

*Geistige Strömungen der Gegenwart: Der Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart, dritte umgearbeitete Auflage.* Von RUDOLF EUCKEN. Leipzig: Veit & Company, 1904. Pp. 398.

THE *Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart* was published as long ago as 1878. Historical exposition formed the substance of this work; but in the second edition (1893), and still more in the present volume, everything else is subordinated to the advocacy of the author's philosophical convictions, which have meantime been ripening and bringing him into more conscious and energetic opposition to the German philosophy of to-day and the ideal of culture it represents. He is able to speak with satisfaction of the many friends his books have brought him, and of the sure consciousness he has of being in spiritual contact with the age, especially as expressed in the younger generation. He now prefers to speak of spiritual currents or tendencies rather than of concepts, to avoid the impression that he is dealing with purely intellectual processes or content with their decision. He conveniently escapes much criticism through a conception of the function of philosophy which enables him to dispense to a large extent with the necessity for grounds and proofs, since he reduces it to a symbolical expression of the Truth analogous to Religion, and incapable of expressing in concepts anything beyond the merest outline, which must be filled in with the help of artistic phantasy and creative intuition (p. 341). Where *real* problems are being discussed, he says, it is not logical or dialectical ability that triumphs, but the power of the spiritual concentration, the vital energies welling up in them. In all questions of principle and their consequences, each one is ultimately defending his own spiritual species; whence alone the power, warmth, passion of intellectual movements (pp. 57, 58). Thought is in general a living force only as a fragment, an expression of a new stage of life (p. 95). There is a world-historical Apperception, and no widening of knowledge apart from a widening of the sphere of human activity. Our knowledge has not made the world clearer, and it stands under such peculiar conditions that we are not justified in regarding it as absolute (p. 116). Intellectualism has erred in treating the life of man's spirit as the life of absolute spirit, and in reducing the world to the unfolding of a Cosmic Logic, with all the attendant shirking of the dark and inimical in the state of the world, with the sacrifice of the individual to the universal, of content to form. For the life of the spirit can in no wise be understood as a mere clarification of something active in external reality, or Nature reduced to a mere lower degree of the life of the human spirit. The contrast between Nature and the spirit of man lies within the life of the spirit. Prof. Eucken considers that his "deviation from dogmatic Spiritualism consists only in this recognition of two different points of departure, two working-points within the comprehending whole. . . . The life of man's spirit appears more incomplete, more involved in a struggle up-

wards. Man is summoned to act and decide for himself, he has to co-operate in the movement of the universe, not merely to arrange it in his thoughts. Not the intellectual, but the ethical becomes thereby the kernel of his striving" (pp. 180, 271). The movement in which he co-operates is that of a conversion of reality to its own inner life, the coming to itself of the world-process, the achievement of a being and a meaning as opposed to all the senseless contexture of relations and preservation of microscopic selves (p. 329). Prof. Eucken's *Lebenssystem* establishes Spirituality ultimately in an intelligible world transcending all human existence. This is the supreme power supporting and uniting all reality, and the constantly active source of the life of the human spirit. In part a mere continuation and portion of Nature, man at the same time exhibits new forces, ends and forms which combine to introduce a new Being opposed to everything that is mere Nature. Action resulting from free decision unites itself to that which is merely happening to him. If there is no such superhuman, supra-mundane spirit then empirical existence, with its chain of rigid necessity, is the only truth and the life of the spirit an illusion. To share in the life of the spirit means to share in a world-life raised above the opposition between subject and object, requiring nothing to complete it. There has to be a gathering together of life to a unity beyond the individual psychological activities, and a transference of the centre of gravity to this unity, so that these activities, directed upon the whole, lead to the evolution of a substantial life. Then there unfolds itself a universal activity working through these psychical activities and proclaiming itself in them, which forms an all-comprehending *Lebensraum* in which the manifold may meet and enter into relation, but which in itself unfolds a constant being and maintains it during all change of activity. Here man is not something added to the world, but in this deep ground he has his share: *Die Selbstbildung wird hier unmittelbar Weltbildung sein* (246-247). The division between subject and object is first overcome to some extent where that we undertake as our work becomes our vocation, a part of our being; and more fully in the stage of creation and of love. But the soul desires more complete independence in a life whose content and goal lies in its own realisation. In this the unity does not stand alongside things and fashion them for its own peculiar purposes: it belongs to the very nature of the things and brings them to perfection. The spiritual life knows itself to be at once the basis and pre-supposition as well as the goal and climax of the world-process. The chief endeavour of the spiritual life, then, is the attainment of Truth, and the more reality of existence the more Truth. The search for Truth is not the search for a knowledge of the world, but the pursuit of self-knowledge by the life of the spirit. The knowledge of Truth is bound up with the process of that life itself, giving it an historical character. The measure of life is here the measure of knowledge.

