow from a bare definition of virtue, yet morality grows by habitual preoccupation with moral ideas in application to circumstances as they arise. The true analogy is the absorption of a scientific intelligence in detecting the true bearings of a principle such as natural selection. Such an absorption is fruitful, in morality and in science alike; and fruitful in proportion as the principle is clearly and justly apprehended.

Then, it may be asked, do we admit morality or Ethics, which we here compare with Biology and Chemistry, to be a natural science; and do we not abandon the contention that a metaphysical idea is necessary for the guidance of conduct?

This is very much a matter of degree. I admitted that the Uniformity of Nature as such is of no use to Biology or Chemistry, because it is notorious that these sciences can exist and flourish without casting a glance on Logic. But the total absence of a working faith in Uniformity would be and has been, I suppose, fatal even to the most purely natural science. So one might say that in a sense a logical faith is necessary and useful to the merest natural knowledge. And this logical faith itself has degrees; and notions of system, method, and explanation may, though I am slow to assert it, be found really helpful in determining scientific problems.

Morality deals with higher categories, and its working faith involves a unity of a type not known to pure natural science. Such a unity is really a metaphysical idea, though to say in what forms and disguises it actually operates in the everyday mind would be a very difficult matter. But

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, sect. 308.

it seems clear that the clue which the mind follows, however ignorantly, is in substance that idea of perfection which pursued in its main lines beyond the details of experience becomes the Idea of the Absolute. No doubt it is the unity just in advance of where we stand, rather than an idea of the ultimate metaphysical Absolute, which at any moment, as Green insists, aids and guides the ordinary man. Morality depends on metaphysic, I am suggesting, not in the sense that it works with the explicit determinations of the absolute, but that it operates through conceptions of unity which, if criticised or doubted, only metaphysical investigation can elucidate or justify. The idea of the Supreme Good is the ultimate elucidation of this conception, but cannot be the shape in which it actually operates within the everyday mind. This is Plato's doctrine, and Green's;<sup>1</sup> and it meets I think, in principle, the difficulty of an abstract comparison between a course of conduct and the Supreme Good.

2. It remains to explain more in detail how, in the adjustment of moral conduct, we obtain guidance from the idea of perfection as thus understood. The essential point is that the situations, which constitute the problems of conduct, are highly individualised, and demand no less individualised solutions. Existing morality, and current knowledge of man and of the world, are the organs by which the impulse towards unity is brought into relation with specific character and circumstance. These play the part in practice which is played in the development of theory by acquired science and experience.

And it is very important not to demand too much. The idea of a magical possibility of absolute rightness in morality seems to be at the root of ethical pessimism. The best rightness we can hope for is to be right for us under all our conditions and limitations.<sup>2</sup> It is because these conditions and limitations are so complex that moral problems are not hopelessly insoluble. We have not got to say what is right for others, or what would be right for ourselves if we were other than we are. Our judgment in morality is about as good and as bad as our judgment in other complex matters. We attempt—whether by habit or by reflexion makes no

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, sect. 309, cf. *Republic*, 505 E. "The good, which every soul pursues, as the end of all its actions, divining its existence, but perplexed and unable to apprehend satisfactorily its nature"—i.e., it is our guide throughout, but changes as we pursue it.

<sup>2</sup> This is the very type and essence of science. Mr. Taylor seems wholly off the right track at this point, in suggesting that individualisation makes morality subjective (*Problem*, p. 361).

difference, for trained habit can make all adjustments of which reflexion is capable—we attempt to harmonise the situation presented to us, including our own selves, following the logic of the objects of desire towards real satisfaction. We are not brilliantly successful ; but we are about as successful in conduct as in the other matters which we approach in the same way ; for example in science, or in practical organisation.

We aim, then, at satisfaction, or the removal of contradictions in experience where our action can affect it, in short, at determining and attaining what we really want. It is a mistake of principle, I hold, to attempt to lay down beforehand in what our satisfaction is to consist, whether in pleasure or in any other predetermined form of consciousness. That is like binding a physicist before he begins his science in terms of what he is to explain phenomena. Every problem or situation is thoroughly concrete, though universal and the meeting point of universal forces and principles. Our business is to invent the course which shall most remove contradictions ; to theorise the individual situation, including our own resources.

