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ARTICLE II.

THE METAPHYSICAL NEEDS OF OUR TIME.

BY THE REVEREND JAMES LINDSAY, D.D.

OF no one thing does the thought of our time stand more in need than of a revived interest in Metaphysics. A scared Ritschlianism has fled before metaphysics: the almost universal attitude of the scientist towards metaphysics is that of the scorner: much even of the ethical philosophy of the time is grown squeamish before metaphysic. However, signs of quickened interest in metaphysics have not been wanting. In the recent speculative thought of Germany, metaphysical boldness has not been wanting, as witness the works of Eucken, Busse, Külpe, Thiele, Wundt, Paulsen, Rolfes, and others that might be named. In England, we have had the great metaphysical works of Drs. Shadworth Hodgson, Bradley, and Ward, while America has rendered important service through Professors Bowne, Ladd, Howison, Royce, and others. To all which must be added labors like those of Renouvier, Fouillée, Pillon, Dauriac, in France, and the work of De Sarlo and others in Italy. Subjective and individual moments will inevitably enter into the treatment of metaphysics, and the need presses that metaphysics go out in search of objective materials.

The real unity of the universe, its goal and its ground, and the nature of man's soul,—these are all themes into which our individual hopes, fears, and desires are prone to enter, and in respect of which we must give the more earnest heed to what is objective. I mean, we cannot keep too close to palpitating Reality. For Metaphysics is just the

philosophy of the Real. The mind's healthy instinct for reality must be maintained in our quest for the highest categories. The adequate hypothesis—the all-comprehending concept—will thus be no vain abstraction. Shunning the atmosphere of illusion, metaphysics must take primary account—in a way not always done—of Evolution as principle of becoming, and must show the end which Evolution subserves in compelling thought to recognize the necessity of teleology or the fact of purpose in nature. The need of our time is to maintain the primary position of Metaphysics, whereby, as presupposition of the special problems of Ethics, Psychology, and Logic, it must take precedence of them, and profoundly affect their direction and treatment, even while Metaphysics may receive, from their detailed outworking, fullness of form and content.

Never, I believe, was the need for a true metaphysic more deeply felt, Ritschl, Comte, and Littré notwithstanding. The metaphysic we so crave will ground its laws, not in any molecular movements of things physical, nor even in any mere volitions of the Will Divine, but in the Divine Nature or Essence. An ethical metaphysic it must be, with the metaphysical attributes of its Deity all keyed up to the eternal ethical essence of which we speak. For the Unconditioned Being with whom we have to do is One wholly ethical in his nature. But I do not mean to suggest, in saying this, any pursuance of metaphysics merely for the satisfaction of ethical needs, and apart from the sheer intellectual worth and discipline of metaphysic itself. The science of metaphysics we to-day most deeply need, that it may determine for us what can and what cannot be known of being and the laws of being *a priori*,—in other words, from those necessities of the mind, or laws of being, which, though first revealed to us by experience, must yet have preëxisted, in order to make experience itself possible. Chastened and critical, the metaphysic of

the time is such that Paulsen has said, "There is to-day probably not a metaphysician who believes that he has the key to unlock the mysteries of the world." But, for all that, I think we do well to remind ourselves that, when we think we have done with metaphysics, we are—whether we understand it or not—having done with Deity.

Nor can any thoroughgoing metaphysic do without theology, as its touchstone and support, even though the need exists in no servile fashion or unduly dependent form. Metaphysical treatment has, in like manner, its own peculiar light to shed on the basal problems of theology. The problem of metaphysics is found in the world opened to our view by the vast and varied constructive activity involved in experience. Of that activity in its whole range or extent metaphysics is critical. For it embraces all being and knowing—ontology and epistemology—and a complete theory of experience in the sense just indicated, would mean a metaphysic that should be perfect. Metaphysical knowledge aims at reality, as that is given to us in outer and inner experience.

