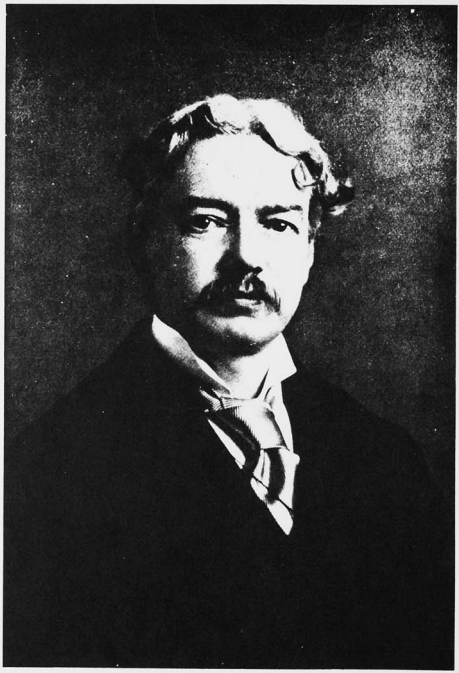

GEORGE DAWES HICKS

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1862–1941

GEORGE DAWES HICKS was born on 14 September 1862 at Column House, Shrewsbury, where his father, Christopher Hicks, had a solicitor's practice, which had been in the family for two generations. His mother Victoria was the daughter of John Samuel Dawes, of Smethwick Hall near Birmingham. He was the eldest of six children, three sons and three daughters, of whom all but two, George and the eldest daughter Victoria, are still living. In 1866, when George was four years old, his father was driven by adverse circumstances to leave the home in Shrewsbury; three years later he settled down in a solicitor's practice at Guildford, where the two youngest children, Violet and John, were born. George was sent to a preparatory school kept by Mr. Robert Lydgate and known as the Castle School. The ruins of the old Norman Castle of Guildford were in the school grounds, and the boy, who never took kindly to outdoor games, was fond of wandering about the broken walls and dungeons, looking for old coins and other relics of the past. He loved swimming, and every summer morning rose early with his brother Albert to bathe in the river Wey. He was always studious, rising rapidly to the top form, and took a special pleasure in helping other boys with their work. In 1876 he won a Scholarship at the Royal Grammar School, Guildford, where he spent the next four years under Dr. Monsoll, an able classical scholar, to whom, as also to the second master, Mr. Jeffreson, Hicks acknowledged a lasting obligation. His chief enthusiasm in these days was for natural science; 'it was', his brother writes, 'his early love', to be fostered later in the laboratories at Manchester and Leipzig, and retained throughout his life. 'He used to say that if he had his life to live over again, he would devote it to physical science.' Often during the school holidays he would be found in the old chalk-pits at Guildford with hammer and chisel, hacking out fossilized

shells from blocks of chalk. He delighted in walking, especially on high ground, climbing to the highest accessible points in the vicinity. In 1880, when he was about eighteen, Hicks left school to study law in his father's office. He set himself to the work with characteristic industry, but never took kindly to it. Speculative interests were already dominant, and his temperament was scarcely adapted to a business career. The simplicity and unworldliness of his nature left him indeed throughout his life something of a child in practical affairs. He wanted to study and to write; even while working for his articles he had sent contributions to *Nature* which to his great joy had been accepted. His heart was set on going to a university with a view to entering the Unitarian ministry. His father, who had strong intellectual tastes, recognized the reasonableness of his desire; but straitened means seemed an insuperable obstacle to its fulfilment. Hicks determined to try for a Scholarship at Owens College, Manchester, and with this intent, stayed some time with his uncle, Mr. Teece Whitehurst, at Shrewsbury, tutoring his cousins in the intervals of his own work. In 1883 he won the desired scholarship and spent the next four years at Manchester, studying philosophy under Robert Adamson and graduating with first class honours in that subject in 1888. His father died in the same year. From Owens College Hicks passed on to Manchester College, to study theology for the ministry, moving with the College from London to Oxford during his second year of residence. The Principal was Martineau's successor, Dr. James Drummond, to whose teaching and personal influence Hicks felt a deep debt of gratitude, to which he gave expression some thirty years later in the 'Memorial Introduction' prefixed to Drummond's posthumous volume, *Pauline Meditations* (1919). While at Oxford, Hicks continued to work at philosophy, attending lectures by Nettleship, Wallace, and Cook Wilson. In 1891 he went to Germany with a Hibbert Scholarship, studying for four years at Leipzig under Wundt, Heinze, and Volkelt. In addition to his main work

on Kant, he assisted Meumann in experiments on time-apprehension, and worked at psychology with Wundt and at physiology with Ludwig and Hering. In 1896 he obtained his Ph.D. with a thesis, published as a volume in the following year, on the Kantian philosophy. On his return to England he carried out his intention of entering the Unitarian ministry, and for six years (1897–1903) had the charge of Unity Church, Islington. His preaching attracted a distinguished congregation, among whom was often to be seen the venerable figure of James Martineau. Here, too, he met and soon afterwards (1902) married his first wife, Lucy Katherine, daughter of William Henry Garrett of Highbury. While at Islington, Hicks continued to work at philosophy, lecturing for the London School of Ethics and Sociology and taking a keen interest in the meetings of the Aristotelian Society. Gradually he came to see that the many social and other duties incidental to ministerial work were an obstacle to the fulfilment of his true vocation. In 1903 he resigned his charge, and in the following year he was appointed to the chair of Moral Philosophy at University College, London. He held the Professorship for twenty-four years.

