CHAPTER X

THE NEW IDEALISM OF RUDOLF BUCKEN

I

The greatest figure on the continent till M. Bergson came into the field was Rudolf Bucken of Jena. He has published a large number of works bearing on metaphysics and theology, and has propounded a new idealism which he prefers to call "spiritualistic antievolution." His work is a sign of the times, as many of the tendencies of contemporary philosophy (see Chapter II.) are visible in his writings. He advocates the substitution of life for logic and declares that life is action and not mere thought or intelligence. Action alone expresses the full nature of man. Bucken does not address himself to the task of solving the philosopher's riddle of the universe, but to that of helping the plain man to overcome the struggle for spiritual existence in the world of action. To Bucken the kernel of man's striving is not intellectual but ethical. The contradiction of life is felt rather as a life problem than as a logical riddle. As a convinced activist, he believes in the reality of time and change. Bucken's works are an attempt to reconcile philosophy with religion, though he says that belief in God is not necessary for religion. He tries to vindicate the spirit of Christianity by means of his philosophy.

"In all his writings, the religious note is heard. Indeed, what Bucken finally intends is a renovated and theoretically vindicated Christianity; in spite of his anxious
avoidance of everything which has the appearance of metaphysical dualism, Christian faith and its logical foundations are his central concern" (Baron Frederic von Hugel, Hibbert Journal, p. 77b). "Eucken's philosophy is a Christian philosophy of life" (Boyce Gibson, Eucken's Philosophy of Life, p. 116). "His personal and religious idealism is a philosophical restatement of the teaching of Jesus" (Hermann: Eucken and Bergson, p. 6).

As a philosophy which does not in some way represent the tendencies of the new spirit has no chance of survival in the present state of the philosophical world, Eucken's philosophy tries to express some of the aspirations of the new school. Professor Boyce Gibson contends that Eucken's thesis is that "Philosophy is homeless till it has found the main life currents of humanity, has sympathetically insinuated itself into these and allowed all its convictions to be moulded inwardly and objectively by the movements with which it has allied itself" (Quarterly Review, April 1914, p. 383). If this only means that no serious philosophy should construct its thought-structure in an a priori manner, it is right. Since philosophy has to account for life and experience, it must follow in the wake of life process and experience. We cannot deduce the course of world history as the Scholastics did from a number of dogmas, but have to go to experience and penetrate into its heart. To know the mystery of life, we have to study life. But quite in consequence with the spirit of the age, Eucken holds that speculative idealism substitutes thought for life and derives the universe a priori. What we are called upon to do is to get into the stream of life straight away, dive beneath the scattered data and seize the stream vital at work. Speculative systems which break the unity of experience into subject and object cannot see the movement of spiritual life. This criticism we have met often, and the wonder is how such a superficial charge can live to be repeated in season and out of season. Every idealist admits that concepts are determined by life, while they
also form a part of life. Philosophy is not completely subordinate to life; it has also its place in the sun. And thus Eucken admits on occasion. "Life has first to seek itself, its unity, its perfection; and it is just this that is the problem of truth." And so thought which adequately represents "the upward endeavour of life to its own unity" has its function and may be sought after. "Philosophy as Eucken conceives it," says Professor Boyce Gibson, "is no mere reflection upon life, as though life were of itself complete without the reflection. It is rather a vital function of our spiritual activity. It is that form of spiritual vitality which brings to coherent expression the intuitions of experience." (Quarterly Review, April 1914, p. 369). From this it is plain that philosophy has an essential function in the life of spirit, if it only rests on experience and develops on its basis. That is what all serious philosophy has been. As satisfying an inherent need of reason, philosophy has its place in the life of mind. Eucken calls himself a spiritualist monist and holds that his system of spiritualist monism, whether or not it is logically consistent, still helps us to adjust the several aspects of life. Eucken does not speak of philosophical theories but of spiritual currents and life systems or Syndromes, and his own view of life he develops by criticising rival systems.

II

Eucken adopts the method of dialectical development and puts forward a view of his own after criticising other systems. There is the Greek view of life modelled on Art. In art, matter and form exist together. Though matter is subordinate to form, it is still necessary to it. Eucken holds this view to be unsatisfactory since it does not recognise personality, spirituality, etc. Another defect, according to Eucken, is that in it the actual and the ideal, the evil and the good are looked upon as necessarily related. We shall see that on the question
of the organic relationship between the natural and the spiritual the Greeks are right and Eucken is wrong.

Naturalism is now criticized. It makes life a mechanical process. In it everything is necessary and has its fixed place in the development. If everything in the world has only to be accepted, how can we fight evil or attempt to improve life? There is no place for freedom and personality in the natural scheme. The basis of reality is the physical world and man is only a product thereof. Naturalism ignores the life in spirit; it disregards the facts of man's inner life. It does not solve the problem of knowledge either on its metaphysical or its psychological side. It does not account for the unity of consciousness (see Main Currents, p. 245). The conclusion which Eucken derives from the criticism of naturalism is that man is more than a mere fragment of nature. Though he is bound up with nature there is something in him that cannot be derived from nature. Man's capacity to know testifies to it. Nature is only a juxtaposition of things in a succession of states; but man can rise above nature. It is possible for man to be dissatisfied with nature and routine. There is in him a higher kind of life unknown to nature. And if we are interested in understanding the values of spirit, we should give up the psychological method, which is only next door to the naturalistic, and adopt the theological. The psychological standpoint occupies itself with purely psychic processes, and in the province of religion especially it occupies itself with the conditions of the stimulations of will and feeling, which are not able to prove anything beyond themselves. The spiritual experience, on the contrary, has to do with life's contents and with the construction of reality; it need not trouble itself concerning the connections of the world excepting in a subsidiary manner, because it stands in the midst of such connections, and without these it cannot possibly exist' (Theod of Religions, p. 454). The psychological method treats mind from the naturalistic point of view. The
noological method recognises the growth of spirit through
the interaction of subject and object. Eucken's method
is distinguished from (1) the naturalistic method which
deals with the world as independent of its relation to
the individual consciousness, and (2) the psychological
method where the individual consciousness is viewed as
independent of its relation to the world. The noological
method which he adopts is based on the conception of
spiritual life and views the world as a whole.