Experience marks the limits of scientific knowledge. Metaphysics grasps the inner essence of reality, the last ground of being. Metaphysics seeks a connection with the Whole, and the unity of the Ideal and the Real. Metaphysics must needs be a metaphysic of Spirit no less than of Nature, for reality is a unified whole. It is for metaphysical science to show wherein reality as Whole has its final Ground. The metaphysical need now is to keep the Whole in view. The task of metaphysics lies in the deepening, expounding, and interpreting, of experience. The metaphysic of experience, in its possibility, necessity, and reality, must be scientifically comprehended. No one who reflects on the magnitude of the difficulties in the way of metaphysical science, will think slightingly of metaphysical attempts at solution. So great is the task that meta-

physics must be always on the way to the solution, never at the end of it. The History of Philosophy proves there is here a really significant progress or development. We acknowledge the impossibility of a metaphysic of the transcendent, or the impossibility of an absolute metaphysic, but a monistic tendency in metaphysics recognizes a transcendent causality.

By virtue of a necessity of reason, or a necessary inference of reason, we raise ourselves from the manifoldness of appearances to the thought of a final unity, an Ultimate Ground, a Primal Cause,—in other words, to the conception of the World-Whole, and of the ultimate world-elements. This All-ness—the Whole—is, in an especial sense, the demand of Reason. This All is God. To-day, as in the days of Aristotle, metaphysics has to do with reality taken in whole, inquiring into the principles of all 'reality.' Its central task is to determine the principles of 'substance.' For the notion of substance as "a sort of Kantian *Ding-an-sich*" is one from which we simply cannot get away. The old and troublous category of substance has had its truth transferred to the conception of self-activity as fundamental fact. This self-activity is no arch-juggler. It is the metaphysical answer of to-day to the old queries as to *Ding-an-sich*, Being, or Substance. This just means activity which carries its primal impulse in its own bosom. Not Kant alone, but also Fichte, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, each in his own way, had some sense of the implied truth, which is simply that of the indissoluble connection of the inner actual self with the exterior and essential.

This notion of substance is simply fundamental in our cognitive experience. It springs up in experience every time my self-activity is inhibited by anything whatsoever. It is but the inevitable making real of *that which* I must so interpret in terms of my real self. It is thus an ulti-

mate in experience, beyond or behind which you cannot further go. And, when thought passes up to higher matters, there too one may find place and room for the notion of substance in a conception of the World-Ground so sought. Thus the Aristotelian doctrine of substance as a self-active principle, though not without its shortcomings, is a really philosophical one. Descartes and Spinoza both missed it; not so Leibnitz, when he sought to restore dynamic categories for the static relations in which these thinkers had left matters. We can even overpass Aristotelian insight, and rise from subjective intelligence to the energy of self-conscious personality when we ascend to the idea of the Absolute Personality. In such ways we retain the notion of substance, rather than flux or stream of being, while we at the same time avoid the Spinozan conception of its kaleidoscopically changing performances, which yet could not prove ground of a real yet advancing development.

But we are not done with difficulties. No sooner do we try to determine the Absolute as Absolute Spirit than we carry over to this conception of the Absolute the analogy of the human life of spirit. But in this we come only to analogies of consciousness, and the advance of thinking the Absolute in an absolute way remains actually unfulfilled—unfulfilled for metaphysics as exact science. We, by virtue of our independence, are exalted above the changing manifoldness of our life of representation. So God rules the world, and is exalted above it. What metaphysic does is to determine the concept of the Absolute—the Unconditioned or Absolute Being—after Time, Space, and Causality, and to raise itself, through Causality, Space, and Time, to the idea of unity and of the whole, of the infinite and the eternal.