From this time onwards Hicks's life was almost exclusively devoted to philosophy. In 1903 he had settled in Cambridge, in a house in Cranmer Road with a pleasant garden and ample accommodation for the fine philosophical library which, like his own stores of learning, he placed so readily at the disposal of his friends and pupils. Though of a shy and sensitive disposition, he was fond of congenial society and was liberal in the hospitality of his house and table. Among his intimates was James Ward with whom he went for constant walks, and whose influence on his views on psychology and epistemology is clearly discernible. To Ward was mainly due the change of orientation from the Bradley-Hegel outlook characteristic of Hicks's Oxford period to the Realist tendency of his thought in later years. After Ward's death, Hicks edited his psychological papers

on Education in the *Cambridge Psychological Library*, of which he was then editor. His marriage had placed him in easy circumstances, and brought him, for the few years of its duration, the happiness of a companionship grounded on deep affection and intimate understanding. His wife's death in 1908 left him for the rest of his life a lonely man. In a letter written nearly twenty years afterwards, he says:

> the only portion of one's being in which one was truly happy and joyous, free from care and trouble, were the years in which Lucy was with me. They were years of ceaseless toil and labour, but they were softened by a sweet affection and love which lightened all toil and made labour a pastime. I think of the days when I used to rush back from College in order to share the delight of spending quiet moments with her in the evening. Her glad welcome, her warm greeting, her eagerness to share in all one's little troubles and anxieties, and her perfect openness and sincerity, so that you knew for a certainty that in her keeping you were absolutely safe and secure, and that no guile could ever enter, all this was an experience which, having once known it, makes my present life almost unendurable.

And in 1937, in dedicating his *Hibbert Lectures* to her memory, he recalled her 'unfailing help and encouragement' in his intellectual work. He threw into that work an amazing energy, both of mind and body. Several days in each week he travelled to and from Cambridge to carry out the duties of his London Chair. He gave fifteen lectures a week, and sometimes more, at University College, as well as courses on Kant and on advanced psychology for the Moral Sciences Faculty at Cambridge.[1] He examined frequently, both at Cambridge and at other English and Scottish universities, was a Trustee of Dr. Williams' Library, in which he showed a keen interest, and was one of the Visitors of Manchester College, Oxford. His chief activities outside his teaching work in London and at Cambridge were in connexion with the Aristotelian Society and the *Hibbert Journal*. Of the former he had been a Vice-President

[1] He graduated B.A. by research at Cambridge in 1909, and M.A. in 1912.

since 1901; in 1913 he was elected President and from 1915 served for a few years as its Secretary. He contributed frequently to its Proceedings, as also to the Joint Meeting with the *Mind* Association held annually at one of the British Universities. Of these papers, which, together with others in *Mind* and the *Journal of Psychology*, give the key to the development of Hicks's thought during the first third of the century, we shall speak presently; the most important were included by him in 1938 in the volume entitled *Critical Realism*. In discussion Hicks always commanded attention; he spoke with lucidity and precision, voicing definite convictions uncompromisingly but with singular modesty. He showed to more advantage in the exposition of a carefully thought-out position than in the rapid thrusts of controversial argument. His work for the *Hibbert Journal* dates from 1901, when he submitted to the Trustees the suggestion for a quarterly review that led to its establishment in the ensuing year. He became its sub-editor and held that office under Dr. Jacks for the remainder of his life. The masterly surveys of recent philosophical literature, which he contributed twice in each year, illustrate, better perhaps than any other of his writings, the breadth of his philosophical scholarship and his rare gift of dispassionate judgement. Hicks allowed himself little relaxation; in his one recreation—mountaineering in Germany, the Scottish Highlands, and the Lake country—he displayed a physical energy as strenuous as was his energy of mind. In personality and ways of life, Hicks recalls the *Gelehrte* of a now almost forgotten Germany rather than the normal type (if such there be) of an English university professor.

It was so likewise with his teaching. On this aspect of Hicks's life-work, I shall quote the full and discerning appreciation contributed by one of his most distinguished pupils.[1]

[1] Dr. S. V. Keeling, now University Reader in Philosophy at London. Dr. Keeling studied under Hicks from 1921 to 1923 and from 1926 was lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at University College.

As a teacher, Dawes Hicks was a man of single mind, wholly engrossed in philosophy, and he firmly believed that it, as no other subject, could impart to his students an influence and a training such as would render them habitually reflective about their existence and destiny. This high evaluation of philosophy accounted for much that was characteristic of his conception of its pursuit in the university and of his method of instruction. An undergraduate course, he felt, should awaken the student's mind to the profundity of the greatest work already accomplished, for the sake both of the merits intrinsic to those accomplishments, and of providing illustrations of the methods by which important problems have been and could be treated. The plan of instruction Hicks adopted in consequence involved him in the delivery of some fifteen lectures weekly. Here his strength and his weakness as a teacher was apparent. Not only was the field assigned a vast one, but the rate at which he traversed it was so slow as to multiply inordinately the number of lectures required to cover it. For Hicks invariably dictated his matter. The slowness of advance necessitated by dictating also involved him in providing further supplementary courses in some subjects, in which he would amplify details that could be only briefly noticed in the corresponding general courses. In this way he treated separately advanced topics in Plato's metaphysics and Kant's Critical Philosophy, and provided a two-years' course on epistemology. He further held a late afternoon class for M.A. and advanced students, usually selecting for his subject some work of importance recently published; e.g. Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, McTaggart's *Nature of Existence*, Vol. I.

Dr. Keeling suggests that Hicks's method as a teacher was due to the conception and pursuit of philosophy which he had found at Leipzig.

I fancy (though Hicks did not say so in so many words) that the width and thoroughness of the German view and practice indeed moulded in a measure his own plans for teaching the subject at University College. Yet I feel he was misled at this point. Whether an extension of the German plan to the needs of University College was desirable or not, the means for carrying out such an application were wanting. For philosophy as conceived and taught at the Continental University would have required both a longer period of study than two years from the undergraduates and a larger (and, I feel, more expert) teaching staff than the College was prepared to appoint. Yet, if I read

Hicks's intentions aright, he was not deterred by the magnitude of the task he conceived, and, *almost* single-handed, attempted its accomplishment. It seems to me that professorial work of a really high order is very rarely possible to one who spreads himself over all divisions of his subject, and, had Hicks limited himself to the department in which he was most at home (say, Kant and general epistemology), his teaching might have raised him to that eminence in lecturing which we find most often among the French or the German professoriate of his day. But, instead of so limiting his powers, he ranged over the whole field. In a word, Hicks attempted what, in order to be performed with distinction, required the services of half a dozen professors of philosophy rather than one. Not that Hicks's instruction was inferior to that given generally in this country; on the contrary, in some respects it was probably superior.'