This is why, though as a rule I have the utmost respect for Mr. McTaggart's arguments and examples, I cannot think his instances here to be of a relevant type. They rank, it seems to me, with questions which are carelessly propounded as puzzles to students of practical sciences, containing no possible data for an answer. It is like saying to a gardener, "Am I to prune an apple-tree in my orchard?" or saying to a doctor, "My child has spots on him ; what do you think can be the matter?" The answer comes at once : "Show me the tree" or "the child, and I will tell you what I think". Just so it is asked, Is marriage the best arrangement? The moralist, if I am right, and as Green maintains,<sup>1</sup> has no immediate insight based on a comparison with the idea of perfection in the abstract. He will demand that the question shall be closely stated, with regard to the stage of social advance, the race and civilisation about whom it is asked, and will then treat the issue as a serious inquiry, largely sociological but having an ethical aspect through its bearing on character. He can determine the general nature of the claims and capacities of selves in a definite type of society ; and may then be able to offer a judgment on the question what arrangement of institutions provides a conciliation of these with the least degree of injury. The point

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, sect. 379.

of view which makes him a moralist lies in his being alive to more and deeper aspects of unity than would appeal to the biologist or to the jurist as such. His eye is differently trained. This is exemplified by Green's investigation.<sup>1</sup> It flows directly from his conception of a spiritual unity gradually taking form through the working of an idea of good in the experience of certain types of men. For other types of moral being the conclusion might, conceivably, be different. In such a real investigation of an ethical question the Hedonic criterion, I believe, could never occur to the student's mind.

So in the conflict of different ends, or in the distribution of resources, such as money and time, between different objects. The problem is altogether transformed when we state it as the endeavour to construct a solution for a highly complex situation, from what it is when we take it as a question asked in the abstract, out of all context. It is put to us again, Does a public school do a boy more harm or good? In general, I should say, no answer can be given. In view of a particular boy, whose character and surroundings we know, and of a particular school, there is no great difficulty as a rule in forming a fair judgment on the question. As regards the distribution of time or money, there is a difficulty which I have admitted, in bringing the higher forms of unity into relation with quantitative terms. But as in æsthetic or medicine, so in ethics, the result is obtained by a frank recognition that every solution of a problem is subject to mechanical conditions. A single question, how much a man should eat, or how loud a note must be struck, or how much colour must be put on the eye of a portrait, is meaningless; and so is the question how much money I should give to charity, or what time I should devote to metaphysic and to bicycling. In plain words, the distribution of money and time must be systematically theorised in connexion with the possibilities offered by the situation. That we are born into our theories or conventions, and most of us never know that they do the work of theories, is no objection at all, for precisely the same is true of our mental furniture of every kind. Thus a particular decision is approached on the basis of a rationalised habit, dictated by the main aim and design of life. I have formed, or have picked up, or inherited, a notion or instinct of what I can achieve and how I mean to achieve it. On this all details are consequential, though, of course, in most lives, with a very

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Political Obligation*, sect. 233.

loose logic. But logic is no looser in morality than in opinion, which admittedly is meant to be logical. From the main aims and method of life certain necessities follow as to adjustments of time and money; charity is or should be relative not only to the money I can spare but to the attention I can devote to its utilisation, and that again follows from my line of life and special capacities. Recreation and work are adjusted by a concrete theory of the way in which the claims on my limited powers may best be met. I do not say for a moment that we are usually right, or even self-conscious, in our decision; but I do say that our life is probably a more rational whole than our opinions, and that the latter are admittedly a thing which ought to be logically coherent. There is no theoretical difficulty, therefore, in saying the same of our conduct.