It is this unity which forms the basis of speculation. The question of the essence and the quality of the Eternal

Being is indeed the question. The Eternal Being must be not only original and necessary, it must also remain what it is—an essence, a self-existing essence. The Spirit of this essence is the Absolute Spirit. So metaphysics, as a science of the Absolute, has the need to seek to present, so far as it can, an Absolute as ground of the possibility of all subjective and objective being—as indeed the highest, all-embracing, subjective-objective principle. A real God who makes his existence known in concrete manifestations stands in no kind of contradiction to the idea of a world-grounding principle. The idea of an absolute unity is determined in itself, without as yet a concrete to be represented. The essence which represents this absolute unity must at the same time be personal. So we understand the world-grounding principle. Metaphysics apprehends this principle only as an original unity, only as self-conscious unity, which is the eternal and primal cause of all consciousness. A Schopenhauer represents this unity, as for him the concrete monism represented by Absolute Will: a Lotze conceives the unity in a way which has been blamed for being much too abstract—the inner essence of the unity not being defined—under the form of the Absolute Personality.

It may very well be asked whether we can really think anything more concrete or more reasonable under the notion of Absolute Will than under the conception of Absolute Personality—a world-informing Person. What is needed is, that we press beyond the metaphysics of self-consciousness in Deity to the metaphysics of the eternal ethical essence of God, the central Personality, who is real and universal ground of possibility to all beings and things. In such an absoluteness of Deity I find the objective of my being and thought. I take such Absolute to be ground of all unity, root of all being, and condition of all consciousness. I affirm a synthesis of my thought and such tran-

scendent Absolute. Why not make one thing of all reality, of all experience, whether possible or actual? Why should not the transcendent, too, be experience, not something in itself erected outside experience? In the conception of an absolute experience, the transcendent will, of course, be included, the transcendent being transcendent only in respect of my finite and relative experience.

To such an absolute experience I ascribe intensive infinity, and, while making experience thus one, hold reality always to transcend vastly our finite experience. I cannot believe we are left only with the world and ourselves on our hands, and no knowledge of the Absolute. Of the Absolute I claim a true knowledge. Not, of course, a perfect knowledge, but yet a real knowledge. Knowledge, to be knowledge at all, must be no merely subjective thing, but the apprehension of reality. It can, of course, only be a knowledge "for us," but it *is* knowledge of the Absolute—the Absolute as it is. The Absolute *is* what it reveals itself as being, and is an infinite deal beyond what is cognized. The universe is, no doubt, hidden from us by the veil of our ideas, or thoughts, and, so far, we must remain idealists. But the universe is a thing instinct with life and vital possibilities, and, in its interpretation, it would be the despair and negation of all thought to make the Absolute an unknowable thing-in-itself. Because my life and my thought enter into the all-embracing life of the Absolute, that Absolute can be for me no unknowable thing-in-itself, for that were an impossible and contradictory conception.

A glance at the History of Metaphysics will show how far from easy is the task of which we have spoken at such length. The weightiest task of the present consists in the determination of the Infinite, but the conception of the really efficient which we to-day have, mediated only through Causality, springs from what affects the human

mind. This conception will always mean an imperfect one as to the essence of God, but one by no means fundamentally false. If one thinks of God as perfectly unrelated to the individual, and quite isolated from the human subject, one has a fundamentally false conception of God. But it is impossible to apprehend the essence of God in such a fashion. "Metaphysics," says Koenig, "seeks to bring reality to absolute conceptions, while the concrete sciences content themselves with notions relatively perfect." This does not drive us to Bradley's criterion of the truth—namely self-consistency—and does not bring us to treat truth as one of the things, that is to say, appearances, which more or less exist.

