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Jones, W. Tudor  
Rudolf Eucken's  
philosophy of  
religion



RUDOLF EUCKEN'S  
PHILOSOPHY  
OF  
RELIGION

BY  
W. TUDOR JONES, PH.D., F.R.G.S.

Wellington, N.Z. :  
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## NOTE.

The following articles appeared in "The Inquirer" for January 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th, 1906. The numbers are now out of print, and several requests have reached me for their re-publication. I hope that they will serve as a slight introduction to the philosophy of my revered friend and teacher—Prof. Rudolf Eucken. As I am engaged on a more minute account of his Philosophy of Religion, I allow the following pages to appear just as they appeared in "The Inquirer."

W. TUDOR JONES.

Wellington, N.Z.,  
September 8th, 1908.

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27 APR 1988

**RUDOLF EUCKEN'S**  
**Philosophy of Religion.**

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I

**Introductory and General Aspects of  
the System.**

In a series of four articles an attempt will be made to present before the general reader some of the most important aspects of the religious-philosophical teaching of Professor Rudolf Eucken, of the University of Jena, in Germany. The subject is so vast that nothing more than an outline of it can be attempted, but it is of such importance as soon to demand attention in England. Eucken's *Philosophy of Religion* is but little known in England at the present day, if we are to measure its extent by references to it in English books on philosophy and religion, although during the past ten years attention has been called to it in several prominent journals. In 1896 there appeared in "Mind" an important review of one of Eucken's great books, "Der Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt," and in later issues of that quarterly, as well as in "The International Journal of Ethics,"

attention has been called to later important books of Eucken :—“*Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion*,” “*Gesammelte Aufsätze*,” “*Geistige Strömungen der Gegenwart*.” Several writers in “*Baldwin’s Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*” have emphasised the importance of the idealistic aspects of the writings. An introduction to Eucken’s philosophy may be found in Dr. Smith’s “*Truth and Reality*” (T. & T. Clark) although in some senses the writer seems unable to apprehend the deeper meaning of the purely religious significance of the great author. The first edition of “*Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart*” was translated and published in America a few years ago : “*Das Wesen der Religion*” was translated and published by myself in 1904, in a monthly magazine, in connection with my church at Swansea, and is now out of print ; a new edition of the “*Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker*” will in the course of 1908 appear in English, translated by Professor W. S. Hough, and will contain in addition a chapter on “*English Philosophy of Religion*,” with which Eucken is so well acquainted. In addition to the above it may be mentioned that during the winter of 1906 Professor W. R. Boyce-Gibson delivered a course of lectures in the University of London on Eucken’s Philosophy, which have now appeared under the title of “*Rudolf Eucken’s Philosophy of Life*.”

As far as Germany is concerned it may be stated that outside the theological faculties of the Universities Eucken stands as the leading religious idealist. Pfeleiderer calls him the “*Emerson of Germany*,” and the name has deep meaning. What

Emerson was to America and England in days when philosophy was barren in so far as it gave no help to the ethical and religious life, so is Eucken amidst the German philosophers of the day. There is an important sense in which Eucken must be seen, and heard, and known, before he can be understood. And once he is known he remains for ever a permanent possession of one's life. Generations of students are taught with him to face the problems of life and existence, in ways quite different from those of any other modern philosopher. Coming under the influence of Eucken means bringing philosophy into the realm of religion, and attempting to solve the deepest problems by the union of thinking and living the problems. This he tells us is the only true philosophy and the only true religion.

Rudolf Eucken was born on January 5th, 1846, in Aurich, East Friesland. He was educated at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin. He is Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Göttingen, where he studied under the great Lotze. He is also Doctor of Theology of the University of Giessen, and is, since 1874, Professor of Philosophy in Jena.

What are some of the characteristics of this philosophy of religion, which is having such a great influence in Germany at the present day, and which does more than anything else in reconciling knowledge and religion? That the influence of Eucken's system on religion is great in Germany to-day, and is destined to become the main current

of the future, is the conviction of men so able to judge as Wendt, Troeltsch, Falkenberg, Siebert and others.

Eucken's system starts from the standpoint of the individual life. Here there are no "Kantian Categories," which precede experience, and which are necessary in order to have experience at all; here there is something quite other than the "Thought Process" of Hegel. Both of these belong to the reason, and have no direct relationship with life as a whole. Eucken at the very start emphasises the fact that life in its entirety must be considered before any satisfactory philosophy becomes possible. He cuts himself away from all philosophies which are simply satisfied with physiological and psychological relations or metaphysical speculations, or of supernatural revelation. Philosophical systems have often attempted to discover reality in the union of subject and object, in spite of their dualism, or in the union of mind and body in spite of their dualism. Eucken has an antithesis quite other than these, or of any others which are found in the history of philosophy. His antithesis lies within the soul itself. It is here that the beginning of philosophy, religion, reality, God is to be found. He would start as Descartes started by an introspection into the soul and its meaning, for it is there that the key which opens the door to the deepest meaning of religion and life is to be obtained. And when this introspection into the nature of our soul or our life is made, what do we discover? We discover a double aspect in the life itself—NATURE and SPIRIT.

On the one hand, life is a piece of the mechanism of the universe ; much in it is natural, is connected with the physical universe, and with man's physical needs. There is no effort needed to keep oneself on the level of these things, for one's pleasure consists generally in satisfying them. But on the other hand, there is another element in the soul or life besides this natural one.

The first is a subjective kind of life which demands no effort and no sacrifice ; the second kind of life establishes connections with things outside itself. One kind of life is recognised as belonging to a higher realm of being than the other. Man must recognise this distinction, and with the recognition of the distinction begins a never-ending striving in the life.