If it is urged, as I think Mr. McTaggart means to urge in his demand for principles of distribution, that we must lay down beforehand at least what kind of things are more important, and what kind of things are to give way, I answer, as above, that in a sense this is obvious, but in a sense I believe it to be a dangerous fallacy. Our principle, the logic of our objects, will tell us in its working what are deep-lying contradictions, what are superficial, what apparent harmonies are pregnant with latent discords, or what apparent discords are introductions to fuller harmonies. It will tell us all this, so far as our knowledge and inference extend; and that limits the situation with which in morality we have to deal. We cannot escape its operation, so long as we act *bond fide*. The sense that "it is all very well, but there is something wrong," which attends a victorious self-deception by which we enter on a doubtful course of conduct, must be given its place, if we are true to ourselves, and must be tracked out to its significance. We are quite safe to miss our own satisfaction, unless we take sincere account of all we know and feel, and let each element have logical fair play.

But if it is meant that we are to prescribe the species of our feelings of satisfaction beforehand, that is, I think, a pit-fall. Some solutions may bring pleasure, others intellectual repose; others "the approval of conscience"; others the tranquillity or endurance of completed tragedy. All we need to know is that we seek complete satisfaction; the clashing and harmonising of objects will indicate our defectiveness or our success in ways which could not be adequate, if it were possible to lay them down beforehand.

It is, I am convinced, a profound theoretical error to think of current moral and social ideas and traditions as something

arbitrary, which might just as well have been different. Just like the sciences, they are a tissue of adaptations, generated by the struggle of logic, with different degrees of insight, to harmonise situations from moment to moment. I am not saying that life is wisely or rightly determined by these adaptations, but I am saying that it is thoroughly determined, and that to suppose our own choices to be in principle capricious or irrational is to misunderstand our position and the essence of the moral problem. Not only is it scientifically wrong to treat the bulk of social tradition as irrational in its genesis, but it shows a lack of insight to treat conduct and modes of life as in essence irrationally determined. The logic of life is imperious, and conduct is guided by the dialectic of its objects in the minutest details. To urge that it is full of error and incoherence is irrelevant; the point is that the machinery of determination is operative throughout, and is of an assignable nature. The imperfection of its results is itself necessary, and relative to the gaps of our experience.<sup>1</sup>

I may further illustrate my point by referring to Mr. McTaggart's evacuating interpretation of "my station and its duties". (I in no way attribute my views to Mr. Bradley.) The idea of his station and its duties, he maintains, does not teach a schoolmaster how to deal rightly with a particular boy on a particular occasion. This is something which I am tempted to say that I cannot understand. It must mean, no doubt, that the author reduces the idea of one's station to a general conception of one's place in society as distinct from other places. But surely this is a very poor idea of one's station. Who says "schoolmaster" says "a walking theory and practice of education". This is "what it is to be" a schoolmaster. His conception of his position as distinct, say, from that of the clergyman and the parent, is just the outline of an idea which theory and experience have filled in and adapted in detail, till his position involves for him a distinct conception of his individual duty to each individual boy who is entrusted to his charge, and this again carries with it the reaction of his trained nature upon every occasion and situation which arises. That his action is not in form determined by reflexion or deduction makes, as I urge throughout, no theoretical difference at all. It is governed in the end by ideas and must be condemned or judged in their light. He is bound to have considered what, under all the conditions, can best be made of each boy so far as the schoolmaster is concerned; and this is just his con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 807, above.

crete idea of his station. It is a clear case of such a theory as I contend for.

Therefore, about the general method of the determination of conduct, there is, if I am right, no doubt or difficulty whatever. It is simply the logic of the objects of desire, by which we pursue the idea of perfection as our complete satisfaction. It is subject to blindness, due partly to lack of experience and inferential power, partly to self-deception by which partial objects, stimulating desire, are preferred to the whole. At every stage our idea of perfection represents our best construction of the whole; and in proportion as criticism touches it metaphysic is needed to sustain and develop it. Its working through habit and knowledge to resolve the contradictions of our individual situation is not to be taken as a pronouncement of abstract Metaphysic; but acting through categories which nothing but Metaphysic can justify, it plays quite a different part in the science from that played by Uniformity of Nature in Chemistry and Biology. And even for these sciences the entire abandonment of the logical idea which works in them would mean annihilation.