Kant called metaphysics the science which advances from the knowledge of the sensible to the knowledge of the supersensible by means of reason. Reason demands the Whole, but reason does not demand form and unity here, matter and manifoldness there. It demands the closed, harmonious Whole, while the principle of unity perpetually rules. Metaphysics holds the office of censor in the kingdom of the sciences. The metaphysics of Criticism teaches us to apprehend the world and all its products as appearances, that is to say, mere representations. Kant was contented with scientific investigation and representation of the knowledge of experience, and gave, no doubt, an impulse to science in the narrow sense of the term. But, on Bradley's criterion, all experience must prove itself unreal. Bradley has no satisfactory solution to give of the problem how degrees of reality are possible, how what is not real—has only more or less reality—falls into the kingdom of reality. With Bradley, no individual moment of experience is in itself real. All reality consists in psychic experience, and the relative is only real in the measure in which it is absolute. Drs. Bradley and E. Caird cannot be said to solve the metaphysical problem at

all. For the difficulty remains, wherein the difference between the degrees of reality consists, and how this difference is in general to be apprehended.

The contempt of metaphysics so common in our time we can neither share nor excuse. We see in the transcendent a domain of abiding hypotheses. These hypotheses are scientifically necessary. In their right use and proportional valuation we catch sight of the essence of scientific modes of view. The despisers of metaphysics in the interest of science see in the completion of experience which metaphysic offers nothing but "mere subjective play without value," in fact "an altogether purposeless, yea, foolish venture." For to them the rationalizing of experience is the end neither of science nor of philosophy. To them science is only the one-sided mechanical inquiry into nature. They take it for the task of science to measure, not to value—to discover, not to explain. But a metaphysical view of the world seeks to explain or to rationalize it. The metaphysical completion of experience arises out of the problem of the unity of the world. The end of the scientific method is not a determinate personal relation to things, but the knowledge of their ground and connection. Metaphysics determines the last ground of the world-connection as spirit. But the Absolute Spirit is not a merely abstract monistic principle. It is not necessary that metaphysic solve the difference between spirit and nature in an abstract unity. To metaphysics, the world-connection is that of the world of immanent spirit. But this is not to break down all relation to what transcends the world.

We are compelled to no modes of thought wherein the world is absurdly deified, and set above God. For if the universe be, in some sort, his environment, he must yet be free to transcend it. The increasing need of metaphysics, in respect of method, is to be thoroughly scientific.

Like the other sciences, it is a theoretic discipline. Herbart viewed philosophy as science because of the comprehensibility of experience. One may very well affirm that experience is the indispensable foundation of knowledge. Metaphysics, in so far as it is science, does not conduct us beyond experience. Scientific metaphysics has only to do with our world of experience—not with an *ens extramundanum*—but intensively metaphysic leads us beyond experience. Intensively it does so, for no one has a right to lay narrower pretensions on metaphysics than on the other sciences. Metaphysics, like the other sciences, serves a theoretic need. “Man,” says Schopenhauer, “is a metaphysical animal.” Metaphysic springs out of the scientific endeavor to know the most universal trains or courses of the world-connection.

The proper presupposition of metaphysics is the homogeneity of God and the world. Its principle is being that is grounded in itself. Metaphysic determines for its main fact the world as whole: it rests entirely upon experience, and moves towards the world-whole. It embraces the world as totality. What divides metaphysics from the other sciences is not its method, but only the universality of its task. For metaphysics is indeed a science, and the crown of all sciences. It is the inquiry after the Real. The greatest scientific performances owe their origin to this speculative activity of reason. Natural science is a discipline of hypotheses. The divinatory element of inquiry rules in the hypothesis, and just through such hypotheses—through, that is to say, speculative thought—comes to things new and radiant light. The speculative method, properly conceived, is related to experience. Only in experience as a whole—only in the Absolute itself—is full reality to be found.

The Absolute is the totality of being. Busse properly says, “The Absolute cannot be the Absolute, cannot, that

is, be the totality of all the real, without its content, as the totality of all the real, being perceived, and without the totality of all the real being perceived as its content." Thought is, but it does not exhaust reality. Thought is reality, but not the Absolute. We have the sciences of Nature and those of Spirit, and we perceive that in the course of time they must realize the one science. For all truth is ultimately one. We would even know God, who is the only real. Man is not only an individual, but a self-conscious individual—a person. The selfhood of the individual will is real. The Absolute and the individual are at base and bottom one. Real unity has in our metaphysical views not been reached, but monism is an undoubted metaphysical advance. Monism may be taken to be a necessity of thought. But the unity so sought is not one that comes of effacing deep or even basal differences, but merely a unity that runs back into identity of source or oneness of originative Reality.