Eucken views nature as merely mechanical though he
has no right to do so. But if nature is mechanical, there
is something higher than nature in man, and this the
idealists would grant. "If there is such a thing as a
connected experience of related objects, there must be
operative in consciousness a unifying principle, which
not only presents related objects to itself, but at once
renders them objects and unites them in relation to each
other by this act of presentation and which is single
throughout the experience." (Green, Prolegomena to
Ethics, p. 37). This view of Green is repeated by Eucken
when he says, "There must be a unity of some kind
ruling within us; but the mechanism of nature can never
produce such a unity." (Mind Currents, p. 65). Idealism
is strong on the point that ethics is no natural science.
It is vain to preach any ethical law to a being who is the
result of natural laws. He has no conception of an
ought." Though there is an aspect in which man can
be viewed as a natural object, the more important aspect
is not that. Eucken is relating here the results of the
idealist analysis of experience. But, as we shall see, the
exclusive view of nature leads Eucken to a dualism
between nature and spirit which he never completely
overcomes.

Intellectualism is only another species of the same
genus. It tries to construct the universe after a logical
pattern. It takes its stand on a belief in universal reason
immanent in man. It includes within its framework
the whole of life and experience. Everything actual is
necessary since the real is the rational. Again, evil has only to be accepted. Freedom and personality are disregarded. The evolution of the world becomes a mere unwinding of the thread from a real, but not a creative growth. Idealism looks upon the problem of existence as one of belief and not of life, while to Eucken "the intellectual conflict is one of outposts; the real conflict is between ways of living." In this criticism Eucken ignores the essential unity of mind.

In his reaction against Hegelianism Eucken comes to a thorough divorce between knowledge and life. Hegel, it is said, represents the universe as the growth of a concept. Reality is reduced to thought. "The system, if forced to abide by the position it has taken up, can offer nothing more than a thought of thought, a radiation of the focus and powers of thought into the universe, a transformation of the whole of reality into a tissue of logical relations... and thus necessarily destroys the immediacy of life in all its forms" (Problem of Human Life, p. 512). The logical result of this view in practice is that knowledge and not moral life is the more important thing. "The gist of religion is with Hegel nothing but the absorption of the individual in the universal intellectual process. How such a conception can be identified with moral regeneration of the Christian type, with purification of the heart, is unintelligible to us" ("Hegel To-day," Monist, April 1899). So logic has no place in life. What shall we say of this argument? Philosophy is conceptual explanation, and as such is the reality or experience. Therefore philosophy is of no good. The central secret of life can be loved, adored and comprehended. But is comprehension to be dismissed simply because it is not life or love? Eucken's criticism is due to a confusion of issues. Spiritual life expresses itself in art, philosophy and religion, beauty, knowledge and perfection. None of these exhausts the fulness of it. But Eucken seems to consider that religion is the highest form. The holy life of
the saint is to be preferred to that of the seeker of truth or the singer of joy. But religion when so viewed is not exclusive of the cognitive and emotional sides. If religion is the highest stage, then in it we have all sides of our consciousness represented. They illumine the whole without imperiling each other's freedom. Religion is spiritual life in its fulness. But if religion is viewed in the narrow sense of the term as pious conduct or activism, we cannot hold it to be a special manifestation of spiritual life worthier than others.

Hegel does not attempt to derive life from logic, or concrete experience from pure thought. Hegel takes up the facts of experience and disentangles from them the universal principles which constitute the framework of reality. Hegel's method of advance is dialectical, i.e. it proceeds by the alternate production and removal of contradictions until we reach the highest category, called the Absolute Idea, which has no contradiction. Hegel proceeds on the assumption that contradiction is a mark of error. Just as Eucken develops his view by a criticism of rival systems, Hegel criticizes the opposite concepts of subject and object and points out how the highest is a union of these two opposites. Eucken says, "We shall not criticise reality from our own individual standpoint, but shall bid the facts criticise themselves, being led from appearance to the reality by the help of a dialectic immanent in the things themselves." (Quoted by Boyce Gibson in the Quarterly Review, p. 382). That is exactly what Hegel does. In him thought is as fluid as the real itself. Benedetto Croce, speaking about Bergson's intuitive knowledge, asks, "Was not this just what Hegel demanded, and the point from which he began to find a form of mind which should be mobile as the movement of the real, which should participate in the life of things, which should feel the pulse of reality, and should mentally reproduce the rhythm of its development, without breaking it into pieces or making it rigid and falsifying it?" (Philosophy of Hegel, p. 214). The
movement of conceptual thought depends on and is determined by the larger movement of life. Absolutism takes its stand on the deeper experiences of the soul and it is therefore not a system unconnected with experience. At a later stage we will have an opportunity of showing that Eucken points to a spiritual life which is sometimes looked upon as beyond experience.

Eucken, as the result of the critique of Hegelianism, subordinates theory to action. It is true that mere knowledge is not enough to satisfy the whole of human nature. But there cannot be any activity apart from theory. Eucken asks us to act. What is it we are to realize in life or action? We must know something about spirit before we can act spiritually. But as a criticism of a false view of intellect which tries to spin theories without relation to facts, Eucken's point may have value; unfortunately no writer holds to that absurd position. "Intellectual work itself does not become positive and productive until it becomes an integral portion of an inclusive spiritual life, both receiving from that life and contributing to its advancement, until it is guided by the resultant drift of great spiritual organizations and impelled by the energies which originate from these sources" (Maia Currents, p. 65). It only means that intellect is an element of life but not the whole of life, quite an obvious proposition. The 'thought' of the absolutist is not exclusive of action. The 'knowledge' of the idealist systems is not mere cognitive comprehension, but force of mind which drives man to move in the direction of spiritual reality. Knowledge is not a mere acknowledgment of the ideal, but a vision of the spiritual life which is a precious possession of the soul coming out in life on every side. Mere knowledge is vain without love. Permanent idealism does not stop with the consideration that the goal of men is reached when he recognizes the presence of the Absolute in him. It is clear that knowing is not living, and he does not truly know who is not stirred to his very depths.
by the consciousness of the infinite in him. Quite as much as Kueken, Absolutism recognises that the spirit developing in man is a force striving towards expression through opposition and discord, developing through effort and struggle.