A consequence of great importance seems to me to follow from the nature of this mode of determination, as compared with the summation of pleasures. As objects of action become more complex the translation of them into quantity tends to bracket them as equal in value. Every one knows how heterogeneous complexes, say, the marks of wholly dissimilar examinees, insist on summing themselves up to the same total. The linear numerical series has no way of representing the different composition of identical sums. Now between alternative complexes of objects which give the same sum of pleasure, though as wide asunder in their nature as the poles, a Hedonic criterion cannot distinguish. Whereas, as situations become more complex, the adequate solution of each in concrete science tends to become more clearly differentiated; so that situations of modern life, on careful consideration, constantly seem to dictate their own solution beyond any doubt.

(c) From the point of view here taken, the two standards of immediate harmony with environment, and of development of ideals, become commensurable. Happiness, in the sense of harmony or satisfaction of the whole of which we are members, becomes the only test. Deliberation is incipient development, and development is for the sake of removing contradiction, or realising satisfaction. How completely we are able to conceive the whole to which we belong

must be a question of our individual experience and capacity. On this depends the soundness of our judgment in incurring immediate contradictions, that is, in making sacrifices (whether merely in our own persons or in the persons of those whom we are able to affect) with a view to possibilities of development either future in the lives in question, or wholly beyond them, or remaining partial and painful within them. This judgment is just of the same order as that which we are testing daily and hourly in accepting *prima facie* sacrifices or contradictions for the sake of the whole. It seems to me precisely analogous to our behaviour in the realm of theory, which mainly consists in deciding what contradictions are *ad hoc* to be disregarded, and what, as more fundamental, we must apply our scientific resources to reconcile. Ultimately, no doubt, the idea of the Supreme Good must include what for us are the separate aspects of theoretical and practical perfection. But speaking in more relative terms we may say that the idea of perfection is for conduct what the idea of system is for science.

#### CONCLUSION.

The most serious objection to these views which I should expect to be advanced, would be that according to them we make no use of the definite content of the abstract idea of supreme good, as metaphysically established (I suppose) for all possible worlds, in determining our conduct. We use it in a confessedly imperfect form, in which, I think Mr. McTaggart might probably contend, the empirical and metaphysical elements are undistinguishably mixed, and therefore it cannot be truly said that morality thus determined rests on a metaphysical basis, as Green for instance seems to assert. This point was referred to some pages back, but it may be well to recur to it in conclusion. The answer would, I think, begin by accepting the imperfection of morality as a whole, and of our morality. As Mr. McTaggart insists, perfection could not be realised in an experience like ours. In attained perfection we should have, or there would be, a complete experience forming one harmonious web with the idea of perfection; and as all would be true and satisfying no question would arise how much was false. In our imperfection, we are haunted by this question, and we must admit that the whole tissue of our morality is tinged with falsehood. Nevertheless we are able, from a metaphysical standpoint, to verify an idea of perfection as working throughout the tissue of life. We cannot apply it to particulars of conduct

by metaphysical considerations, but we can justify by metaphysical considerations the logical effort which is always constructing particulars in obedience to the idea. Though our morality is tinged with falsehood throughout, yet we know that it is truth, relevant and relative to our life, in as far as it pursues the line of effort which the nature of reason involves. And we know that somewhere in the central tendencies of this effort, the tendencies whose negation would be to us the most fundamental contradiction, there lie characters continuous with and implying those of ultimate perfection. After all, the Absolute needs us and our conduct just as we need it. We are in it, now if ever, and we can hold to it, if at all, with the full breadth of reason and need not allow our grasp to be attenuated to a thread of hope. Our experience, we must remember, is in one sense a fuller revelation than an abstract idea of ultimate reality, if in another it is less perfect. Its backwardness is due to the magnitude of the enterprise which it implies; for it demands and begins the harmonisation of a total world, and not merely the anticipation of its general nature.