

FRANCIS HERBERT BRADLEY was born in Clapham, London on 30 January 1846 to Emma Linton, the second wife of the evangelical clergyman Charles Bradley, the father of twenty-two children in two marriages. The family moved to Cheltenham in 1854 and Bradley went to Cheltenham College, Marlborough School and University College, Oxford where in 1867 he was awarded first class in classical moderations, and in 1869 second class in literae humaniores. In 1870 he became a life Fellow of Merton College, on condition, with which he complied, that he remained a bachelor. He took little part in the intellectual life of Oxford after 1871 because of severe ill health. He became more and more reclusive as he grew older, but he played his part in College administration. In the winters he travelled on the continent for the benefit of his health and became a close friend of Miss (or Mrs) E. Radcliff, to whom he wrote nearly every day. He dedicated Appearance and Reality, Essays in Truth and Reality, and the second edition of The Principles of Logic to her. He was also a friend of the famous novelist Elinor Glynn whose novel Halcyone includes a character, Cheiron, based on Bradley. He was the recipient of many awards, including an honorary doctorate from Glasgow University in 1883, membership of the Royal Danish Academy in 1922, an honorary fellowship of the British Academy in 1923, and the Order of Merit in 1924. He died of blood poisoning in 1924.

He was, like Green and Caird, greatly influenced by Hegel, but never regarded himself as an Hegelian because of the extent to which he disagreed with Hegel's fundamental ideas. He is widely regarded as the most intellectually rigorous of the British Idealists. Unlike most of his fellow idealists who had practical experience of the social evils of Victorian Britain, he wrote little about political issues, and is believed to have taken a conservative stance on the important social and political questions of the day.

Biographical: A. E. Taylor, 'Francis Herbert Bradley, 1846-1924', Proceedings of the British Academy, xi (1924-5); G. R. G. Mure, 'F. H. Bradley: Towards a Portrait', Encounter, xvi (1961); A. E. Taylor, 'Bradley, Francis Herbert,' Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930.

Principal works: Ethical Studies (London, Kegan Paul, 1876); The Principles of Logic, 2nd edition (London, Oxford University Press, 1922); Appearance and Reality (London, Oxford University Press, 1893; 2nd ed. 1897); Essays on Truth and Reality (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1914); Collected Essays (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935).