Kueken further develops his view of intellectualism by urging that life requires the shattering the given world to bits and reconstructing it into a spiritual whole. Intellect is looked upon as requiring us to accept the given without undertaking any task of reconstruction. It is therefore useless for the purpose of solving the riddle of life. Kueken once again is wrong. The first step in the great spiritual awakening is the feeling of discord between the ideal and the actual. Intellect in its pursuit confronts us with the contrast between the speculative ideals of consistency and system and the chaotic and irregular nature of the actual world. But since intellect has a feeling that the world is rational, it seeks to discover the order of the given and force it to the foreground. Intellect does not passively acquiesce in what is given, but tries to force out of the world its latent order. Kueken certainly knows that we do not passively receive impressions from outside, but react on them. The world of our mind or intellect is not a mere photograph of the world outside, but is an enlargement or interpretation thereof. Logic, according to the absolutist tradition, is the mental construction of reality. The task of shaping the universe to conform to our ethical ideals belongs to morals. But it is only through the co-operation of intellect, emotion and will that we can rebuild the universe on spiritual foundations. When Kueken says that cognition is useless, as life and will are necessary to create the world of spirit, he forgets how life and will cannot set to work without the aid of logic.

Kueken in agreement with Bergson's theory of intuition believes that it is impossible to realise the truth of the world, the essential reality of spirit, unless man has had a rebirth in his own nature. As Professor
Royce Gibson put it, "If we are fruitfully to grasp the movements of the world's spiritual history as systems of life, we must ourselves, through the deepening of our own individuality, have suffered that spiritual change in the depths of our own being, which can alone give us the requisite insight for recognizing a spiritual drift elsewhere" (Quarterly Review, p. 384). We see how a sympathetic insight is necessary for a clear and true understanding, but we fail to see why we should ourselves experience certain things to see them elsewhere. If this becoming something to know it is necessary, then man's condition would be pitiable indeed. We could not know so many things. Subjectivism, which Eucken rebels against, will haunt him. His rejection of thought as the essential element of life does not bring him near the voluntarists, for, according to Eucken, life is more than either intelligence or will.

Eucken differs from the pragmatists since he regards utility to be an end considerably inferior to spiritual salvation, which is the proper end of man. Eucken recognizes absolute standards in truth, morality, etc., which will not be agreeable to the pragmatists. Eucken is decisive on this point. "The essence of the conception of truth, and the life and soul of our search after truth, is to be found in the idea that in truth man attains to something superior to all his own opinions and inclinations, something that possesses a validity completely independent of any human consent; the hope of an essentially new life is held out to man, a vision of a wider and richer being, an inner communion with reality, a liberation from all that is merely human... On the other hand, when the good of the individual and of humanity becomes the highest aim and the guiding principle, truth sinks to the level of a merely utilitarian opinion... Truth can exist only as an end in itself. 'Instrumental' truth is no truth at all" (Main Currents, p. 73). Thus Eucken protests against subjectivism in philosophy. The world is not what suits our likes and
dislikes. The spiritual values of truth, beauty and goodness are over-individual.

The discussion of naturalism has shown that human life involves a break with the merely natural, life, that there can be no spiritual experience without the negation of the natural; that the beginning of all positive morality and religion is in a new birth; that of intellectualism and voluntarism has pointed out the need of an independent but indwelling spiritual life which is more than mere intelligence or will. It has also directed our attention to the end of the free active and personal appropriation of the spiritual life. In criticising the rival systems, Lucken has suggested his own scheme of personal idealism, which is said to be confirmed by progress and evolution, culture and civilization.

We have shown in a manner how these suggestions are not the necessary results of the weaknesses of the theories criticised. But our present problem is to see how far those suggestions are logically sustained in Lucken's system.

III

Nature by itself cannot account for the specifically human. In human nature we have an eternal and permanent principle which is opposed to the flux of the world. Man is free because there is the higher life in him. Were not the spark of spirit present in him, man would not make any effort to raise himself above himself. Man feels his existence to be "solitary, mean, nasty, brutish and short." The higher life tells him in clear terms that the life of the vegetable plant or the brute beast is not worthy of him. Man is both in time and out of it. He stands above the apparent chaos of natural conditions and penetrates to the fundamental spiritual reality underlying the changeful appearances. Knowledge is possible simply because man participates in a higher life. History is possible because it is not a succession of events, but a growth which man who stands
above the perpetual changes of time can understand. Without the life of spirit in which he has a share, man is not human at all. Man as an intellectual and ethical being is contrasted with the non moral nature of the world from which he springs. Life is a problem or a difficulty because man is natural—spiritual or finite—infinite. The actual would have satisfied him if his life were a mere appendage to the world of nature. But no; he is restless. His meanness is a sign that his life is rooted in an independent spiritual order. He feels life's problem to be capable of solution only through a negation of the merely natural. "The spiritual life declares its ability positively within the human province through a persistent effort to move outside the given situation through a tracing out and a holding forth of ideals, through a longing after a more complete happiness and a more complete truth" (Truth of Religion, p. 201). In human life we have a struggle between nature with its mechanical causation and spirit with its creative freedom. Man's life is on one side a mere continuation of nature, while on the other it exhibits new forces. He is at the point where nature and spirit meet and that is why life is not all meanness or vice. The drift of culture and development of history prove the presence of the spiritual in man who is the mould of them.

While subhuman nature has no share in the spiritual world, man alone can enter into the membership of the world of spirit. He is a potential member of the kingdom of spirit. He has to fight a battle before he can secure his patrimony. There is the downward nature acting as a drag on him. "It is much especially true that it is through struggle alone that our life attains its full depth. Resistance alone drives it to put forth its whole strength and compels it to exercise its full origination power" (Main Currents, p. 153). The ideal for man is the life of a wrestler fighting the dark forces of evil dwelling in his own breast as well as in the world of nature.

As Eucken conceives the opposition of nature and
spirit to be final and ultimate, he asks us to get rid of nature by violence if necessary. This getting rid of the natural means the birth of the spiritual. Man in his first birth is natural; in the second he is purely spiritual. Eucken sharply opposes the higher and lower stages of reality. Spiritual growth is regarded as due to a conflict and an overcoming and not an evolution or development. The ideal of man can be reached not by a perfecting of the natural, but by a denial thereof.