It is a striving against Naturalism, against a bare Intellectualism, and a striving for the spiritual life, religion, and God. Eucken emphasises the truth that it is a striving against Naturalism, against conceiving as real that alone which is an object of sense. Even here it has to be emphasised that the mind that knows is greater than the material things which are known. Mind, even as the knowing part alone of the soul, has a superiority over every physical thing, and a recognition of this makes Naturalism impossible. This superiority of the knowing mind lands us in a kind of Idealism which is a great gain for us, but it is only an Idealism of Knowing, and this, as Eucken perpetually points out, covers only a fragment of life and not the deepest fragment. Knowing has

a superiority over the physical things that are known, but the main issues of life and religion remain untouched on this level. What may be known of the universe and of human life plays only a secondary part in religion. Aspects—the most important aspects—of man's nature will remain untouched for ever unless something deeper than knowing takes hold of it. So that Eucken insists on our recognising the truth that there is a deeper dualism than that between the mind that knows and the things that are known to it. It is in the failure to recognise this clearly that the weakness of Kant's philosophy from its religious point of view becomes evident. It is true that Kant emphasised the fundamental distinction between the "is" and the "ought," but even the "ought" was still something subjective for him, and God was something other than the "ought." Eucken, on the other hand, states that we carry a spiritual life within ourselves. He does not hold this in the sense of the *Monadology* of Leibnitz, but finds a cleft in the very soul itself, and it is in the recognition of this cleft that Religion becomes a necessity, and God becomes the one Reality. The distinction in the two kinds of lives cannot be held without a struggle issuing. The man finds himself on the one side surrounded by the natural life with its ordinary, every-day existence, its impulses, and its passions, and on the other side he becomes conscious of a life also within himself, as yet caught in the entanglements of the natural life, and his whole existence depends upon his freeing this life from its natural environment. It is in an insight into this all-important truth that a truly

noble and religious life can be found. This insight is not a fact of knowledge, but a kind of energy made up of knowledge and experience, as well as the efforts which take place in linking the life with things which are beyond itself. The higher life holds before itself its own special kingdom—Ideals of Perfection, Goodness, Love, &c. This higher life asserts its superiority over the natural ordinary life, over the mere understanding and even over reason, whilst it feels its dependence on ideals which it has of a state of existence above itself. It recognises its own accomplishments as fragmentary, and recognises the completeness of life as in the Ideal. It is this Ideal which man recognises but does not possess completely that constitutes the one reality for the self. This Ideal is external to itself, and constitutes the very core of things as they ought to be. It is by communion with the Ideal that man is able to give the Ideal the reality of God. It is the presence of this which is above ourselves, and which demands our deepest nature in all its strength to realise that constitutes Religion. Man gains his freedom in this manner. The great alternative "Either—Or" now presents itself at every step in the life, and it is in the right decision that a creation is going on and a new piece of reality sticks in the depth of the soul.

Here it is clear that the evidence of religion has nothing to do with the senses. The sole evidence of God and religion lies in the fact that man is creating new qualities within his own soul, that a new world has opened up to him, a world of independent inwardness, a world founded on un-

seen relations, lifting him out of his own small natural self, out of his logical self, into a region where Ideals and Values rule and make up the one great reality—God. All else is insufficient for the life. The claims of Naturalism are claims which do not touch the life in its upward march. Naturalism emphasises the world that is known ; it seeks to combine the various factors which have entered into the making of the physical universe and of human life, but in so far as human life is concerned Naturalism ignores entirely the validity of those factors when they are united, and when they come into contact with the mind that knows them and the spirit that experiences them. Naturalism would make us believe of creation as something which is already completed, but as Eucken points out, creation continues as long as man gets out of his own small self and unites the spiritual part of his nature with qualities which are absolute and eternal.

Naturalism further emphasises the evidences of the senses quite as much as the church in the Middle Ages emphasised them, but it forgets the fact that the conceptions of natural science are creations of the human mind, and that we have no warrant in asserting that these qualities are in the things themselves.

When we pass from Naturalism to Intellectualism the same failure to satisfy life is found. Knowledge and culture have their place ; the more man knows and is conscious that he does know it the better. In this manner the meaning

of the physical universe becomes clearer, and the facts of the mental life reveal themselves to us. But this level can be reached without ethical and religious struggle. And unless there is a struggle of this very nature to get out of the lower into an ever-higher, the life revolves in the circle of its own smallness and self-sufficiency. Everything becomes purely subjective in its origin and its validity. Eucken calls this state of mind and spirit the "small self," and throughout his great books shows that man is unable on this road to penetrate into the depth of his own nature, and unable to become the possessor of the "cosmic life" or "spiritual life." Without this kind of life he is unable to experience what deep sorrow means, and what the opening of a new world, in which infinite perfection and holiness personified as God is enclosed. Religion, according to Eucken, is not a normal development and refinement of the mind of man. No, a time must come when the two kinds of lives within the soul are seen to constitute two different kinds of Reality—a higher and a lower. In fact, the point is a break in the ordinary development of life; the ordinary development cannot produce anything higher than itself; it is incapable of touching the life at the deepest and lifting it to a region of an Ideal which is Perfect, Infinite, and Eternal. But the experience of a personal religion which does this and which deepens the cleft in the two kinds of lives brings along with its sorrows and convulsions and birth pangs the opening of a new world, a world of independent inwardness, which now stands over against the ordinary every-day life.

and every-day world as the one great Reality ; and the man who has had such experiences is never more the same kind of being. The struggle will continue, and often the higher finds itself entangled in the meshes of the lower, but an insight into the meaning of reality has been obtained, and the man " falls to rise, is baffled to fight better, sleeps to wake."

It is evident that in all this something besides Thought has played a part. It is in reality, as Eucken points out, neither logical nor psychological nor even in the main metaphysical, but NOOLOGICAL ; it is a kind of energy which is a piece of the highest life of the Cosmos, and is something which is not caught in the meshes of space and time. It is above both ; it is eternal. It is, as we shall see, none other than the Divine entering into Time and rendering it timeless.