The truth of the matter seems to be that Hicks, with characteristic courage and energy, grappled boldly with a problem that besets the teaching not only of philosophy but of every subject in all our English Universities, save at Oxford and Cambridge.

Dr. Keeling goes on to illustrate the value of Hicks's methods as a teacher from his own experience as a student:

During my final honours year at London, I had become enthusiastic about much of Russell's and Moore's work at Cambridge, then more novel. In particular the Lowell Lectures on the External World as a field for scientific method in philosophy had seized upon my imagination, and more than with the conclusions expounded in it, I was impressed by Russell's criticism of the classical tradition, the dead-hand of the past in philosophy, by his opinion that the importance of great thinkers in the past had been exaggerated, the study of them tending to hinder rather than advance us in solving our problems, and by his proposal to extend the methods so successfully practised in the sciences to the treatment of philosophical problems, which, for convenience of investigation, were to be each severed from the rest and treated in independence of them. With all the *fougue* of those *épris de nouveautés* I expressed to Hicks my dissatisfaction at being restricted to the thought of the past, urging that philosophical problems as conceived and treated by our contemporaries should be my *pabulum*. Pained but patient, Hicks gave sympathetic attention and returned a full answer to my objection. Those

differences in the outlook of past thinkers which were due to the climate of the age in which they wrote, though genuine enough, were in his opinion but superficial. A student of any perspicuity would penetrate beneath them and find conceptions whose import was not limited to the times of their conceivers, and whose importance remained undiminished by subsequent changes in religious or cultural outlook. Hicks further urged that a student ignorant of the great work already accomplished was left virtually unarmed and without means of sure criticism. For, on the one hand, he would spend his powers in fruitlessly pursuing paths that had already proved to be *culs-de-sac*; and on the other, he would be exposed to the mercy of each new wind of philosophical fashion and sectarian enthusiasm. So, while allowing that much work of merit was then issuing from contemporaries at Cambridge and elsewhere, he maintained that one should come to this newer work, not as to a substitute for the older, but as to the culmination of a movement whose sources lie principally in the British and German thought of the last two centuries. In short, it should be approached through its historical antecedents. The hour in which Hicks developed and illustrated his answer along the lines just indicated was one of the most profitable periods of my instruction. For the moment I returned reassured to the history of my subject. Some years later, however, when, realizing that nothing would satisfy me but to receive the newer ideas from their authoritative sources, I became a student at Cambridge, the essential soundness of Hicks's recommendation was confirmed in a more convincing way, namely, as a result of my own observations and comparisons. Then I was heartily glad of having first studied with some care the greater work of the past, *before* becoming confronted with the newer things, whose very recency had precluded leisurely examination and mature criticism of them and their underlying assumptions. I learned from Hicks that there is a world of difference between turning first to the latest things and then to the older work as being merely commentative, and turning first to the work of a long past and only afterwards to more recent writings. The latter alone is the safe way.

Hicks's chief service to philosophy lay, however, in his writings. He was not a prolific author, and everything he published was the fruit of prolonged and conscientious thinking. It might truly be said of him, that he never wrote a sentence that does not repay the reading. Disdaining all artifice of style or appeals for popularity he wrote as a philo-

sopher for fellow-philosophers; with the result that his books were 'caviare to the general' and hardly aroused attention outside the academic boundary. Yet both his thought and its expression were unfailingly lucid and convincing. His study of Berkeley supplies the best introduction to that thinker in the language; and the Carmarthen addresses have a simplicity and a charm that goes straight to the reader's heart. His books, for the most part, date from the last twelve years of his life, after his retirement, and represent the conclusions of a long process of reflective thinking. The starting-point in Hicks's speculative pilgrimage was the influence, in his student days at Manchester, of Robert Adamson, the greatest philosophical scholar of that generation. This meant that his attention was directed from the first to problems of epistemology, and, in particular, to the solution offered by Kant. 'If', he wrote, 'we are to connect our knowledge into coherence and system, and to understand the significance of the universe in which we find ourselves, we must resume the problem as it came from the hands of Kant.' But Adamson had been led, by a searching pursuit of the critical method, to question the very foundation-stone of Kant's idealism, the sovereignty of self-consciousness in the constitution of the objects of our knowledge. 'In the long run, it seemed to him, the basis of logical necessity is necessity of fact' (*C.R.* xvi).[1] Yet he always retained what he called 'a companionable feeling' towards the Idealist tradition of Kant and Hegel. Hicks shared this feeling, which was rendered even more 'companionable' by his sojourn at Oxford at a time when Bradley's influence was in the ascendant. During the five years he spent at Leipzig he carried out a detailed study of Kant and Kant's successors, the results of which were embodied in his Ph.D. thesis, written in German and published in 1897 under the title *Die Begriffe Phänomenon und Noumenon in ihrem Verhältniss zu einander bei Kant*. The views on Kant expressed in the book were held by Hicks, with

[1] *C.R.* = *The Basis of Critical Realism* (1938).

little modification, for the rest of his life. I am indebted to Dr. A. C. Ewing for the following summary.