In emphasising overmuch the break between nature and spirit and the need for a second birth, Eucken is under the influence of the Christian conception of a new birth. He is trying to give a philosophical justification of the categories of grace and salvation. But why should we abandon the narrow, limited attitude of the finite self if we do not perceive in us a whole which already draws us toward itself? As Descartes asks, "How could we doubt or desire, how could we be conscious that anything is wanting to us, and that we are not altogether perfect, if we had not ourselves the idea of a perfect being in comparison with whom we recognise the defect of our own nature?" (Meditation III.). It is for the sake of the whole that the surrender has to be made. It is because we already possess the ideal of spiritual perfection we agree to those laws which serve its ends and repel all those hostile to it. If man possesses a sense of higher values, how can Eucken say that the higher spiritual life of man is newborn. It is there because human life is a part of the universal life of spirit. The vaster deep already stirs in man. The life of spirit appears in human consciousness, but it is true, as Eucken says, that for its full expression the human consciousness has to be transcended. All that this means is that the higher life is in him though it stretches beyond him. This should make Eucken concede that the spiritual life is also the natural for man. When the birth of spirit in man is looked upon as the second birth, man is viewed as a natural being to start with, and unless there is a
total conversion of his nature it is impossible for him to become spiritual. But if man were completely natural or rotten in his nature, no amount of manipulation could make him a spiritual being. The only chance is from the influx of spiritual life from outside. Man can be delivered from his sin by grace. Eucken thinks that he supports this doctrine by his view of second birth, etc. But this view clashes with Eucken's other statements that man to start with possesses a fragment of the life of spirit; otherwise he cannot be intellectual, moral and artistic in his nature. It is meaningless in argue that man is weak and finite by nature and cannot therefore by the unaided exercise of his natural capacity develop spiritual perfection. If he is really so completely lost, if he is essentially and unalterably sinful or 'natural' in Eucken's sense, he cannot and would not think of God at all. No life of spirit will recommend itself to such a being. Eucken himself admits it: "Either the power of a new world is operative in man, and makes him strong outwardly and inwardly, or the whole life of man is spiritually lost—one great illusion, one great error" (Life's Basis and Life's Ideal, p. 332). If therefore, spirit is in man, then what is wanted is not a complete victory over human nature, which is partly spiritual but only a transformation of the lower and a development of the higher. The pathway to salvation is not through sudden conversion but gradual growth. What is required is not a letting in of divine energy from outside, but only a development of the spiritual note he already possesses. This view of man as potential spirit and of salvation as the development of his spiritual side is satisfactory, but it is the view of absolutism; the view of man as merely natural and perfection as involving a second birth is Eucken's, but is unsatisfactory. We find in Eucken both these views left side by side. When he cares for novelty, he urges one view which is illogical and unsatisfactory; when he cares for consistency, he urges the other, but then his system becomes identical with absolutism.
But we may be asked, Is not conversion a fact attested by all religious men? Yes. But there is such a thing as growth in the life of spirit. When this growth is steady and natural we do not notice it; when it is sudden and great our attention is attracted by it, and we call it a change of heart or conversion, revival or second birth. Conversions are only great changes or crises. There is no proof to show that new energy flows into the soul from sources completely outside it.

What is the truth contained in Finkel's severe opposition between nature and spirit? He only means to say that in the actual world the lower nature of man is opposing the higher; in the world the forces of evil seem to be fighting with the forces of good. We admit that in man the higher and the lower, the spiritual and the natural seem to be opposed when they are exclusively viewed. The realization of spiritual life is due to a development or extension of man's higher nature against the lower. In the sense that we cannot have complete spiritual life without a negation of the lower nature, Finkel is right. In man it is not completely realized, though it is partly so. The spiritual life is both immanent and transcendent. The discord between the higher and the lower is felt most in human experience, but that is no reason why we should transfer what is true of human experience to the whole world and arrive at a dualistic metaphysics asserting the world of nature and, as an appendage to it, the world of spirit. But, as we shall see, even human experience involves a unity between the two sides, and so should the world.

The spiritual order has yet to be realized; it is to be won through struggle. It is not yet, but is in the making. In the unfinished universe we require a guarantee that the spiritual reality can be attained at the end of the evolutionary process. And Finkel grants us that assurance. We can have faith in the final issue of life. But if the victory of spirit over nature is so certain, then even in Finkel's scheme the end is inevitable and the
world seems to be determined as in the absolutist's picture. Eucken does not merely say that the goal is bound to be reached, but also that it is already realised. He posits the absolute eternal reality of the order of spirit. If it is already real, what is it we are struggling to attain? What is the significance of moral endeavour if perfection is eternally realised? The whole account is what is generally identified with absolute idealism. Eucken sets down the temporal and the eternal side by side. As the absolutist asserts the reality of the whole which is realising itself in the world process, so also Eucken asserts both eternity and time, in which one is being acquired slowly and gradually through the conquest of the other. Eucken's strictures against absolutism do not come with much grace from him. Sometimes Eucken is inclined to dismiss the world, if not as an illusion, at least as something to be completely negated. A concrete doctrine which holds to the reality of both the eternal and the temporal, victory of the good and yet a battle with evil, consciousness of perfection in religion and yet a burning moral will, is looked upon as the goal in absolutistic systems. It is a world where the two are inseparable. The one is necessary because of the other. This absolutist conception Eucken now and then plays with but does not posit as the highest truth.