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## The Spiritual Life and its Content.

In the first article it was pointed out that one of the chief foundations of Eucken's system of Religious Philosophy consisted in the fact that a cleavage is to be found in the very nature of the soul itself. On the one hand, we found the qualities to be those which pertain to the natural subjective life of man. They constitute a piece of reality in so far as they are necessary for the continuance of life. For example, eating and drinking and caring for our own interests are necessary not only for ourselves, but in a sense for the welfare of others. But such a natural life makes no demands upon the whole of our nature; many of the powers which man possesses lie quite dormant in the very act of accomplishing these natural things. The higher animals perform many of these functions, and perform them often with a kind of instinct which puts man to shame. Man is put to shame in this respect for two reasons at least: first, he is capable of knowing that such actions do not constitute the highest reality, and secondly, he is aware that higher qualities are dragged down to the level of the sensuous, and so produce the diabolical aspects with which many human acts are saturated. In connection with such actions, the mistake is made of taking our own pleasure and the satisfaction of various sub-

jective states as the criteria of reality. Instead of lifting up the lower to the level of the higher, to the level of the demands of the higher life, the higher as already stated is dragged down until it becomes entangled in the net of the lower. The maxim of Kant has been forgotten in such a mode of action, viz., that we should always act as if we desired our action to become a universal rule. The standard, then, is not our own subjective states of mind or feeling, it is not a kind of equilibrium which the self has reached within the narrow limits of its own interests. The standard now must be something which is objective to us in so far that we have not realised the whole of it; it is now something which has fallen into a higher scheme of things, a higher order of being, than any subjective desires or sensuous impressions.

Here Eucken starts out in several of his great works to explain the meaning of this higher reality, which he names the Spiritual life on the one hand, and God on the other hand. What is this Spiritual Life according to Eucken? At a later stage we shall see what he means by God. The Spiritual life has no ready-made content, but it has the potency for a content. It is the higher nature of the soul—the side which has to take outside burdens upon itself and outside ideals as well. In order that the potency may be possessed by the life more and more, it must become convinced of the fact that the only way reality can be reached is by taking things outside itself into consideration and weaving these into the web of the existence of the higher life. It is,

in fact, a process which may be termed a macrocosm and a microcosm. It is a macrocosm in the sense that the life is related to the cosmic life around it; it is a microcosm in the sense that it includes the potentiality of the cosmic life within itself. If life is to grow, if it is to change its first impressions of things, it has to struggle to get out of its lower level to an ever higher one. It has to leave behind itself the level of sensuous impressions as well as the level of its own subjectivity. If either the inward or the outward aspect of life is ignored, the life will suffer and it cannot rise. But the higher self must hold itself as capable of finding its reality in the two—the outward and the inward—and in the overcoming of the two in a higher unity. If the object alone gains superiority, the life sinks into a barren realism or naturalism which simply rests satisfied with the factors which have operated in the history and behaviour of things; and if, on the other hand, the subject is lifted out of its relations with the object, the higher self has broken its connection with the source of its life and with the possibility of receiving fresh content. In fact, in this latter way the self attempts to live on its own capital without increasing it, and the whole of its content is bound sooner or later to come to an end, and so the staleness and emptiness of life set in. There is, then, an all-important sense in which the wholeness of the higher life and the wholeness of things have to be taken into account. By this wholeness is meant that the reality now consists of that quality which has fused by the union of subject

and object. This reality is quite other than each of the two placed separately by itself. This fusion takes place on various levels. Most philosophers would admit that it is true on the intellectual level, on the level of knowing anything at all. Eucken carries this further, and states that it constitutes not only knowledge, but a higher thing—religion. As already pointed out, the whole of man's nature is not in the mere act of knowing. But on this level of religion all the demands which thought has made, yea, and the demands which are made when the element of thought has passed into the needs and aspirations of the higher life, when moral needs present themselves—all these demands are to be possessed by man. It is evident that these demands and aspirations of man's nature, when viewed in man's highest and noblest moments, are something quite different from what occurs on the natural or intellectual level of existence, or on either the objective or the subjective side of things when either of these sides is held separately. This combining quality of the two sides of existence is called by Eucken "Inbegriff"—i.e., it is the totality or aggregate of all things. It is a new reality; viewed externally it is the Cosmic Life; viewed internally, it is the Spiritual Life. It is not a perception, although perception has contributed its share to its existence in us; it is not a thought or a thought process, although these also have entered as factors into its constitution. It is both together, with the aspirations and the demands of the higher united, which constitutes this new reality. On one side this new reality is a thought aspect; on the other side

it is a pragmatic aspect. And Eucken insists that they cannot be separated without the greatest injury to life and religion. He unites both in his system. The reality is not speculative ideas about the Absolute, for in all these ideas the Absolute remains something quite other than ourselves in its nature; and it is not the practical aspect of life working in the direction of its desires, and considering these alone as real and true. It cannot be the first, for that would rob the self of its own potency for reality; it cannot be the second, for that would rob the self of its absolute standard. It is true that Eucken's "Inbegriff" has not a ready-made reality, but it has the germ of it—i.e., in it is something of the very nature of the absolute standard itself. Although it has to hold fast to the truth that the absolute standard is other than itself, yet it has to hold quite as fast that there is enclosed within itself the power to be at one more and more with this absolute Perfection.

