

thing is made that is made."* To what extent and in what directions the world is plastic we can only find out by trying; but at any rate we are sure that it is not *indifferent* to us, and thus Humanism "sweeps away entirely the stock excuse for fatalism and despair."†

Prof. James pointed out that the will to believe comes into operation only when there is a "living" option. Why this is so Mr. Schiller attempts to explain. An option is 'living' for us when the hypothesis suggested does not conflict with "the apperceiving mass of beliefs of which we find ourselves already possessed."‡ But these beliefs are themselves in large measure "the common-sense traditions of the race." They appear to us who float far down the stream of time in the guise of universal and necessary, "axioms," the opposite of which it is impossible to conceive. In truth, every one of them, Mr. Schiller contends, was originally a "postulate," constructed by our minds in order to enable us to satisfy our theoretical and practical needs. Thus the logical law of Identity was a device for harmonizing the chaos of sensible experiences with which the race began. In a similar way was evolved the conception of "one Time and Space as single continuous receptacles; the distinction between thoughts and things, matter and mind; the conception of classes with sub-classes within them; the separation of fortuitons from regularly caused connexions."§ Our ancestors slowly worked out these things of thought "in their attempts to get the chaos of their crude individual experiences into a more shareable and manageable shape." Their

practical value in enabling us to find our way in life and thought has been so firmly established by long experience that it is only by a violent effort we can even admit that they did not belong to the original structure of the mind, but are as much inductions as the "more recent ones of the atom, of inertia, of reflex action, or of fitness to survive."** Nevertheless "postulates" they were, and postulates they remain, differing from postulates that have never established their right to exist only in the fact that they have stood the test of experience, by enabling us "the better to foresee the future, communicate with one another, steer our lives by rule, and have a cleaner, clearer, more inclusive mental view." These axiomatic principles are not likely to be upset by future experiences, but at the same time we must not claim for them the rank of ultimate or absolute truths; they are not determinations of already existing things, but merely the ideal instruments by which we systematize our knowledge and our life. With this we must be content. Perfect harmony of the true, the beautiful and the good is an ideal, which lies far before us, and which must not be confused with the empty abstractions of absolutist philosophies.

It has taken us so long to get "oriented" in this new philosophy—and even now our illumination is by no means perfect—that anything like a complete estimate of it is impossible. I must therefore confine myself to the suggestion of one or two difficulties which lie in the way of its acceptance.

The most paradoxical doctrine advanced by Humanism is that the world itself undergoes a process of

*Ibid, page 12. †Ibid, page 13. ‡Mind N.S., No. 52. §Ibid, page 401. **Ibid, page 460.