Eucken's hostility to nature is unaccountable. Professor Bausanque says there is "a certain hostility alternating with neglect towards the realm of Nature below man, towards the beginnings of morals and religion in early society, towards the detail of normal character and conduct, towards the ethical import of institutions and towards the greatness of Hellenism and the Middle Age" (Quarterly Review, 1914, p. 376). Eucken makes nature mean the evil passions of man and the physical world. Since they generally oppose the higher aspirations, he holds that nature is evil. But this is to take nature in a very restricted sense. As we have seen, even the lower passions of man have to be transformed, and the world
of physical nature made an instrument of spirit. We do not know what authority Eucken has in speaking of the life of sense as natural. We admit that were man completely confined to the sense world he would not have any ideals by which to round off his experiences. Such a life would be one of dispersal or scattering into elements, while a life of reason is a gathering up, a uniting activity. But the two are not really opposed. We do not want a complete suppression of sense and birth of reason. What can reason do without sense? Sense and understanding are different aspects of one and the same life. Strictly speaking, the existence of nature presupposes a mind. It is comparable only with it and with nothing else. Eucken contrasts the actual and the existential with the ideal and the essential, and breaks the universe into nature and spirit. Eucken admits that we can remove the contradictions of our actual life through our activity. It follows that what appears at first to be contradictory is there merely to sting us to progressive activity. The spiritual is the inspiration of the natural. Nature is the stage on which the spiritual life has to realize its possibilities. Ultimately the world of nature is to be subordinated to that of spirit. It is unreal if it has not any spiritual significance. The religious souls of the world feel the unity between the two. They whose lives are lifted above individuality and subjectivity into a plane of universal and objective personal being are clearly the vision of spiritual perfection in which nature plays but a subordinate part. To the great spiritual leaders "the new kingdom was no vague outline, and no feeble hope, but all stood clear in front of them; the kingdom was so real to their souls and filled them so exclusively that the whole senseworld was reduced by them in a semblance and a shadow, if they could not otherwise gain a new value into a superior power." (Eucken). Eucken is quite definite that the world must be a spiritual evolution, for the rise of mind and spirit would be unaccountable if the world below man were purely natural.
Thus Eucken answers the question of the relation of spirit to nature in the way in which it is answered by the absolutes. Eucken is clear that spirit is the source of all reality and nature only an aspect thereof. He absolutely contemplatively the other suggestion that nature is the basis of reality of which spirit is the by-product. The contrast between the ideals of man and nature lies within the life of spirit. The oneness of the whole is attested by religious experience when we feel his nitty with something greater than himself, where the peace and harmony of all is the outstanding fact. The opposition between nature and spirit is due to imperfect apprehension. Were it real and not apparent, we can never break down the opposition. Tolstoy lays undue stress on the negative movement of the spirit away from nature in its quest for freedom. While we admit that negation is real, it is at the same time a side of the positive progress. It becomes an abstraction if it is cut off from the whole. The impulse after freedom first expresses itself as a break from nature which is restraint, but the reconciliation is effected as soon as the human consciousness finds its true centre in the spirit. The shock of resistance is no doubt needed to make the self aware of its true destiny. The ego can come to self-consciousness only by beating itself against obstacles, by being reflected back upon itself from the world of nature. This meeting with opposition is a necessary condition of becoming aware of the self's real purpose, but the opposition is not the end of things. Though the upward ascent is not a smooth, peaceful, but a steep, difficult path, though the issue of the conflict may wind now in one direction and now in another, there is no doubt about the ultimate victory of spirit. To over-emphasize the opposition between spirit and nature, Eucken is trying to come into line with the orthodox Christian view of the relation between the spirit and the flesh, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, but in so doing his religious prejudices get the mastery over his philosophic impulses.
What is the spiritual life? We are not told what exactly it is. Everything about it is vague and uncertain. We are only told that it is an inward, self-sustaining and independent life. Certain indefinite characteristics which are ever on the lips of religious philosophers are given us. But these indications of spiritual life lead us nowhere. We do not know how to construe it, since Eucken does not trace the relation of the spiritual life to the various aspects of life. Some of the descriptions given of it remind us of Bergson's 'Worlds.' The word 'spiritual' refers indiscriminately to the scientific, aesthetic, moral and religious aspects of reality. For example, it is said to begin when routine existence ceases. What exactly its relation to the psychical life and the natural world in the midst of which alone it can be lived is, Eucken does not tell us. We have no accounts of it in Eucken's philosophy, one which Eucken, the Christian theologian press forward, and the other which Eucken the philosopher cherishes. According to the first, spiritual life is a remote phenomenon unconnected with the world; according to the second, it is the totality including the world within its scope.

There are passages in Eucken where the world of spirit is regarded as an independent realm of reality superior to the scious or the phenomenal world which is but a changeful shadowy reflection of the eternal reality. The spiritual life is said to be independent of nature. "But one thing we must, above all, bear in mind—that if the invisible world is to have the requisite stability and breadth, it cannot be the mere object of our finite longing or any inference laboriously drawn from the conditions of our finite experience; it must be completely independent, and exist in its own right." (The Meaning and Value of Life, p. 75). The spiritual life is quite distinct from the psychical life of man. For it "demands a complete inclusive activity transcending the opposition between subject and world, inward feeling and outward
fact. Our merely psychical life, however, is at the mercy of this opposition." (ibid. p. 309). When the spiritual life becomes discontinuous with the natural, it loses that from which it acquires content. If it is so completely different from what we know in the actual world, we cannot describe it, for it is nothing at all. There is no meaning in saying that the spiritual values are higher and unconditional. We do not know what the life of spirit is. All that we can say of it is that it is immutable, free, permanent and rational, simply because life, as we know, is mutable, changing, necessary and irrational. Spiritual life is a self-existent reality opposed to the natural, the human and the individual, the finite and the automatic. It is the spiritual, the divine, the universal, the free and the creative being. The eternal unity lies outside the world of experience, completely transcendent to it. According to this view, the world is an appearance empty and vain, and human nature sinful and corrupt. The only chance of salvation is by a second birth. This view of the corruption of the world, the wretchedness of man, need for conversion and deliverance by grace is a mistake of fact and judgement. If spiritual life is independent of man, how can man ever partake of it? If it is removed completely from the human, if it is a mere beyond, it will be unattainable. It cannot be assimilated or appropriated by man. If it is a timeless reality having no connection with the temporal, then the two are left side by side without any mediation. Either the world or the spirit must be an appearance. Conflict is the end of life and human existence is a tragedy indeed.

But Ruckert sometimes takes a concrete view of spirit, and that is the philosophically satisfactory doctrine. It is the all-embracing whole of which mechanical nature and human consciousness are aspects at different levels of manifestation. "The natural and the spiritual stages both fall within an all-enveloping life whose very process of self-development is to pass upward from the
one in the other, and so come into full realisation within our universe through the very impulse of its own movement” (The Meaning and Value of Life). The material elements have helped spirit in its upward course. The mechanical nature has travelled to bring the human into existence. The growth of evolution, life, consciousness, morals and religion are proofs that the life of the spirit has been expressing itself in higher and higher forms. The lower forms have always to be interpreted in terms of the higher. Nature may condition spirit, but is conditioned by it. It represents to us the conditions in the external world which are necessary to bring forth spirit. Thus are man and nature organic to each other. The end of evolution is not reached in human consciousness, for even there we have oppositions and discord. Man himself feels in moments of insight that between his actual self and his ideal there is a gulf or a cleavage. He reaches out towards the spiritual whole which he can never completely grasp. Therefore his position is one of doubt and distraction, discord and difficulty. It only shows that we are not completely spirits as yet, but are only claimants for spiritual life.

