

## THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

millions chase each other through the vast depths of space. Our own "human nature," which exalted itself into an image of God in its anthropistic illusion, sinks to the level of a placental mammal, which has no more value for the universe at large than the ant, the fly of a summer's day, the microscopic infusorium, or the smallest bacillus. Humanity is but a transitory phase of the evolution of an eternal substance, a particular phenomenal form of matter and energy, the true proportion of which we soon perceive when we set it on the background of infinite space and eternal time.

Since Kant explained space and time to be merely "forms of perception"—space the form of external, time of internal, sensitivity—there has been a keen controversy, which still continues, over this important problem. A large section of modern metaphysicians have persuaded themselves that this "critical fact" possesses a great importance as the starting-point of "a purely idealist theory of knowledge," and that, consequently, the natural opinion of the ordinary healthy mind as to the *reality* of time and space is swept aside. This narrow and ultra-idealist conception of time and space has become a prolific source of error. It overlooks the fact that Kant only touched one side of the problem, the *subjective* side, in that theory, and recognized the equal validity of its *objective* side. "Time and space," he said, "have empirical reality, but transcendental ideality." Our modern monism is quite compatible with this thesis of Kant's, but not with the one-sided exaggeration of the subjective aspect of the problem; the latter leads logically to the absurd idealism that culminates in Berkeley's thesis, "Bodies are but ideas; their essence is in their perception." The thesis should be read thus: "Bodies are only ideas