

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE late Dr McTaggart left behind him a paper of instructions in which he expressed the wish that I should undertake the publication of the concluding volume of his *Nature of Existence*, if he should die before the manuscript had been printed. This wish conferred an honour, whilst it imposed an obligation. I regret that the pressure of my academic work—heavy before, and greatly, suddenly, and permanently increased by McTaggart's lamented death—has prevented me from fulfilling my task earlier.

It was McTaggart's custom, before publishing a book, to make five successive complete drafts of it. Each draft, except the last, was submitted, when finished, to certain of his friends for criticisms and suggestions, and was exposed to the full force of his own unsparing judgment in respect of both literary form and logical rigour. The next draft would embody such additions and alterations as his own reflections or the comments of others seemed to make desirable. Naturally the changes in the later drafts were, as a rule, comparatively trifling. The position which had been reached at McTaggart's death, in the case of *The Nature of Existence*, was as follows. Drafts A and B were completed, and he had been busily engaged for some time in revising Draft B and writing Draft C. Draft C existed in typescript up to the end of Chap. XLVII, and in manuscript it extended to the end of what is now Section 567 of Chap. XLVIII. The book is therefore printed from Draft C up to the latter point, and thenceforward from Draft B. It seems unlikely that McTaggart would have made any very substantial modifications, if he had lived.

I have divided the book into numbered sections; have filled in all cross-references; and have constructed an *Analytical Table of Contents* and an *Index of Terms*, thus bringing it into line with the first volume and with the rest of McTaggart's published works. The only changes which I have made are verbal ones, and they are few in number and slight in extent.

In conclusion, I must thank the University Press, its officials, and its craftsmen, for their courtesy, and for the trouble which they have taken with the printing. Nor can I withhold a tribute from the experts at Miss Pate's University Typewriting Offices, whose ability to decipher McTaggart's extremely difficult handwriting has lightened the labour and extorted the admiration of his Editor.

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