Here Eucken takes a more positive view of the relation of spirit to nature. Spirit is not opposed to nature. The change from the natural to the spiritual life is due to an unfolding of the inner nature of existence. The spiritual life is in the world of experience, is present in man, but has not as yet come to its own. The mechanism of nature gives us a low degree of reality when compared with the creativity of spirit. When man reaches the highest stage, the opposition between spirit and nature is completely overcome. The eternal life transcends human existence only in the sense that human life is not complete and self-sufficient since it is not raised above the opposition between subject and object.

This view is confirmed by Eucken’s suggestion that artistic creation supplies a clue to the interpretation of the spiritual life. For in a work of art we have a mutual
interpenetration of the subjective and the objective. The soul in the artist transfigures the natural. Things receive a soul by his vision, and his soul acquires a content. If in art we bring out the soul of things, how can we do it if things had no souls? The life of the artist points to the affinities between nature and spirit, world and idea. The world of fact is not opposed to the life of spirit, but is itself a grade of the evolution of spirit.

In another place we have pointed out the need for the opposition. Why should the Absolute develop differences? This question is not answered by Eucken. He only tells us that there has been a development. "The idea becomes irresistible, that for reasons beyond our ken, in some certain sphere of the spiritual world—for unquestionably the problem reaches higher than humanity—a split, a severance of operation from essence, has taken place, and that for our eye this conflict reaches its climax in human existence" (Vorübergehendes Geistesleben, p. 445). This split, bifurcation or severance of existence from essence is viewed by Eucken as an event in time, and not eternally. There has been no eternal spirit without the world process, no God without energizing. There has been no whole without nature and spirit and their struggle. Eucken himself admits it when he says, "The whole develops itself through the agency of the antithesis of subject and object, of power and resistance, but it remains superior in it, and holds both sides together even while they are divided" (Menschenwechsel, p. 58). The spirit sundered itself into distinctions which are finding through the world process their way back to the original unity.

Eucken says that spiritual life is the central fact which alone gives a clear, connected, and complete account of the world of nature and existence, history, morality, science, art and religion (Meaning and Value of Life, p. 84). It alone imparts value and meaning to all that occurs in the lower levels of being. It forms the ultimate
basis of reality while transcending all human life. It is the whole which has been steadily unfolding from the lowest upwards. It is at once the basis and presupposition as well as the goal and climax of the world process. It is the supreme power which supports and sustains all reality, the constantly active source of the life of the human spirit. It is a self-sufficient life superior to space and time. It is that which “sustains, dominates and unifies the visible world.” Thus though Eucken starts with the conception of nature as a hostile power with which man is in conflict, he is compelled to admit in the end that nature is an integral element of a spiritual universe. Spiritual life is the whole in which the parts or grades of reality find their function and meaning. It reveals itself from the lowest matter up to the highest love and devotion. Though the whole is spirit, it is not present in full perfection at every point of the universe. There is generally opposition between the parts. The world is the process of the progressive realization of spirit. Through conflict a higher harmony is being slowly attained. The world is trying to win back through effort and struggle the unity of the two, nature and spirit. Eucken insists on the reality of the world process, which is a slow conquest of spirit over nature, but in indicating that the end as well as the beginning is the complete reconstitution of the two, he sides with absolutism. And if he does not put himself down for an absolutist thinker, his theological prejudices are responsible for it. There is nothing special or new about the statement of absolute idealism which Eucken has contributed to it, he has only given a special emphasis to the view at a time when emphasis was needed.

V

It is therefore as an ethical preacher that Eucken will be remembered. He feels much worried about the distracted condition of the world around. On every side
we meet with problems and paradoxes, puzzles and contradictions. The disease is not so much one of intellect as of will. The problem is one of life and has to be met by life and action. We must so act as to transform the problematical and the discordant into the whole and the harmonious. With all the advance of culture and civilisation man is not happy.

What is the reason? The average individual of the world simply accepts the natural without knowing it to be apparent and transitory, and thus misses the eternal reality. We come into contact with the real in spiritual life, which is ethical and religious. The meaning of life is due to the complexity of human desires which crave for satisfaction. Material needs and pursuits absorb man's energies so that he has not time to think of the higher values. Mental unrest has only one cure, the possession and practice of the spiritual scale of values. Eucken summons all those who suffer from the insecurity of spirit and flimsiness of faith—whose name is not legion or million, but many-million—not to surrender themselves to matter with its mechanism which is bound to enslave the spirit, but fall back on soul force. Man is great because of his inner spirit. Outward things cannot satisfy the inward soul. "But we are now experiencing what mankind has so often experienced, viz. that at the very point where the negation reaches its climax and the danger reaches the very brink of a precipice, the conviction dawns with axiomatic certainty that there lives and stirs within us something which no obstacle or enmity can ever destroy, and which signifies against all opposition a kernel of our nature that can never get lost." (Truth of Religion, p. 62). Absorption in external things is the cause of the present depression of the soul. Man is delicately balanced between ruin and redemption, ruin if he follows nature, and redemption if he follows spirit. At present he is on the inclined plane to ruin since he is pursuing material ends.

How should we proceed in life? By not accepting
the natural. Nature as it comes to us is full of troubles, but we have so to act upon it as to rid it of its puzzles and build a spiritual order on its basis. We have to try to realise the spiritual life. We have seen how the spiritual life expresses itself in the impulse to unity. From the beginning it has been a whole, the creative power which moves towards unity at all stages, the vital energy which spurs us on to make a unity of the world. Anything less than the whole will not satisfy. Man will not be satisfied with his existence until he gives up his finiteness and relativity. Pain and unrest are the signs of his finiteness which he has to get over. Man has to fight against opposition to gain his ends; he has to fight error and ignorance, confusion and prejudice to gain truth; he has to fight impulse and irrationality to gain the moral good. Everywhere he can win his rights as a spiritual being only by shifting the centre of gravity from the natural and the individual to the spiritual and the universal. So long as man is finite, so long as there are elements which divide the life of man, like the claims of nature and the counter-claims of spirit, he will have pain and discord in his life. But when the ideal task is achieved oppositions cease. When the love of the whole is embodied in all our activities, then the spiritual being of man manifests itself and man attains satisfaction. It is then that the individual petty and particular small self becomes truly personal and spiritual. Since the separate atomic self is repudiated, he will lead a life of spiritual expansion and love. Then our work becomes our vocation, our duty an pleasure.