That such conceptions have much to do with objects of sense or with the history of things does not alter one iota the matter, in the sense of lowering the values of such conceptions. They cannot be explained by evolution except in so far as their history is explained. Evolution is an account of the process of the passing and transformation of things from stage to stage, from the lowest elements up to man, and as Eucken says from the natural man to the spiritual man, or, if we like Nietzsche's term better, to the *Übermensch*, to the *Overman*. But Nietzsche's *Overman* is not that of Eucken. With the former the *Overman* has carried many

of the coarser and most brutal elements of the lower self into the higher regions of activity without altering the nature of these elements. With the latter the spiritual man is he who has struggled, and evermore will struggle, and has undergone, and will evermore undergo, pain and sorrow and tears, for so alone can he be lifted out of his own small self, can be purified of all that is merely personal and subjective, can be raised from the bondage of sense-impressions, and the rule of a secular culture which becomes empty and vain when it is raised to the throne of life, and can become the partaker of the cosmic life.

Eucken insists that the timidity of so many philosophers to pass from the purely subjective mental life which is entangled in so many sense-impressions should be fought against with the greatest courage. In England and Germany today, philosophy is made to rest either on a pure physiological and psychological analysis, or on a construction which seems utterly unaware of more than half the needs and aspirations of human life. In so many of these philosophies the problems of life are barely touched from the point of view of the religious consciousness. And with all due respect to men of eminence like Professor Wm. James, even a small man is able to see that he is outside his province when he deals with the deepest questions of religion. He admits himself that he has never experienced many of these phases of the religious consciousness, and that he writes as an outsider. Our philosophers will have to live through these experiences if they are ever

to give us anything of permanent value. Philosophy must pass from the realm of mind to the realm of life as a whole, and trust that the passing from the understanding and even from reason to the life of the spirit constitutes the road on which the highest reality may be found—that which opens out the infinite possibilities of life.

It makes a world of difference whether man is ready to take this step or no, whether he is willing to hold as the one reality that which is the whole of life in union with the highest aspirations of the spirit. Such a reality is a fact of the spirit, and so its foundation remains unshaken. Such a foundation exists in the very nature of things and in the very life of the spirit of man. It is in this transition that life gains its greatness and its goodness; it is thus that fresh problems force themselves upon the spirit of man and exercise such an enormous pressure upon it. These are problems other than those of the bare intellect. The intellect has done its share to make them known to us, but when they sink to the depth of the spirit they become problems of morality and religion and of the one thing needful—the ever upward march of man. For now it becomes clear to the man who has viewed life in a manner such as this, that it is in some solution of these problems that life in the only real degree becomes possible. He has now the spiritual insight to see that the permanent possession by the soul of these demands, which come in the forms of ideals, constitutes the very core and pith of life itself. Such a state, with all who have experienced it as

Eucken so grandly paints it, is none other than an entrance into a new world, and the establishing of a connection with a higher order of existence than before. This is the true existence. As previously pointed out, this New World is, even when it is entered, no ready-made one. It has to be possessed after it has been discovered. But here we wish to emphasise the discovery of it, and leave the possession to a later article. In the discovery of this new world life is conceived as not belonging to the natural existence and everyday experience, to the impressions which are made upon us without any reaction, but in a new greatness and goodness which stand over against these, and which make such a difference between the natural man and the spiritual man. It is, therefore, out of this fact of the spirit that a fundamental distinction must be made—and it is a matter of life or death to make it—between these two kinds of lives. And holding the difference between the two kinds before ourselves, there is the affirmation of the fact that the spiritual life belongs to a higher order of things than the natural one. This is one of the most distinctive notes in Eucken's teachings. "If," he says, "the spiritual world which this idealism brings forth, with its enclosing of a deeper truth, and of a more original nature of things, is not a higher grade of reality than the natural existence which it shows as belonging to a lower order, then the whole fails and all courage is lost. This idealism issues the proclamation of the whole, and of the ground of existence in one encircling fact. It means something quite other than the beautiful colouring of

the "Given"; it means the opening and the development of a higher and more definite reality enclosed within itself. It means a new world as the kernel of all. In the fact of the great creations of idealism—as, e.g., in Plato, in the beginnings of Christianity, in Luther, in Kant—existence is not made lighter, but more difficult; all these have recognised the pressure of mighty problems upon our existence. To lighten existence and to embellish it belongs to a pseudo-idealism. Against this, as did the men of yore, have we to-day to fight; if we are to be idealists in the true sense of the word, we have to work before all other things for the substance of life, for a spiritualisation of existence out of the whole and out of the depth, and we may at no moment forget that we can work and conquer only under the delineation of the truth, of the strong inexorable truth."

These words are needed to-day. When the "roots" of the tree of life are offered as a sufficient nourishment for the human soul, and the "fruit" is ignored and even treated as non-existent, it is necessary to call attention to the half-heartedness and nervousness with which philosophy and even religion prepare the table of life for us. The true idealism, as Eucken insists, must be concrete, that is, it must not mean that an ideal world is prepared for us, and that we can enter into it with half our nature asleep. The necessity of this true idealism which takes into account the whole of our nature must be recognised and welcomed, and this necessity points out the need of the recognition of the smallness and

pettiness and selfishness of the natural life, and a struggle of the whole life must issue in order to possess the things of eternal value, and such a struggle and such a possession are to be ours throughout life. In this manner problems ethical and religious open in front of us, new and ever greater demands are made upon the whole of life, and it is in the realisation of these in however humble and toilsome a way that the meaning and significance of the new world becomes clear to us; it is thus alone that a permanent piece of reality sticks for ever in the life. How this reality works we shall see in our third article.

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## III

**Religion and its Relations.**

It may be stated that all of Eucken's books have been the clearing of the ground for his last great work, "Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion" (first edition 1901, second edition 1905). Probably the best way to understand his system of philosophy is to take the books in the order of their appearance, for in this manner an insight may be obtained into the gradual development of the system in the author's own mind, thus making his personality clearer to us than by reading his works at random. In the above-mentioned work the author reaches a higher religious level than in any of the previous works. In fact, the work may be named a Theology as well as a Philosophy of Religion.