I believe that Prof. Eucken would accept the above, allowing for the unavoidable disadvantages of over-condensation, as a fairly accurate epitome of his *Welt- und Lebensanschauung*. That is not such a Heaven-born inspiration as some appear to think. When Schelling, in 1841, attacked Hegel's philosophy as incapable of entering into the relation with absolute reality demanded above all by religious faith, and sought to replace it by yearning and the act of will corresponding to a practical, personal necessity, he may be said to have started a powerful undercurrent of philosophical reflexion which has never lacked striking exponents. We know that Kierkegaard attended these lectures and glowed with enthusiasm when Schelling spoke of "Reality". From him streams an influence, potent in literature and not entirely negligible in philosophy, which certainly reaches down to Nietzsche and to Eucken. Eucken has Kierkegaard's insistence upon "*wesentliche Erkenntnis*," upon the inwardness of morality, upon the ethical all-importance of the individual. He shares his refusal to see any parallel between natural and spiritual evolution, opposing equally an irreconcilable "*entweder-oder*" to all smooth dialectical progression. He has with Nietzsche his disregard of historical and social considerations, at least to some extent. There are many and important points of difference, of course; but we may say that in Eucken a spirit akin to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche has become mellowed, patient and persuasive: at times even a little tame and rhetorical. As a critic of culture Prof. Eucken approaches the Nietzsche of the first period very closely. It is History, he says, that robs us of the power to fashion our own lives by estranging us from our own thoughts and responsibility through ceaselessly occupying us with things foreign to us: giving us learned knowledge for life. Nevertheless it is indispensable as a means of inter-subjective union, enabling the inner life to front the endless world encircling it so overpoweringly (p. 259). Mere social culture lies on the periphery of the life of the spirit: *Eine blosse Menschen- und Massenkultur echte Geisteskultur weit zurückdrängt* (p. 299). Great personalities are the masters, not the servants, of their age, who raise the life of the spirit out of a shadowy existence as merely universal concepts to full reality, characteristic unity and visible form, by bringing summations of energy into definite directions and forcing historical movements into individual paths (p. 297). For its origination the life of the spirit must have individuals, for its fixation society. Moreover, if in culture man is not to hang just any self-spun thoughts on to an alien reality, and so with his whole striving fall into emptiness, then the grounding of culture in an independent life of the spirit is indispensable. Good and True could never be absolute requirements if the whole movement took place in man himself and bore the impress of his specific features. The greatest of all emancipations is the emancipation of life from the merely human (pp. 243-244).