Tooken calls upon us to give up our false self-satisfaction and capture the cosmic spiritual life in which human life is rooted. This spiritual life is a fact in that it is real, but its reality has not become existence. We cannot say all existence is good. So spiritual reality is in one sense a reality, in another an aspiration. It is "a fact, and a task, a repose that can never be disturbed and an endeavour that cannot be satisfied." (Mann
Human effort is necessary to make a heaven on earth. Victory of good is promised by the reality of spiritual life. It is man’s duty to turn this from an idea into a possession. The religious ideal should animate all social work. The ideal of man is not merely to understand the nature of reality but to subdue all things to the higher life of Spirit. Eucken is quite right in subordinating the mystic quietism to the practical work of building the spiritual kingdom. Eucken is to be praised for his insistence on the uplift of man by work. But we must remember that all forms of idealism emphasize the sense of a deeper life which is not satisfied by mere externals. All of them urge us to secure our footing firm on the inner soul, to save ourselves from the dangers of outward objects and natural things, and work for mankind with a goal in view.

Eucken’s ethics is pure religion without any dogma. The life of spirit is something to be possessed. Mysticism is the highest religion. It is living the life of God. When the spiritual life becomes one’s own life, then the finite man becomes an independent spiritual centre. “A genuine self is constituted only by the coming to life of the infinite spiritual world in an independent concentration in the individual.” (LIFE’s Basis, p. 286). The glory of Christianity is that it has shown as a historical fact what man has in him to become. “Christianity for the first time reveals a complete knowledge of Divine Being; a delocation of man.” (Eucken). There are also the great personalities of the world in whom the actual and the ideal have become one. They are the mediators between God and Man. They are the witnesses to prove that man can be raised to the likeness of God. They are the supermen of Nietzsche, the philosopher kings of Plato, the true Brahmins of the Orient. They are the legislators of humanity summing up the spiritual
forces of the age and forcing the world along new paths and movements. They form the spiritual aristocracy of the world. In them the life of spirit is incarnate. It is lifted out of its shadowy existence into the world of ideals and presented to the world in full reality in visible form. Religion that can be sustained by logic, that satisfies all intellectual demands, is 'universal' religion. We feel that human life is rooted in an independent spiritual life. All sense of tragedy and failure, isolation and discord in the universe is removed. The soul is no more a stranger in the universe but feels quite at home in God's world. But this cannot be the final solution. Nature is found in conflict with spirit; right is worsted and wrong is triumphant. So the average man cannot be satisfied. He feels the need of what Buckn tells 'Characteristic' religion, as distinguished from the 'universal' religion. 'Characteristic' religion is specific and personal. The philosopher can understand and interpret what spiritual life is and what its bearings on practice are. But the man in the street accustomed to thinking in pictures cannot appreciate it unless it becomes concrete. So with special reference to the average life of men, a 'characteristic' religion adequate to his needs is found necessary. There is revealed a spiritual life of supremely personal character with all its glories of love and will, a presence that inspires and redeems our whole life. The difference between the 'universal' and the 'characteristic' religion may be stated thus: 'Universal' religion has no personal God. It asserts the reality of a spiritual life diffused through the world. 'Characteristic' religion asserts the reality of a personality in whom the spiritual life becomes supremely real. We rise from the colorless conception of a pervading spirit to a living personal God. Buckn does not offer any proof of this 'characteristic' religion. Its proof is practical in the sense that the spiritual life of the soul asserts its reality.

Now the Absolute becomes the God of religion. He
is the creator; the world is his revelation. The plain man wishes to know how the absolute spiritual life which philosophy proclaims exists. Eucken says it exists as a personality, not as a thing. Since the God of religion is an object of fear and reverence, worship and adoration, communion and fellowship, it must be a personality. It is a self-supporting personality or over-personality, if we please. But still, 'universal' religion is necessary as a corrective of 'characteristic' religion. The latter is useful in giving us immediate expressions of the higher life, but it has a tendency to become a slavish imitation of this or that life, and to lose its freedom and become dogmatic. At such times we have to fall back on the 'universal' religion.

'Universal' and 'characteristic' religions are not two different religions but two grades of one religion. We cannot say that the 'characteristic' religion is merely an arbitrary product. For it is the logical conclusion of the course. Only we are emphasising the concrete aspect of it. The object of knowledge at the 'universal' level becomes an object of love at the 'characteristic' stage. It may even be urged that this is the highest conception of the Absolute, as evidenced by the mystics. For it is a stage beyond the dialectics of knowledge perceived by the seers of religion in their Playah visions. What was an ideal in the stage of 'universal' religion now becomes a reality. The religious souls commune alone with the Alone and find it to be Infinite Love. When they come down from their heights to relate to us the glories of their visions, we will profit by their lessons. But they will not give us a philosophical religion, for to the question why do we consider God a person, no intellectual justification can be given. For, strictly speaking, belief in a personal God is not necessary to religion. "Religion can subsist without belief in a God; the old genuine Buddhism proves that; but without the duality of worlds, without an outlook into a new being, it becomes an empty phrase" (Tract of Religion, p. 229). Religion requires only
a cosmic spiritual reality but not God. Spiritual life is not identical with God, but seems to be the atmosphere in which God as much as any other being lives. Eucken understands the difficulties incident to the conception of a God. For a finite being like man, it is not possible to have knowledge of God unless God also is finite. We should rather say that God is not infinite or man is not finite. We do not know how exactly the world of persons is related to a personal God. Is he the external author of the universe or is he the president of the republic? We have already said that we do not understand what precisely the life of spirit is. Sometimes we are told that it is the self-sufficient eternal vital energy, but sometimes it is also made a growing, changing, dynamic force. Spiritual life is a growing something which is trying to become independent of man. But religion, which brings man into union with God, is supposed to bring him into relation with the deepest basis of reality, and that reality cannot be something that has yet to attain its realization. Here God is viewed as the goal of the world, while the spiritual life is merely the trail to the final goal. Spiritual life is viewed here as the upward tendency enfolded in imperfection and not as is usual with Eucken, "the self-consciousness of reality" (Life's Basis, p. 263). The spiritual tendency of the world is only a tendency, and, therefore, has yet to grow and progress, while God is not subject to growth. Spiritual life we are supposed to make, but we do not make God. Here spiritual life is viewed as the process of becoming in which we have the energizing of the whole in part, or the spirit in nature, or infinite in finite. Such a kind of pure infinite we have in seven places in this book shown to be spiritual. When we begin to discuss about the nature of God, we come across indefinite and inconsistent views in Eucken. Eucken himself feels that we cannot prove the existence of a personal God. The nature of the divine can only be felt by the divine in us. "All opposition to the idea of the Divine personality is ultimately explained by the
fact that an energetic life process is wanting—a life process which entertains the question not so much from without as from within. Whenever such a life process is found, there is simultaneously found often in direct contradiction to the formal doctrinal statement an element of such a personal character of God” (Tract of Religion, p. 436). In the spirit of Bergson, Eucken asks us to hold our tongue for the heart has spoken. They have felt and we have no right to question.

