

“What is the truly Real,” form the beginning or the end of philosophical thought? Is it the requisite or the result of all philosophical reasoning? Those who affirm the latter, who start professedly without bias and prejudice, looking at the world around and within them in an impartial spirit, and hope to arrive, by patient analysis and by lengthened trains of reasoning, at a final result or highest abstraction, would fain offer the latter as their solution of the problem of Reality. These philosophers may be called Phenomenists. Opposed to them stands another class of thinkers who are convinced of the necessity of first attaining a definite standpoint, a fixed centre of reference, a fundamental conviction in the light of which to gain an understanding and an interpretation of the many-sided appearances in the worlds of nature and mind, of society and history. For them philosophy only begins when at least a preliminary answer is given to the question, What is the truly Real? This class of thinkers may be termed Ontologists. Both classes of thinkers are represented in this country and abroad. Professor Wundt of Leipzig is probably the foremost living representative of the former, Mr Bradley of the latter class of thinkers. The former class is, apparently, at the end of the century, in the ascendant in Germany, the latter in this country.¹

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Phenomen-
ists and
Ontologists.

¹ The opinion expressed in the text, which was written six years ago, is, so far as British Thought is concerned, confirmed by the appearance, since the end of the century, of several important works dealing with the ontological problem, and notably by the publication in the current year (1912) of James

Ward's Second Series of Gifford Lectures (1907-10): 'The Realm of Ends, or Pluralism and Theism,' and Mr Bernard Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures (1911-12): 'The Principle of Individuality and Value.' So far as German Thought is concerned, a revival of the metaphysical interest is unmistakable.