Religion with Eucken means the gaining of a new self—a self which is never to cease to grow. This self is to be possessed by man through the freeing of the life from the "small I," and it must always be looked upon as something quite other than a particular subjective self. The spiritual self belongs to the very nature of things; it is the culmination of the process of the world-life. This quality of the spiritual self is universal, i.e., its substance is in the Cosmos. It depends, therefore, upon the wholeness of things, and recognises its dependence, for it is in the recognition of this de-

pendence that it finds a guarantee for the meaning of the world. That aspect of the self is necessary in order to escape from the perpetual flux of appearances. But this relationship of the self has to become ever clearer, and this it can become only in the degree that it struggles against appearances and links itself to meanings and ideals. By taking the wholeness of things into account, the cleft between thought and existence is overcome. What its potencies may mean can not become clear to this spiritual self by the outward aspect of any knowledge or speculation, but by coming into contact with the life of society around itself. It is in society that the self has to realise itself. It is in society that the self receives its problems, and it is through the taking up of these problems, through transforming them and approximately solving them that it gains its content, for thus alone can the deepest meaning of things be experienced by the spirit of man. Thus life gains an ever-new content; it passes from negations to affirmations because it has been driven to such a position by its own demands. It is evident that in all this there is something quite different in nature from the natural process, for the power which drives forth the idea is quite other than, quite contrary to, the ordinary natural process. When the spiritual life becomes conscious of its relationship with the world-life it takes upon itself the burdens that are presented to it, and sees the meaning of its own development in front. Life becomes now a ground to be travelled, a problem to be solved, a rest not to be gained until after the exertion of the whole spirit. The more this is done the more does it

seem opposed to the empirical existence which is within and without the spirit. The possession is conceived to be that of a new world—possessed, yea, evermore to be explored. So it is a new world and an over-world at the same time. In this world, discovered by the spiritual self through many struggles, dwells all that is perfect, and it is in this that the spiritual life finds its sufficient cause as well as its sufficient end. Eucken insists that unless this over-world exists the spiritual life, in so far as its wholeness and strength are concerned, falls into pieces and becomes a mere illusion. Whoever wishes to hold to the reality of the spiritual life in the midst of the storms that blow upon it must become convinced of the fact that in that life an independent reality is enclosed, which is a quality of the over-world and which creates the over-man. When this is admitted and acted upon, although there will be as yet much that is dark, there is enough light to cast a hope in the very depth of the human spirit that the struggle is a dire necessity, because it signifies not only a struggle from a lower point to a higher one, but FROM ONE WORLD TO ANOTHER.

Here religion differs from philosophy. As Eucken himself states: "Religion holds up visibly to us a large world-wide fact—the opening of love and grace, the living presence of the Kingdom of God; whilst philosophy begins with the general outlines of reality and can penetrate only gradually to the point where the facts of religion become a necessity for its own endeavours." To religion belongs the reality of this new world—a

world superior to that of direct and immediate existence. To our author there is no real religion possible without recognising and experiencing this. "A denial of this is for religion a refuge of 'halfness' and obscurity, and is a wretched contradiction in itself." But the belief in the mere existence of some higher Being is far from giving us a religion. "The Epicureans admitted willingly the existence of divine beings, and yet at the same time denied all religion because they denied to these beings any relations with humanity. To religion belongs not only the EXISTENCE of a higher world, but also the opening up for us of its living presence for salvation from our sins and needs, and for the obtaining of a new being." The only real God is he who works in our own immediate circle. He is not an object to be gazed at, but a power to be used for the transformation of life. A recognition of his transcendence without his immanence is of very little value for man.

Here arises the all important problem of religion—the proof of the living presence of a higher world in our own circle. We are familiar enough with the old method of attempting to prove the existence of God from the starting-point of the physical universe. This method has not quite died out even in our own day. If religion is to obtain a foundation which is unshakable, this method of proof will have to be given up. It is astonishing how prevalent such a method is in our midst. Eucken emphasises this need of change, for no method which attempts to prove the

existence of God by the reason, order, and adaptation to ends found in the physical universe, or by an analogy of the workings of the human body or mind, can stand the light of science. All such proofs are artificial, a refined form of realism, and consist simply in projecting by analogy to the universe our own mental conceptions. Such proofs are also fleeting in their nature, because mental conceptions concerning the physical universe vary from generation to generation. They also belong to the lower side of the truth of things, and so leave out of account the higher truths which exist and are effective in the human spirit, and which have no counterpart in the physical world and its behaviour. The counterpart of the higher truths is not in what is physical, is not in what is below themselves, but in that which is above themselves—in the ideal. It must then be admitted freely that science from its objective aspect offers no clue to the existence or efficacy of the divine, and that it has become amongst the leaders of thought a superstition to attempt to build religion on the unfilled clefts of natural science. The history of evolution shows us clearly that the clefts are being gradually filled—with the result—the sad result—that a religion founded on such traditional proofs has to shift perpetually its ground to the next unoccupying point, and that point in its turn it will have to flee from. Science itself is not concerned with the province of religion ; far less is an archaic or pseudo science concerned with it. We are not warranted in holding that such and such things are produced by nature out of itself, and other things produced by some superior power. If we

hold to such theories we can find no more than an external God, who is little better than no God, and we have to create artificial breaks in the behaviour of the physical universe in order to possess such a weak religion at all.

Eucken states that we have to take our stand on the fact that the world of natural science does not signify the whole and final reality. This work of science is the work of mental activity, and is real in that sense as far as it goes, but it does not go and does not profess to go far enough. It goes some way on the road to reality ; this science has been built up through the strength of the mind of man. In our investigation after reality we are therefore to proceed not from the world to man, but from man to the world. The centre of gravity must be shifted from the object to the subject ; it has in science to be shifted from the objects of sense to the mind and strength which give MEANING to these. Here is seen the overpowering influence of Kant—of emphasizing the inward aspect of things in all the dealings of the human mind with physical objects.