It is a most masterly and thorough examination of one of the leading problems of Kant's philosophy and is very much wider in scope than its title might suggest, covering in fact, or at least referring to, most of the central difficulties of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. It seeks to show how Kant's treatment of them all is partially vitiated by the absolute separation of phenomena from noumena. This is not in itself an original view: it was in fact the common theme of most books on Kant up to that time, but the originality lies in the detailed way in which it was worked out and in its references to other topics, which cannot of course be reproduced in a few lines in an obituary notice. At the same time Professor Dawes Hicks tries to show how the drawing of the distinction itself requires the bridging of the gulf between the terms. Kant holds that the difficulties involved in treating phenomena as real *per se* can only be solved by the conception of noumena of which they are mere appearances; but if this conception is really necessary for the solution of the difficulty this must mean, it is contended, that there is an integral connection between the concepts that we must use in dealing with the appearance-world and the concept of noumena, which is inconsistent with Kant's insistence on their complete separation and points rather to the view of the noumenal world as a complete whole of which phenomena are abstracted parts. The distinction of the three senses in which Kant uses the term appearance (*Erscheinung*), the criticism of Vaihinger's theory of 'double affection', the explanation of the apparent inconsistency of Kant in regarding noumena as a problematic concept, the application of the author's point of view to Kant's ethics, and the introductory discussion of Locke and Leibniz may be mentioned as noteworthy.

In the same year (1897) Hicks contributed a survey of English Philosophy in the nineteenth century to Ueberweg-Heinze's *Geschichte der Philosophie*. During the period of his ministry at Islington and indeed for some time after his appointment to the London Chair, his sympathies were with Idealism of the Hegelian type. He believed that the truth of Kant's philosophy, liberated from subjectivist aberrations, had found its logical consummation in Hegel. But before 1917 the trend of his mind towards realism had

become more pronounced, as a result partly of Bradley's emphasis on the distinction between essence (the 'what') and existence (the 'that'), and even more markedly of Moore's celebrated article in *Mind* on 'The Refutation of Idealism'. Most of his fellow-philosophers at Cambridge, such as James Ward, Russell, Moore, Broad, and W. E. Johnson, for all their divergencies in detail, were at one in advocating a realist theory of knowledge. Hicks became gradually convinced of the untenability of the Idealist position. The paper on *The Basis of Critical Realism*, read to the Aristotelian Society in 1917, marks his definitive crossing of the Rubicon.

The studies in the Theory of Knowledge, published collectively in *Critical Realism*, form Hicks's main contribution to philosophical literature. His position may be briefly summarized as follows. (1) The groundwork is the distinction, reached in agreement with Moore, but independently, between the act of knowing and the object known. The former is, of course, mental; the latter may be mental or physical, but in either case is independent, both for its being and for its nature, of the mind's act of apprehension. Hicks criticized Bradley for neglect of this distinction, in that he interpreted the dictum that 'everything is experience' to mean that whatever is experienced must be psychical existence. Common sense is justified in the belief—or, rather, in intuitively taking for granted—that when I perceive what I call a table it is the real table that I perceive. This is not due, as Hume maintained, to a blind propensity of our nature; for it is integral to all rational thinking. (2) The crux of realist theories of knowledge, viz.: to account for the facts of error and illusion, is met by the further distinction between the 'apprehended content' and the 'content of the object'. What we directly apprehend is always the object, the real thing, an individual existent (a 'that') which is a complex unity of diverse characteristics (the 'what'). But we never apprehend the object's real content in its entirety; what we apprehend of

it—the 'apprehended content'—is a selection from that content. 'The *sum* of qualities actually discriminated in and through the perceptive act will clearly be different as a *sum* from the *sum* of features characterizing the object' (*C.R.* 74–5). We have no right to assume that the constituent qualities of the object remain unmodified when they enter into the new unity of the 'apprehended content'. Thus the real thing may appear different from what it really is. But this is not to say that we apprehend 'appearances' and not reality. Appearances 'are not themselves existing entities, but ways in which existing entities are apprehended. . . . The appearances are no more than the orderly manner in which the quality is apprehended by a finite mind under the conditions and limitations imposed by sense intuition' (ib. 45–6). By this distinction between the 'apprehended content' and the 'content of the object' Hicks is striving to express in modern terminology what scholastic thinkers intended when they discriminated *id quo percipitur* (or *concipitur*)—the sensible or intelligible *species*—from *id quod percipitur* (or *concipitur*)—the direct object of cognition. In his use of the somewhat ambiguous term 'content', especially when he distinguishes the content of the *act* of apprehension—e.g. 'awareness of blue'—from the apprehended content, viz. 'blue', his intention is to rule out, not subjectivism only, but any interpolation of a *tertium quid* between the knowing mind and the reality. 'When I am apprehending blue, I am not apprehending my awareness of blue, but the blue' (ib. 16). Be it noted that the apprehended content (like the content of the object, but unlike the object itself, which is always particular) is universal. In a paper read to the Aristotelian Society, Hicks argued with much ingenuity that in perceiving Sirius, the apprehended content is not dated at the time when the light rays were emitted, i.e. years ago, since in that case the content would be particular. The lapse of time is necessary only for the light to travel until it stimulates the eye so that we may *now* see the star as it is *now*. (3) Hicks definitely broke

with the assumption, common to Hume and Kant, of the heterogeneity of sense and thought, insisting on the continuity of all mental process, from the most primitive sense-awareness to the highest levels of conceptual thinking. He agreed with Ward that a sense-awareness that is only receptive and not also discriminative and comparative of the qualities sensed, was the description of no observable cognitive activity. Advancing knowledge, all along the line, might be likened to a pattern gradually coming out (ib. 75). In other words, judgement is implicit in the simplest act of sense-perception. In all its operations, whether of perceiving or conceiving, the mind is active both in discrimination and in synthesis. 'Discursiveness', he writes, 'does not originate with conceptual thinking. In the sensibly continuous masses of so-called immediate intuition, such as the perception of continuous space, the continuity in question is only relatively undifferentiated. Even in the awareness of a simple movement in space there must be involved the awareness of so much discreteness as is implied in speaking of the "starting-point", "direction", and "goal". What reflective thinking really does is to unfold more fully and explicitly the continuity in discreteness, or the identity in difference, which is implicitly involved in unreflective experience' (ib. 145–6).