The whole demand of the human spirit is for such a unity as spiritual monism implies, and consequently a rational metaphysic will cleave to a spiritualistic theory of reality. Some kind of a unity the being of the world must remain for us—a unity resembling that of the self. The unity amid all the manifoldness of scientific forms of life and other phenomena is nothing but the unity of ideas or of the thinking self. Such a desire for unity is, without doubt, the master impulse of modern thought. But this means something very different from the monism of Haeckel, who has not, in fact, reached a strictly monistic doctrine. The attractiveness of his theory lies in its apparent congruity, while what really happens is that the philosophical kingdom is taken by violence and attributes most diverse in character are forced together and declared correlative aspects or sides of one thing. The theory practically takes sentience or materiality, as they exist in us

and puzzle us, and rounds on us by telling us we shall find these coexisting in every cell and molecule, where they are but sides or aspects of one thing. As if this new mode of stating the case were an explanation of it!

I do not take the conception of extended substance to be fundamental in monism. The unitary character of being we cannot escape, postulating, as we do, absolute spirit as the self-existent principle of all things. There is nothing irrational in the supposition of a spiritual substratum—a continuous, permanent, unitary soul-substance, distinct from and higher than the physical organism, but correlated and interacting with it—in fact, such a supposition is the most rational we know. The fact is, soul is impossible to our knowledge save as a realization of spiritual potency, and such realization must be rooted in an immanent spiritual principle as its world-ground. Thus the dualistic process becomes transcended, and receives final expression in terms of soul or spirit.

The truth is, scientific monism to-day not only persists in making the psychical depend on the physical, but is so radically lacking in epistemological understanding as to make matter its ultimate rather than mind or consciousness. It strangely fails to see that, in making mind depend on matter rather than create it—as Idealism fundamentally asserts—it bars its own way to the monism it desires to reach. It must stoop to pass through the lowly gateway of epistemological science, and so learn that man knows all he does only in the medium of consciousness, his knowledge moving always within the sphere of human thoughts and ideas. It never occurs to such monism that one may very well take its world-forces, not as facts, but only as transcendental hypotheses, however likely these may be. It comprehends the absolutely real far less than it dreams, in its study of the world's phenomena of motion. For its mechanical philosophy of Nature does not reflect

what need and room remain for some non-spatial and non-perceptible element to enter as causal factor of the problem. Only in such an element do we find an efficient cause for these world-movements.

I find no foothold here for rationality till the physical is so transcended, and a spiritualistic monism reached in which the manifold forces and disconnected elements are unified by no merely abstract entity. Then we have passed from the realm of epistemology into the sphere of metaphysics. "It is the Absolute," as Busse rightly remarks, "which is active around us and within us, in our inner life as in all other essences, but whose workings rise not all up into our consciousness." So, then, we are confronted with the question, How can these workings be, except on the supposition of theistic representations? We cannot sensibly view God in his essence, but we can think him, and, thinking him, take hold of him. But, in order to do this, we must seek him and constantly advance in the knowledge and living conception of him. The fullness and the fulfillment of thought is God. He is the whole possibility of thought. He is also the entire fullness of possible being. God is a real, indivisible, and sole essence—the whole fullness of thought. His unity must be perfect. God alone is One, with this One we can first begin to speak of being.