VII

Eucken holds with Bergson and the pluralists that all genuine action is free and creative. It cannot be deduced or predicted. Eucken says that determinism “involves the disappearance of the present in any real sense of the word. When there is no demand for decision, no tension and no room for original action, when the future grows out of the past like a flower out of its bud, then there can be only the shadow of a present.” [p. 437]. But Eucken also says that a free act is the utterance and expression of the whole self. We genuinely possess ourselves only in such free acts. We live in them and not in others. If it is the expression of the full personality of man, then it would arise out of the man’s self as the “flower out of its bud.” We cannot say it is an absolutely new creation. Of course it cannot be predicted. As the artist’s vision is the expression of the artist’s being and at the same time a novel deed, even so a genuine act arises out of the self and is still novel. It is both old and new. Eucken agrees with the absolutists in thinking that a free act must be determined by the nature of the self. He with the absolutists aids the cause tardy for real freedom the self which determines must be not the small petty self but the whole spiritual self which we share. Our free acts are those which are determined by the wider and deeper self, and not the autonomic surface self. So Eucken’s freedom is not pure contingency.
The freedom of souls is due to their participating in the Absolute. The whole to which both man and nature belong operates in man and so he is free. The bare freedom of spirit which he has in him on account of the presence of the whole, is abstract and potential until it gains actuality and concreteness by commerce with reality. It is with growing life that man’s consciousness of his inward life or sense of freedom develops and deepens. Eckeen carefully distinguishes freedom from indeterminism or contingency. Man has to find his content in the given world. His freedom is, therefore, bound by the necessity of the world of actuality. So man is partly free and partly determined. This is the absolutistic theory that the whole alone is fully free, and not the individual beings. Till the self finds itself in the other it will be bound by the other.

VIII

Eckeen proves personal immortality not for all but for some. But he also holds that soul sometimes dies before the body. The death of the soul! How then is immortality or survival even possible? ‘The infinite pain and love that has provided a new spontaneous nature in man, over against a dark and hostile world, will conserve such a new nature until its spiritual nucleus and shelter it against all perils and assaults, so that life as the bearer of life eternal can never be wholly lost in the stream of time’ (Truth of Religion, p. 232). The proof of immortality is the basis of his in spiritual experience. Empirical proofs are not of value, and the kind of immortality which Eckeen makes room for cannot satisfy those who are dissatisfied with the absolutistic notion of immortality.

IX

We find how the system of idealism propounded by Eckeen is absolutistic with only a difference in emphasis. While the insistence on will is present as an undercurrent
in all absolutist systems, Eucken puts it in the foreground. Not that systems of absolute idealism compromise in any way the central features of Eucken’s system (personalism and activism). The independent life of the spirit, which is the one central idea of all the volumes of Eucken, remains as vague as ever. In many large volumes he has failed to give it any definite content. We cannot say that Eucken has made any serious contribution to philosophy (see Professor Rosenquet in the Quarterly Review, p. 370). Taking shelter under life, he skips over the many metaphysical problems which are puzzles to philosophers of the present day. He does not feel called upon to discuss them, seeing that we can continue to live even if we do not know the precise nature of God or future life. The central issues of life he leaves aside, but tries to persuade men to a higher life. But he forgets that we cannot improve or enlarge life unless we preserve the ideals necessary for higher effort.

Eucken is more a prophet than a philosopher. His work inspires us with higher ideals, and tries to lift us up to a larger and higher plane of being. It is Eucken’s faith that whatever might have been the function of philosophy in ages gone by, just now, when spiritual distraction and mental unrest run high, the task of philosophy is to give peace of mind and soul by awakening the spiritual vision of wholeness and freedom. To this age, fast growing materialist, he offers as a way of escape a belief in the reality and supremacy of the spiritual world. Eucken contrasts graphically the real needs of man, and the insufficiency of the present situation to satisfy them. He gives us a vivid picture of the opposition between what is and what ought to be. He invites our attention to the meanness of man’s existence, and with a reformer’s zeal asks us to build better. On every side Eucken feels the lack of a great goal which would raise individuals from out of their smallness. The spiritual concerns of man are left unmet for. Eucken
calls for a revision of values and urges that religion should be the foundation of life, and not merely an incident of it.

The critics of Eucken agree in the view that Eucken is not so much a philosopher as a man with a message to his age. Professor Perry holds that Eucken's system is not a philosophy at all, if by philosophy is meant "the attempt to think clearly and cogently about the world, and lay bare its actualities and necessities" (Philosophical Tendencies, p. 154). Professor Wilgery in his Introduction to Life's Basis and Life's Ideal observes: "It has been remarked, and the present writer would be among the first to acknowledge the truth of the statement, that the voice is that of a prophet in the sense of an ethical teacher rather than that of a philosopher in the more technical sense" (p. vii). This estimate of Eucken's philosophy may best be concluded with Professor Russett's words about Eucken's system: "Eucken's wide influence appears to rest partly on a very considerable merit and partly on a piece of good fortune. It is his merit to have made himself the prophet of a simple and central truth, which has been the burden of the greatest philosophy of all ages. This is the truth of the primary and solid reality of the substantive spiritual life by which man rises into membership of an eternal world. And it was a piece of historical good fortune that, striking in at a moment of anti-speculative reaction in his own country, he was enabled to be one of a few in preaching this truth, and yet to preach it as a modern to modernus, liberated by the critical temper of the day from a great deal of lumber (as, for instance, the philosophy of nature), which makes much in the classical German philosophy obsolete and unreadable" (Quarterly Review, April 1914, p. 376).