In addition to arguing constructively to these positions, Hicks spent much effort in a searching criticism of opposing views, such as Holt's Behaviourist interpretation of consciousness as a cross-section defined by the responses of the nervous system, Russell's antithesis of 'acquaintance' and 'description', and, especially, Broad's doctrine of *sensa*. As against Broad, Hicks contended—I quote Dr. Keeling—'that in normal sense-apprehension what we directly apprehend is not "patches of colour" &c. (*sensa*), but physical objects themselves with certain of their qualities and relations'. He denied any grounds for the assumption of any such particular existents as the alleged *sensa* or of the inherence in them of secondary qualities. Why, he asked,

should not the particles of a red-hot body be red? 'If it cannot be demonstrated that material things themselves literally possess such secondary qualities, neither can it be demonstrated that they do not.' Moreover, the very difficulty which the *sensum* theory was designed to avoid, i.e. the contrast between the appearance and the reality, breaks out within the *sensa* themselves. The elliptical shapes presented by a penny *are* elliptical, yet *appear* to the percipients to be round. 'The fact remains that the *sensum* appears different from what it actually is' (ib. 59). Nor does experience advance from originally isolated presentations to construct out of these private materials the complexes which form the 'things' of man's public world. On the contrary, 'sense-appearances presuppose, as the condition of their possibility, real existing things which appear; the appearances are dependent upon the actually real objects, and not the objects upon the appearances' (ib. 259).

Hicks's epistemological principles were worked out with fullest detail in connexion with sense-perception, but in two of his studies he applies them to other modes of cognition. The striking Essay on *Conceptual Thought and Real Existence* opens with a discrimination between perceptual and conceptual apprehension, drawn so as to be consonant with their continuity in the development of mental life. Both alike have reality for their object, but in the latter the reference to the real order of existing things is mediate and reflective, involving a fuller measure of self-consciousness and the formation of general concepts by a process that is at once analytic and synthetic. 'The act of judging is analytic in character because it breaks up or sunders or differentiates what is previously apprehended as a more or less confused whole; it is synthetic in character because it unites those sundered features in another order, and by doing so both enriches what is called the subject of the judgment and specialises the generality of what is called its predicate' (ib. 126). Conceptual knowledge is never of bare abstract

generality. 'Every great scientific generalisation carries with it a more and more definite individualising of the particulars in which it finds exemplification' (ib. 134). Moreover, 'in any judgment there is involved reference to a connexion of an objectively valid kind—that is to say, of a kind altogether distinct from the mere conjunction of such presentations or re-presentations as may be involved in forming the judgment' (ib. 131). Not that conceptual thinking is immune from error, for the necessity is necessity as conceived by us and holds of the apprehended contents, not of the contents of the object. Here Hicks introduces a highly important distinction between concepts and universals. A universal is a real character of things, a concept is a thought-product, a content apprehended, 'a way in which a universal is conceived' (ib. 135). Neither the concept nor the universal are, as such, existents; both are timeless contents, the one inhering in an existent mind, the other in an existent object. Apart from their 'ingredience' into actual entities—the affinity between Hicks's doctrine and Whitehead's is obvious—universals are real *per se* with that mode of timeless being to which Hicks, following Meinong, gives the name 'subsistence' (*Bestehen*). 'All existents must be real, but not all that is real exists.' He enumerates as constituents of the realm of subsistence, (*a*) qualities or characteristics, (*b*) relations, (*c*) numbers, (*d*) truths, and (*e*) moral and aesthetic values. On values, and on their timeless objectivity as subsisting, he dwells at length in the *Hibbert Lectures*. The article closes with acute criticisms of Bergson's antithesis of intuition and conceptual thinking and of Bradley's theory of judgement. In the second of the two papers, *On the Nature of Images*, Hicks faces a problem that has hardly received due attention from writers on theory of knowledge. His whole case against subjectivism rested on the principle that an apprehended content was not an existent entity; but do not images as apprehended contents which are also existents belie that principle? Against this objection he contends that imagining is of a

piece with perceiving in that 'where objective imagery is present, there is, as in perception, a real object upon which the act of discriminating is directed, and that this accounts for the objective character which the content apprehended seems to possess, although the number of the features actually discriminated is far less than in perception, and the portion of the apprehended content traceable to revived awareness considerably greater and more arbitrary and haphazard' (ib. 99–100). The argument is supported by a careful enunciation both of visual and auditory imagery and, especially, of the imagery of dreams. How it comes about that in the act of imagination subjective factors—i.e. previously *erlebt* awareness—affect the content apprehended, so as to give rise to constituents in it that seem to the imagining subject to be unmistakably objective, is, Hicks admits, an unanswered problem. It is the problem *inter alia* of *Einfühlung*, and Hicks's inquiry in this paper is a valuable contribution towards its solution.

Hicks's concentration on problems of epistemology was not prejudicial to his interest in other branches of philosophy. Theory of knowledge was never, in his mind, divorced from metaphysics. Nor did he ever lose his early zest for the speculative issues raised by the advance of science. Of the studies included in *Critical Realism*, one deals with *Bradley's Treatment of Nature*, another with *The Dynamic aspect of Nature*, and a third with *Eddington's Philosophy of Nature*. In the last-mentioned essay, while expressing unstinted admiration for Eddington's work in physics, and welcoming his 'resolute effort' to convey to us some idea of the bearing of these researches on philosophy, Hicks submits these 'excursions into metaphysics' to acute and searching criticism. In particular, he questions the elimination of the notion of substance from physical theory by the identification of mass with energy, the conception of the mind as reconstructing the external world on the basis of direct acquaintance with the ends of the nerve-fibres that run into our consciousness, the virtual assumption of an

array of qualitative material in a physical world that claims to be merely a complex of quantitative symbols, the suggestion that in the end the world consists of 'mind-stuff', and 'the contention that in consequence of the latest development of the quantum theory we seem driven to the conclusion that the laws of physics are not strictly causal, that there is no strictly causal behaviour anywhere'. In Hicks's judgement, 'the probability would surely seem to be that the apparent lawlessness is due to conditions of which we are ignorant rather than to arbitrary freaks on the part of the electrons themselves' (*C.R.* 228).