Although we can find no such perfect essence, as thought is necessitated to think, in reality, yet the thought of the most real essence of all proceeds from what is empirically given. Says Thiele, "Not only the philosophy of an Aristotle, or a Kant, or a Herbart, but also that of a Plato, or a Fichte, or a Hegel, rests finally on what is empirically given." Our method of inquiry is the synthetic, which is so valuable and indispensable for the knowledge of real events. The metaphysical interpretation and working up of the inner and outer facts of experience will give a con-

ception of the world and its connection, in which subject and object, thought and being, spirit and nature, present a unity, and, in this unity, the essence of the world. Such a unity metaphysical thought must seek. The metaphysical view of the world sees the given world not merely from the standpoint of scientific method, but demands, for the setting forth of the deepest essence of the world, the acknowledgment of a Divine World-Ground. God is the First, and he gives to everything its true, full worth. In his essence, in his unity, we must find the fullness of thought and perfection itself.

Not that the human will is identical with the Divine, but that with pluralism we must unite monism, for pluralism possesses not the same worth of reality as does monism. Lotzean doctrine joins a real pluralism to a deeper monism. Man is free. Free-will is pluralistic. But free-will must be connected with the conception of a theodicy, and this last is monistic. Morality demands an ethical end—a God, and it is quite evident that God cannot be originator of sin. Man is a cause, but God as Absolute Causality is true cause of all being—the cause of all causes, the soul of all souls. But yet the will is free, and our selfhood is not mere appearance. God is free and unbound, but God in his action makes himself dependent on human relation or behavior. Yet God has his own life.

The puzzle has been said to be the *mode* of an activity so pure, self-conscious, and free, not its reality. If the *mode* of it be "inconceivable," we are told there is an end to it as a solution. But is not this an extraordinary attitude to assume? Do we treat all ultimates in such a fashion? For we are here dealing with an ultimate, such pure, free self-activity being but our present-day equivalent for the thinking substance of Descartes, and the *purus actus* of Aristotle. What indeed are ultimates but just facts—the most illuminating facts—whose modes we yet

may not know? A spiritualistic monism is certainly warranted in maintaining that there is only one principle of being, even that primal form of self-activity which we have postulated.

Theistic doctrine, with its concern for the conception of personal being, accords better than any other form of theology with practical and experiential interests and demands, but a satisfactory theistic metaphysics can only come from full account being made of all we know of the universe in other ways, and full justice being done to the results of theoretic knowledge. This shows how much remains to be done in the metaphysical field. Take so great a metaphysician as Lotze. Remarkable for his power of thought and the richness of its content, Lotze has yet plenty of room in his system for contradictions and half-truths. Yet his singularly sharp and eclectic mind has enriched thought with much that makes for metaphysical progress. It is the metaphysical need of our time to bring such systematized truth to harmony, which it will do by purging out the leaven of contradiction, garnering the truth amid his obscurities of thought, and setting it in consistent and harmonious relations. His views on such matters as monism, freedom, immanence, the soul, self-consciousness, substance, the individual, the one and the many, are among the numerous points on which his thought still deserves attention.

From these inquiries and scrutinies there must eventually accrue great gain both to philosophy and theology, and the need abides that they be pursued with enthusiasm and thoroughness born of full belief in their value. The fact is being always more recognized that the need is for a metaphysic that shall be empirically well grounded and steadily rear its superstructure on basis of fact. In spite of the unmetaphysical spirit which to-day makes metaphysics a discipline despised and rejected of men, we must

hold fast, in more purely factual ways, to the attainment of metaphysical conclusions. For though there are the signs of quickened interest indicated at the beginning of this article, still it must not be forgotten that even in Germany, classic land of metaphysical thought, metaphysical speculation is to-day rather more languid than it should be, and the same is yet more true of countries like France and Italy. The revived metaphysical interest of Britain and America is the more surprising, since abstruse metaphysical thought comes not so naturally to these countries, so deeply immersed in concerns of the practical life. Great need remains that properly metaphysical subjects of inquiry be prosecuted—such as Ultimate reality and the significance of the world—on the basis of exhaustive study of nature and human life. Transcending present interest and reality, we must press on to know to what the whole world tends; what we ourselves are, and why we do exist; yea, and for what reasons we bear ourselves as we now do.