Prof. Eucken is always interesting as a critic, but he is too much

a man of one idea, and that idea extremely difficult to render even moderately intelligible. The independent life of the spirit is dinned into our ears on every second page, and yet I have sought in vain for anything like a *deduction* of the idea itself. Moreover, Prof. Eucken admits the difficulty of giving to the concept of a world-nature in man any very precise expression. Artistic creation furnishes for him the type of what he means. There we have a mutual interpenetration of subjective and objective in the soul of the artist, things receiving a soul and the artistic life a content. And he quotes with approval the saying of Goethe that in such a synthesis of world and spirit we have "*Die seligste Versicherung der ewigen Harmonie des Daseins*". Can that, he asks, which in Art is an incontestable reality not be true of the life of the spirit as a whole? This is a fine saying, but I did not know that Prof. Eucken was prepared to admit *die ewige Harmonie des Daseins*. According to him the given world is not merely not an evolution of the spirit, but opposed to it, the recognition of this fact marking the passage from philosophy to metaphysic (p. 104). How this opposition came about he nowhere explains, even symbolically; but all true spiritual life involves such a metaphysic, since it evolves itself, not merely in superiority, but in opposition to the world. Surely this is something Goethe would not have accepted. In fact, I do not grasp what Prof. Eucken intends us to understand by the relation of the independent life of the spirit, of which we hear so much, to the divided realm of Nature and Humanity. Is it as much in opposition to Nature as is the spirit of man? If so we are left with an absolutely hopeless dualism. If not the opposition of Nature to the human spirit must be due somehow to our imperfect relation to it, and we should not allow our imperfection to load it with hard epithets. Again is the independent spirit fully expressed, or susceptible of complete expression, in these differences? So far as I understand Eucken, the present world is not merely chaotic, but imperfect. There is a sort of descent of the Holy Ghost on the spirit of man to supply *his* deficiencies, but Nature is left to go on its way in brute opposition if not active antagonism to man. Now, what is meant by saying, that man's appropriation of things raises them to their own true perfection, if they are inherently imperfect? All talk about bringing forth the soul of things is merely figurative. Man's power to modify Nature does not extend very far on this earth, and certainly does not reach beyond it. Their soul could only be drawn forth by the same power that is increasing its revelation to man's spirit; the progressive creation of a new reality would in fact be a movement in the whole substantiality of spirit affecting the human spirit and Nature at one and the same time, and rather a fresh apprehension than a free appropriation by man: an effect, and not a cause. Prof. Eucken insists very strongly on man's freedom, while at the same time he distinguishes his position from Indeterminism. Man's spontaneity is not his deepest nature; he finds a content in

a world of actuality within which he has to understand his freedom. He is a contexture of freedom and necessity. Freedom is not of the individual points, but of the whole. It is the culminating point of an all-penetrating endeavour (pp. 372-375). Just so, it is, in fact, made up of the mechanism of Nature and the compulsion of spirit. To share in the life of the spirit, he says, is to have a fully active life, raised above every opposition, and bearing in itself the draught of an independent reality, towards the completion of which every movement is directed (p. 96). To be in earnest with the idea of a world still in process of creation, Prof. Eucken would require, it seems to me, to regard the spirit, not as having the independent, superhuman, supramundane life he claims, but as having sundered itself, once for all, into fundamental differentiations which are now in time finding their way back to that relation to one another whereby the unity which once existed for itself should exist for them. Something, perhaps a good deal, could be said for such a view; but Theistic prejudices forbid Prof. Eucken from imagining, as did Kierkegaard, that God himself is still in process, with a Being as yet incomplete. Prof. Eucken's creation of that which already exists in all possible fulness of perfection, however it may serve to fill up man's time, even if it were possible, certainly appears to be quite unnecessary. In fact, either the independence of the spirit is an illusion, or the process of creation a mere appearance.

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*The Platonic Conception of Immortality and its Connexion with the Theory of Ideas.* By R. K. GAYE, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Cambridge: University Press, 1904.

THIS Essay, we learn from the title page, obtained the Hare Prize in 1903, and it is, as we should expect, a contribution to that interpretation of Plato which prevails in the University of Cambridge. There can be no question that Cambridge has deserved well of Plato in more ways than one. In particular, Cambridge men have insisted that Plato had a coherent metaphysical system, and that, in the course of his long life, he developed and modified that system in some important points. Every one who takes his Plato seriously—and the number of such is happily growing—must feel that these two positions are sound. The trouble only begins when we try to formulate the metaphysics of Plato and to interpret the dialogues in the light of that. This is not the place for a statement or criticism of Dr. Jackson's views. They may be right or they may be wrong; but the fact remains that no other authority on Plato has yet been able to find in the dialogues the system or systems which Dr. Jackson finds there. Now, in the present Essay, Mr. Gaye adopts most of the conclusions of Dr. Jackson and Mr. Archer