So the conclusion is established beyond the possibility of a doubt that in science itself there is a More than sensuous nature. This More is something over against nature, i.e., it is the existence and reality of an inward life. This inward life is a universal thing, at least in so far as it is the possession of all who know the meaning of sensuous things. Upon this ground, out of the power of this mental activity which knows, which is

aware of things, have arisen science and art, right and morality, state and humanity, love and life and work. Even on this ground of dealing with sensuous objects and human relations there has grown a new idea of personality and a new spiritual centre of existence. Even on this mental level there is the breaking forth of a new world over against the mere subjective desires of the individual. That this is true may be seen from the characteristic taking up of the struggle against what Eucken calls the "small human," for the emancipation of mental and spiritual work from the private interests and opinions of the bare individual. That scientists themselves have ignored these great results of their work and have emphasised only the external sensuous side is to be deplored. But the work and the results are there, and constitute a proof that the spirit of man on any level of work shows the presence of a life and an activity which are quite other than the bare objects of sense. This life and activity are not a mere More of nature, but the beginning of a new order of things, the breaking forth of a new kind of reality in so far that it shows that the mental life is not a something dependent or lying by the side of the mere natural process either of the individual or of nature. Although the complete reality is not enclosed on this level, yet it has become the standard of all the work of culture, and, however much it is forgotten, it is only out of this standard that the work of natural science can originate and continue. We must therefore, according to Eucken, come to the conclusion that the world is more than nature, and that man is not the mere product of nature,

but the possessor of a life which gives meaning to nature.

When we turn from nature to history a similar conclusion must be arrived at. In connection with the work of history in the development of religion much will have to be altered. The Christian conception of history will have to be changed. That conception shows the relationship of God and man as having happened but once in the history of the world, and this conception is supposed to be a break in history itself, to be something lifted out of all human relations and activities. The force in connection with the movement of things is conceived in this manner, in the main as something which was not in human nature and its capacities, or in the transformation of existing things, but in the SUPERNATURAL power, wisdom and goodness of God. All that happened was supposed to be linked in an entirely new manner to the will of a personal God, and man was bound in a decree out of which he himself was powerless to escape ; e.g., in the Christian conception we get an account of the Creation and the Fall, of salvation and the day of judgment, and the world-history becomes a great connecting drama, which, through innumerable catastrophes and failures brings about at a single stroke the final conquest of the good. In this manner our position to the whole of things has been determined, and nothing new can be brought about. This view, as Eucken points out, cannot be held to-day, and the sooner we see that the better for us. The main conception to-day is that of the Becoming of things,

and the Christian era shows but a fragment of this becoming. In Christianity itself there is much which belonged to its particular age, and which cannot be transplanted to the soil of another age. The dogmas which are entwined around the Christian religion belong to days of long ago, to modes of thought and expression which are largely non-Christian, and which have ceased to have meaning and power in our day. Such notions have led many people throughout the ages to conclude that man is hemmed within a chain of causation and is incapable of liberating himself. But is this true? Eucken states that it cannot be true. When history is read and its deeper current becomes visible, there appears a power which is superior to the natural casuality of things, and this power has come about through human activity. It is a power which has worked against the fleetingness and shallowness of appearances. Such a fact as the expression and manifestation of such a power could not happen without the work of the human spirit, which is greater than the ordinary human formation of things. The things of history are taken up by the spirit of man, and are carried forward and upward to higher issues by the activity of that spirit, so that religion is not a fleeing from the present into the past, but the creation of an ever-wider present—a present of the spiritual life over against the present of tradition or the thought of the present of the bare moment; and this spiritual life brings into existence a kingdom of the spirit in the midst of time. Thus there arises within history—within the ordinary current of events—an over-historical reality, and through

all the struggles and transformations of time there opens out to man an eternal truth, and through this all our relationships with history are changed. The current of the becoming of things is now viewed as not running unbroken, but with the entrance of the spiritual life, which life is universal and not merely personal and subjective, a new order of things perpetually takes place. A dualism has here again taken place between the bare historical process and the spiritual life, for thus alone the life gains its universality and its ethical character. Great ends open up in front of man; great problems and possibilities surround him on all hands; the conviction is borne upon him that the spiritual life is founded in an eternal truth, for this conviction gives the reason of his existence and the goal of his destiny. Thus it is by the activity of the spiritual life that the stream of history can be made to run in ever-deeper channels. In order to do this it is neither the carrying of traditional intellectual elements of the past nor even the clearness of mental conceptions alone that will help us, but energetic self-deepening of our own inmost nature and activity. This is the essence of Christianity as held by Eucken, and as we shall see in the last article on Eucken and his relation to Christianity, he conceives of Christianity as the absolute and final religion.

If we look at Eucken's system in its relation to psychology, the same truth of the superiority of the spiritual life over the mental process of that life is seen. The account which psychology gives of us is too small; it cannot lift man out of his

own small self. Our self has a world-character, or else it could not bind together the impressions which it receives into a totality and give them meaning. When we pass from psychology to the recognition of the world-life of the self, there appears the possibility and the necessity of a turning to religion; there appears the possibility and the certainty of a new order of things. In this way, as Eucken states, "Religion alone assures the spiritual life of its indispensable independence and superiority over against the nearest existence. and only with the help of religion is genuine spirituality able to close itself firmly together and take up an energetic struggle against 'halfness' and all the sham which cling to the average life of humanity." How this culmination of the spiritual life is to be reached we hope to show in the final article.

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## IV

**Religion and Christianity.**

It was pointed out in the third article how, in the various operations of the human mind in its dealings with the world, the superiority of the spiritual life to the things that are known manifested itself. Its superiority was also shown over the ordinary natural life. Problems without end have now presented themselves to the spirit of man. The spiritual life gains its independence by a recognition of this superiority, and it is now held as in its very nature a portion of the highest reality. Man must conceive that it is the highest and most fruitful of all truths or the most deadly of all errors; it is either the work of the divine or a child of deceit and darkness. Such an alternative must present itself to man, and when it does present itself he is on the ground of religion.