Hicks's second main interest was in the philosophy of religion. He had been religiously minded from his youth, and his faith had been nourished and strengthened in his student days by the influence of Martineau and James Drummond. He never wavered in his belief in a personal God, transcendent of Nature and immanent in man as the source of spiritual inspiration. 'God is a mind, the supreme Mind, a spiritual or self-conscious Being, the supreme spiritual Being—that is the cardinal affirmation of religion' (*H.L.* 142–3).[1] 'We mean by God, a consciousness that knows all that we cannot know, that loves beyond our powers of loving, that "realizes" the good where our faltering efforts fail' (ib. 152). Hence his avowed dissatisfaction with the non-theistic Humanism of Huxley, for whom in other respects he felt a deep admiration, and with that of Positivists like Frederic Harrison. For all his dispassionate approach to religion, Hicks was not untouched by missionary ardour, as is evidenced not only by his early ministry at Islington, but by the addresses, given annually during the the last thirty years of his life, at the Presbyterian College at Carmarthen. To this small College, founded in the late seventeenth century as one of the famous 'Dissenting Academies' of that age, he felt a strong attachment, and especially to its chief, Principal Evans, a theological scholar of recognized distinction. These addresses, a selection from

[1] *H.L.* = *Hibbert Lectures.*

which was published in 1928 under the title *Ways towards the Spiritual Life*, with a dedication to Evans's memory, were directed primarily to the needs of students leaving the College for the Christian ministry. Both in thought and style they are less academic than any other of Hicks's writings, and abound in illustration from his favourite literary authors, such as Ruskin, Arnold, and, especially, Wordsworth's *Prelude* and *Excursion*. They deal with such subjects as the Vocation of the Scholar, the function of the Church as the free fellowship of the Spirit, Modernism in Theology, and the bearings of Christianity on Modern Democracy and the Youth movement. He speaks throughout as a Christian to Christians; insisting firmly that his uncompromising rejection of orthodox interpretations of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in no way precluded his acceptance of what he held to be the essentials of Christianity.

> If the religious principles [he wrote], of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the finite soul,[1] the supremacy of love, are to be presented with the persuasive power with which they are capable of being presented, they require to be conceived in concrete embodiment, in a human personality; in one of ourselves, to whom we can look up as the leader of our pilgrim-troop into the ways of peace and blessedness. . . . And if to-day we are able to stand confidingly in the presence of God, it is Christ who has brought us there. If, in any imperfect way, we have attained to the level of divine sonship, it has been in and through the strength of his spirit, by the influence of his life and character. . . . The divinity of Christ may be a fact, and a stupendous fact, even though no supernatural efficacy ever issued from him; he proved himself to be the Son of God, not by changing water into wine, not even by raising Lazarus from the dead, but by converting the sinful into the saintly, and by shedding the light of what is eternal upon the transient years of our earthly lot.

In one of the most striking of the Carmarthen addresses, on 'Atonement for the Unpardonable Sin', given in 1917 under

[1] Hicks stated the grounds for his belief in Immortality in the Essex Hall lecture of 1934 on *Human Personality and Future Life*.

stress of the World War, Hicks comes closer than elsewhere to a consideration of the problem of suffering and evil. But neither here, nor in his *Hibbert Lectures*, does he do more than touch its fringes. The hope expressed in the Preface to the last mentioned book that he will be able at a later day to deal with the subject, was never fulfilled. I think that Hicks was perplexed and troubled by the problem and that his sensitive nature shrank from facing it. In any case, his refusal to admit any attenuation of the dividing line between human selves was a bar to a just appreciation of vicarious suffering and of the Christian gospel of redemption. He drew a sharp distinction between doctrine and dogma; and while acknowledging the value of creeds and ecclesiastical institutions was inclined to disparage their significance for the religious life. Similarly with corporate worship; prayer to him was the direct communing of the individual soul with God. His faith was summed up in the words of the Fourth Gospel: 'God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

Hicks's approach to religion was, first and foremost, from the intellectual angle. Not that man's knowing of God was exclusive of emotional or volitional activity; rather, it carried with it the consecration of man's entire personality to God's service. 'These three components'—i.e. cognition, will, and feeling—'although logically distinguishable, are never really separable in the concrete life of a mature mind' (*H.L.* 96).

> The mind of man is essentially a unity in which these various factors necessarily imply each other. They are, that is to say, correlative ways in which the one central unity expresses itself. But if we ask what that central unity is which permeates the many-sided aspects of our mental life—its several activities of perceiving, imagining, believing and willing,—there can be but one answer: it is the faculty of knowing or thinking, the faculty, in other words, of self-consciousness. Knowing or thinking is not, that is to say, one of many faculties; it is that which forms the basis of, that which characterizes and co-ordinates, all our mental activities (ib. 130–1).

Since, then, religion is primarily a form of knowledge, the philosophical theory of religion is integral to the religious life. This is the theme of the *Hibbert Lectures*, on 'The Philosophical Bases of Theism', delivered at University College, London, and in the University of Manchester in the autumn of 1931. Their publication was delayed for nearly six years, owing to Hicks's increasing ill health. The lectures were designed, as he tells us in the Preface, to help those who have lost faith in 'a miraculously attested revelation and are unable to accept the "external warrant" of an infallible Church or of divinely inspired Scriptures', and are yet 'persuaded that spiritual life is a reality and that they largely owe their sense of its reality to the teaching of Christ and the Christian Church'. Not that there is any trace of apologetics; the treatment throughout is rigorously philosophical. The field is that of natural as exclusive of revealed theology, if by the latter anything more is meant than what can be grasped by man's 'normal rational intelligence' (ib. 122). The claim of the mystic to a privileged illumination is subjected to trenchant criticism. In Hicks's view, as in Bishop Butler's, any such pretension is 'a horrid, a very horrid, thing'. What the mystic says is, in short, not evidence; partly because it is incommunicable, defying formulation in conceptual terms, and partly because it involves a contradiction. Here Hicks falls into line with Dr. Tennant. 'The mystic cannot have it both ways. If he knows the Absolute as an Other, he cannot be this Other; if he has become this Other, *he* cannot know it because *he* has ceased to be.' (ib. 118). That there is an immediate knowledge, above the level of rational mediation, Hicks readily allowed; he finds it exemplified in the spiritual vision of a Mozart, a Newton, or a Wordsworth. Such religious experiences, 'implying both a continuous process of self-disclosure on the part of God and a gradual realizing the significance of that disclosure on the part of man' (ib. 148), furnish valid evidence for a faith in Theism. But the experiences of the mystics witness only

to subjective certitude, not to objective certainty; too often their immediacy falls below and not above the plane of logical ratiocination.

The chief merit of Hicks's natural theology is that he handles a time-honoured theme to novel and constructive purpose, presenting the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral arguments in correlation, as successive steps in a single chain of inference. Each in turn is presented in a form that goes far to meet the objections that have been raised against their traditional presentation by modern scientific and philosophical thought. No one of the three arguments can claim to be demonstrative; but together they justify, on strong grounds of probability, a reasonable faith in God. Hicks had no patience with the restricted view of reason as exemplified solely in processes of deduction and inductive ratiocination that, under the influence of the mathematical sciences, has increasingly dominated European thought during the last three centuries.

> Reason [he writes], is by no manner of means merely a capacity of forming and using abstract ideas; it is just as essential to recognize the unification and synthesis involved in the process of thinking or reasoning as to recognize the analysis which is perhaps its more obviously apparent feature. Reason is not only the faculty of distinguishing and discriminating; it is the faculty likewise of apprehending the real world widely and steadily and connectedly (ib. 128).

At every stage the argument of the Lectures is controlled by Hicks's views on epistemology. (1) His conviction that 'conscious minds stand to nature',—i.e. 'to the sum of inter-related objects with which natural science is concerned'—'in a relation absolutely other than that in which one object in nature stands to another object in nature,' (ib. 66), and that 'the self which the individual gradually comes to know is never perceived even as an inner object', being 'that which is implicated in all our mental states or processes, but is not the single object of any', rules out a Naturalist explanation of man's conscious experience and

secures for him the status of a spiritual being—a person—in a spiritual environment. 'Unless we are prepared . . . to relinquish the attempt to frame any intelligible conception of nature at all', we are logically driven to acknowledge that there is real existence beyond nature. In this sense, though in this sense only, we are entitled to speak of a reality that is supernatural. (2) In the second place, he asserts uncompromisingly that the divine self-consciousness, like the human, is other than, and impervious to, the self-consciousness of any other existent being. 'It is meaningless to speak of one consciousness as "included" in another, or to speak of a Mind that "includes" all other minds, and of a man as, in such sense, "a part of God"' (ib. 261). 'If God be an *existent* conscious subject, His consciousness must be in *Him*, must be *His* consciousness, and cannot be the consciousness of any other subject whatsoever' (ib. 145). Pantheism, in other words, is self-contradictory. Thus far Hicks is at one with orthodox Christian theology. The breach arises when he goes on to affirm (3), again in strict accord with his epistemology, that God's activity of self-consciousness, like that of man, is necessarily temporal. 'A timeless life', he says elsewhere, 'is a contradiction in terms.' The truths which are apprehended may be timeless, but the act of apprehension, the knowing, is, like all activity, a temporal event; 'it occurs or happens at a particular stage in the history of an individual mind. A knower who knows, but does not know *at* any period, or *through* any period of time is, in short, a contradictory notion' (ib. 257). To speak, as does Professor Taylor in his Gifford Lectures, of an abiding present in which there is no successiveness is, on Hicks's view, unmeaning; the term 'present' implies correlation with a past and a future. To the Thomist doctrine that in God the distinction between essence and existence is transcended, and that since goodness is timeless, so also must God, who is identical with goodness, be likewise timeless' Hicks replies (ib. 258): 'If God be identical with His goodness, I

presume we must also say that God is identical with His love, with His knowledge, with His insight, and so on. And that would mean that God's love and knowledge and insight are one and the same. Well, if anyone is prepared to maintain that thesis, I am afraid anything I might say would be unavailing.' (4) This last criticism raises the problem of the relation of God to values. Of the objectivity of values, and especially of moral values, Hicks is assured; they 'subsist', as do all universals, with a mode of being distinct from that of temporal existence. The influence of Meinong's teaching on his epistemology is here decisive. Values 'do not constitute God's mind, as an existence, any more than they constitute ours' (ib. 143), though they are known by Him as objects; they subsist timelessly in their own right. Yet, we are told, they are 'dependent' upon God. In a somewhat cryptic passage in the seventh Lecture, he writes as follows:

> I do not say, as some have said, that the moral ideal must exist in the mind of God, because as an ideal it does not seem to me to be an existent, either in a mind or elsewhere. I would, however, submit that only on the assumption of the existence of a Mind by whom it is known in its entirety and on whom its reality is dependent can we rationally think of this ideal as subsisting at all. An absolute moral law is conceivable only on the supposition that it has its ground in an existent Being who is supremely good.

Finally (5), as regards the relation of the world to God, Hicks shows himself sympathetic to the Aristotelian doctrine that physical nature is 'the uncreated counterpart of God's being' (ib. 179). 'The idea of creation as an event which occurred at a definite date in the past calls to be unhesitatingly rejected' (ib. 176). The dependence of the world on God 'cannot be causal dependence in the strict sense of that phrase'. 'If the notion of "creation" is to be sustained at all, it can only be in the sense of continuous creation, of a constant dependence of the world on the Supreme Being.' And he quotes with approval Ulrici's dictum: 'God is not *first* God and *then* creator of

the world, but *as* God He is creator, and only *as* creator of the world is He God.' The world, in short, is as necessary to God as God is to the world. In this matter Hicks avowedly parts company not only with the Christian theological tradition, but with his own revered teacher, Martineau. Here and at every point in his lucid argument, impressive alike in its constructive development and in the measured and penetrating criticism of opposing views, Hicks adheres faithfully to the principles he had reached in his studies in the theory of knowledge. While giving full recognition to the immeasurable richness and, in a guarded sense, the infinity and perfection of the Divine intellect, he will never allow that it is, in principle, free from the conditions that are essential to intellect in man. Similarly, with the subject-object relationship, which holds of God's mind as it holds of man's. The conception of man's intercourse with God as a subject-subject relationship, which has played so large a role in recent theological speculations, alike in Germany and in our own country, was alien to his way of thinking and is passed over without mention in the *Hibbert Lectures*.