Eucken divides religion into two grades—universal religion and characteristic religion. Universal religion deals with the question concerning the reality of the spiritual life—whether an independent spirituality touches directly the life, and whether there is in this a proof of an over-world, whether there is a breaking through the ordinary existence. The investigation, although it is largely the work of reason, does not simply take certain aspects of the life into consideration—aspects of thought or feeling or action—but it holds before itself the whole of the

life as well as its connection with existence as a whole. Religion must mean something more than an investigation into the various manifestations of consciousness when these are taken singly. It is on account of the necessity of this wholeness that Eucken calls it universal religion. The starting-point of this grade of religion is not empirical or psychological proceeding from a fragment of the bare individual but noological proceeding from a real spiritual world. The existence of such a world is made clear not by any kind of presupposition or analogy, for the reality is not a matter of any bare speculative idea apart from the activity of life itself in its various manifestations; but reality is the realisation of life and its aspirations together with the conceptions which are formed through the result of such activity. The old conception of religion as being something of the intellect on its logical and speculative sides has to be given up, for in this way a fraction of the self only is present, and that fraction not the most important one. Our truths concerning reality are truths which are formed on the results of the activity of the whole of the man's higher nature. Here comes clearly before us the value of Eucken's chief conceptions on the Philosophy of Religion, especially as regards Personality, Activism, &c.

The spiritual life conceives itself, at one and the same time, ABOVE the world and IN the world, and so passes to the idea of God. How is this idea to be obtained on the ground of universal religion? The reality of the spiritual life must be recognised, it must be held as constituting the very essence of being, for in this way alone is it able to exercise its

superiority over against ordinary experience. It is, therefore, the necessity of such a superiority as well as the need of finding a permanent ground for itself that carries the self to the conception of the Absolute. Thus is given to the spiritual self a character of unity, world-superiority, and power. In the province of universal religion the conception of God has this meaning: the idea of an absolute spiritual life, a life which is at the same time above the world and in the world. And, as the chief point in connection with such a conception is the inward presence of the whole, all anthropomorphic ideas as well as all particular ideas must be banished. In all this Eucken's position is far removed from Pantheism. Pantheism ignores the opposition between the world and the over-world, and its weakness consists further in that it has no place for freedom and the ethical handling of things, and in that it gives to the spiritual life a natural character only. Eucken is also removed from a dualism in this place—i.e., there is no cleft, in so far as their natures are concerned, between the spiritual life on the one hand and the Absolute on the other hand. Although the spiritual life is other than the natural world, it has to do its work in that world. He points out that all religious conceptions must work chiefly in three directions. They must be of a pure spiritual inward kind; they must work especially not upon the fact of the development but of the substance of the spiritual life; and, lastly, they must not be limited to a particular province of life but must encompass the whole of existence. The spiritual life, working in these directions, gains new convictions, and these add to the perpetual content of the life. This movement of life, this striving

towards the Infinite, this deepest longing towards freedom, this aspiration towards the Eternal, is a movement from unity towards inwardness, towards morality, and towards greatness. The life must ever move in these directions or else it will sink back into its previous natural level. By moving forward, by perpetual striving, it gains the certainty and the nature of its new world. There is no middle way between the two great alternatives, for without religion there is to the life no absolute truthfulness and greatness.

Eucken passes from the level of universal religion to that of characteristic religion. This characteristic religion means the province where dealings take place between man and God in a form of IMMEDIATENESS without the intervention of the world. The chief difference between universal and characteristic religion consists in the fact that in the latter the conception of God comes more prominently forward than in the former. In universal religion REASON played a most prominent part in making clear the "grounds" of existence and the content of the spiritual life; in characteristic religion LOVE comes to the foreground, and reason moves for the time being to the background. The necessities and demands of love carry the life over the colourless conceptions of the Godhead to a living and personal God who is present in the soul of man, and with whom intercourse can take place as "between an I and a Thou." This religious communion is needed by the soul and is its truest nourishment when it is obtained, for in this manner the new reality which comes clear to the soul is able to hold itself fast against all the dangers and enmi-

ties of an alien world which surround it. Man and God meet at the deepest point in the soul, and a strength is obtained to take up all the struggles of life with a divine courage and to overcome all obstacles that stand in the way of growth. This, as Eucken points out, is the religion of the spirit. But the reason aspect must not be ignored. There are grave dangers if it is placed on one side—dangers which narrow the conceptions of life and which have the tendency of humanising and particularising the idea of God in a purely subjective sense, thus leaving provinces of truth outside our consideration and therefore outside our experience.

How this characteristic religion transforms things and rises to ever-higher levels is depicted by Eucken in a beautiful manner in his great book, "Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion." He starts with emphasising the truth that a fundamental distinction must be made between the permanent and the transient in Christianity. Christianity is a religion of salvation in a sense deeper than any other historical religion. In it there are great negations and great affirmations. In its negations it allies itself with Buddhism, but in its affirmations there is a distinct difference of nature between these two religions. Buddhism brings forth its great negations, but its affirmations are weak; it has given up the heroism of overcoming the world in an open battle, and so it fails to give its true place to the potency of the spiritual self. Eucken places himself on the side of Christianity, and states that it is at one with what he designates as characteristic religion. Christianity, in this way, is not one religion by the side of another, but the religion of

religions, the historical realisation of an eternal truth, the longing that dwells in the human breast realised. It is a religion of salvation in the sense that it emphasises the all-important truth of the raising and the transformation of the life through an IMMEDIATENESS of the divine in the human soul. Christianity thus brings to a clear expression a fact which is found in the depth of the heart of mankind. It is, therefore, not a development or strength of one side of the natural life, but the possession of a new life in the whole. Its central idea is the kingdom of God and the opening of the presence of this kingdom to the soul in this life. This brings about the great-becoming of life through a participation in the divine and through a perpetual call to rise above the natural world and its ordinary existence. On this road the soul gains an ever greater depth and an ever more inward freedom. In this sense Christianity can only strengthen as time passes, for in it is enclosed an eternal truth which all the changes of time cannot destroy.

But Eucken insists that in order to recover the deeper spiritual elements of Christianity, the historical aspects must undergo very great changes. Many are the points which must be changed—indeed, given up, for they belong to a past and modes of thought and expression which are no longer ours. The geocentric and the anthropocentric modes of thought have to be discarded entirely; all the sensuous miracles which present views of the universe and of human life discredited by knowledge must be laid aside—miracles like the birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Eucken points out that this historical aspect of Christianity is alien to

its original freshness, and does not belong to its inmost nature; it is a fact of knowledge and not of belief, and all the facts of knowledge are facts brought about by mental conceptions exactly as science has been brought about, and thus cannot possess more than a temporary character. But belief in its legitimate sense can be built only upon the results which bring about an inward movement in our own nature. Whoever gives belief another meaning than this externalises religion and reduces it to the level of sense-impressions. The essence and strength of Christianity are weakened in such a manner, and its eternal nature is in danger of being lost under a load of archaic semi-intellectual notions.

When we pass to Eucken's remarks concerning the person of Jesus as the Christian Church has crystallised it into an immutable dogma we find words of grave warning. How often does he point out that many of the friends of Christianity, without knowing it, are its enemies! The significance of great personalities for religion has been worked out by Eucken in several of his great works, and he does not hesitate to give the superiority to Jesus. In what does this superiority consist according to our author? It does not consist, he tells us, in accepting the dogma of the godhead of Jesus, not in conceiving of a trinity of persons in the godhead, for, as we are told, the divine cannot be limited to one point in human history; it runs through the whole of the world-history, and has been the cause of all the upward movements and conquests of the race. The significance of the life of Jesus rests on something infinitely deeper and truer than wonders of sense and the dogmas of distant days. It rests

on the fact that Jesus gave a turning-point to history, brought to the clearness of the shining day what was obscure concerning the deepest life of man. It is not, therefore, in any theories about his person that the value of his life consists, but in the truth that he reached the highest spiritual level possible for man. In this way he is our moral and religious hero. Any other way of viewing him is to place the historical above the eternal, and thus reducing Christianity to a lower level. We thus see in drawing these articles to a close that Eucken's position resembles that of liberal Christianity. In the midst of the great difficulties and obstacles with which we as liberal Christians have to contend, it is at least to me a matter for rejoicing that on our side in this great liberal movement there is to be found one of the leading religious idealists of the world. We cannot do better in this struggle for the reality of the spiritual life and of a Christianity which can be true to-day than to reflect upon these words of Rudolf Eucken, which are to be found at the close of his address, "Das Wesen der Religion" (The Nature of Religion):—

"Throughout the whole realm of modern culture an independence of spiritual work has arisen which is opposed to the immediate and original manner and condition of man. In ourselves a higher course of life has been evolved which begets its own contents and necessities, and, through these, govern our actions so far as they place themselves in the service of spiritual tasks. Through this arises an increasing struggle of man against himself; the former kind of life becomes insufficient and a new one must be worked out—a new one that will lift

man beyond himself and will expel all that is petty-human out of the formation of the spiritual life. As this requires changes at every point of our inherited condition, it is then true in the province of religion that much which formerly satisfied all claims will be found too petty and anthropomorphic. Not only must the ideas be changed, the inmost life itself requires a clearing, a purification, a transformation, in order to prevent what is and must remain religious from sinking into the mere subjective and mythological. Here we do not mean easy shiftings but fundamental changes. It is necessary to look at things steadfastly and firmly and to take up courageously the fight for truth. It is easy to see that to many a one this indispensable development will appear at first as a threat and a danger to religion, but it is and it remains perverse to see in changes only dangers and losses and fail to see an inducement and a challenge to a positive development of the inherited condition and to an increase of our own ability. It is by an insight like this into the nature of things that we become superior to all that is hostile and are able to transform the apparent danger into a true gain. The anxious fear of a close touch and of a clear settlement with the movements of the time betrays only cowardice and want of faith. For if it is really our firm conviction that in religion of the Christian kind there exists the deepest and final revelation of spiritual Reality, then casual changes in the work of culture may give us much trouble and care, but to the cause of Christianity itself they can but prove useful, because they place by the side of the struggle the characteristics, greatness, and magnificence in a clearer light.

“ The task to-day is to work energetically, to labour with a free mind and a joyful courage, so that the Eternal may not lose its efficient power by our rigid clinging to temporal and antiquated forms, so that that which we have recognised as human may not bar the way to the Divine as that Divine is revealed in our own day. The condition of the present time contains the strongest motives for such work. For once again, in spite of all the contradictions which appear on the surface of things, the religious problem rises up mightily from the depth of life ; from day to-day it moves minds more and more ; it induces endeavour and kindles the spirit of man. It becomes even plainer to all who are willing to see that mere secular culture is empty and vain, and is powerless to grant life any real content and fill it with genuine love. Man and humanity are pressed ever more forcibly forward into a fight for the meaning of life and the deliverance of the spiritual self. But the great task must be handled with a greatness of mind, and such a mind demands freedom—freedom in the service of truth and truthfulness. Let us therefore work together, let us work unceasingly with all our strength as long as the day lasts, in the conviction that ‘ he who wishes to cling to the Old that does not age must leave behind the old that ages ’ (Runeberg), and that an Eternal of the real kind cannot be lost in the flux of time, because it overcomes time by entering into it.”

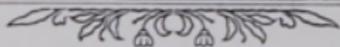




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