After his retirement from University College in 1928, Hicks had leisure for writing on a more extended scale than had hitherto been practicable. Two oversea journeys, to the meeting of the International Congress of Philosophy at Harvard in September 1926, and to South Africa with the British Association in 1929, brought him not only change of scene but intellectual stimulus. He had arrived at definite conclusions and was prepared to defend them, both by constructive argument and by criticism of rival theories, with the assurance that he would obtain an attentive hearing from all serious students of philosophy. The Carmarthen lectures appeared in the very year of his retirement and were followed by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on 'Theory of Knowledge' (1929), the Essex Hall lecture on *Human Personality and a Future Life* (1934), and in the same year by his *Berkeley* (in the Leaders of

Philosophy Series). This book, which was at once acknowledged as a classic, comprised, in addition to an account of Berkeley's life and personality, a critical exposition of his philosophy and a masterly survey of its relationship to antecedent and contemporary thought. It elicited a letter of appreciation from Henri Bergson, which gave Hicks much pleasure. Of the *Hibbert Lectures* (1937) and the volume of collected papers, entitled *Critical Realism* (1938), we have already spoken. Both works were prepared for the press under growing stress of illness. His love of mountain-climbing remained undiminished, and led him in later years to strain his physical energy to breaking-point. 'I find climbing', he writes from Coniston in 1930, 'more strenuous of course than in the old days. I get nasty heart attacks and have to take things more slowly, but still I find invigoration on the heights.' And, a year later, he writes of a visit to Zermatt: 'We had a splendid time. It was wonderful, those massive peaks all covered with snow, and the giant Matterhorn towering above them. We got on one of the glaciers of Monte Rosa, and had a number of climbing expeditions. But, alas, my climbing days are well-nigh over. I found that I had repeatedly to take long rests, and that it was making great strains on the heart.' Hicks's last days were clouded with anxiety and sorrow, and not only from ill health. When a bad fall on his staircase in 1932 caused much bodily suffering, he stubbornly refused to take medical advice. In 1935 he lost his second wife, Frances Jane, the widow of Dr. E. C. Aguggia, to whom he had been married twelve years. Many of his former friends and associates in Cambridge were now dead; and the current of philosophical inquiry in that University was being diverted into channels with which Hicks had little sympathy. He felt more and more the lack of congenial intellectual companionship. For two years before his death he was unable to leave his house and from December 1940 onwards was confined to his bedroom. His last journey from Cambridge was to visit the Carmarthen

College in May 1938, in the company of his brother Albert, to give his annual address. The outbreak of war brought with it a strain both of mind and body, with which he was hardly in a condition to cope. Of his three sisters, the eldest Victoria was killed and another gravely injured when their house at St. Leonards was wrecked by enemy action. His housekeeper nursed him with devoted solicitude, assisting him, whenever the alerts sounded, down two flights of stairs to the cellars. His solace lay in his work, in which he persisted to the last, and in the visits of a few of his old London friends, especially Professor Susan Stebbing, Professor Dorothy Tarrant, and Dr. Ginsburg, whom the war had led to take up their residence in Cambridge. He still delighted in reminiscences of the past and in his favourite works of literature.

He read me [writes Miss Stebbing] a large part of the letter Huxley wrote to Kingsley about the death of Huxley's little son, and said how much he admired Huxley's agnostic attitude. That his mind dwelt on this was shown by his twice reading that bit to me. He told me how he had managed just once to crowd in at one of Huxley's lectures, and how he read all that Huxley wrote. During the last year he read a lot of poetry, and on three occasions he read me poems of William Watson. He deplored his neglect by contemporary writers. He read the poems well in a certain fashion and with much feeling. I felt he was very lonely and very glad to have someone who would just listen to him. He talked a lot about the Lake District and about his first wife, dwelling much on her long illness. He asked me whether I believed in immortality and said that he felt unsure; and yet we could not wholly die.

The end came quite suddenly on Sunday, 16 February 1941. The books he was reading for the *Hibbert Journal* Survey of Philosophical Literature lay scattered about his bed. He was buried three days later in Cambridge cemetery.

In his will, besides a bequest to the Alexander Hospital for Children with Hip Disease, Hicks left £1,500 to Manchester College, Oxford, £1,500 to the British Academy, and his philosophical library, together with the residue of

his property, to University College, London. He had no children by either marriage.

That Hicks left no finished system of philosophy was doubtless due in part to lack of speculative imagination. He cannot be ranked with thinkers like Bradley, Alexander, or Dr. Whitehead. But he threw much light—a dry light, as befits a philosopher—on many of the most important problems of modern thought. He came, in his later years, to be recognized as one of the most learned and judicious thinkers of his generation. As early as 1904 his old University of Manchester had conferred on him the degree of D.Litt. On his retirement in 1920 he became Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at University College. In the preceding year he had received the honour of election to a Fellowship of the British Academy. His title to distinction is the published work by which he himself would most have wished to be remembered. Prophecy is always precarious; but it is surely not unlikely that, when the currents of philosophical thought, now diffused along many and devious courses, unite once more in a main stream, Hicks will be recognized as a pioneer who shaped with infinite patience and clear insight the materials for an enduring synthesis in the theory of knowledge. Nor can his surviving friends and pupils easily forget the disinterested seeker after truth, whose short spare figure and frail body veiled an iron constitution and an undaunted energy, and whose kindly and affectionate nature, simplicity of heart, and unfailing courtesy made him, to those who were privileged to share his intimacy, one of the most lovable of men.

W. G. DE BURGH

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