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G O D A N D T H E A B S O L U T E .

INTRODUCTION.

The special sciences are gradually widening the area of their investigation. Old assumptions are rigorously examined and certain terms, hitherto uncritically used, are acquiring a fuller and more precise connotation. Scientific thought, in many instances, is thus passing the old-time conventional boundaries and is approaching or even entering the metaphysical. This expansion will yield a philosophy of nature which will make new contacts or deepen existing ones with philosophy itself to which will be presented the task of co-ordinating the philosophy of nature with the philosophy of spirit.

Theology¹, in its own way, has always done what the special sciences for their own purpose are beginning to do, viz. to reach a general ultimate conclusion. To elicit this implicit trespass is to clarify thought on religion. An utterly inarticulate religious experience would provide at most mere data for a science or philosophy. But whenever religion in the general sense becomes articulate, be it only to declare "Allah is one" or "Jehovah is God", it provides not only data but also, at least, implies an interpretation thereof that stands as a challenge~~k~~ or an endorsement to its scientific or philosophic equivalents. /In

¹ Used merely to connote the science of the object of religious experience.

In the articulation of this religious experience there are several grades which must be clearly discriminated. There is first the immediate, uncriticised utterances of faith such as we find in religious biography and confession. The grandeur of the content here by no means guarantees the accuracy of the forms of articulation. Further, the religious life may be examined and from it deductions may be made and the utterances referred to above may be collated and systematised so as to form a body of truth after the type of the special sciences. If the limitations of such a pursuit were strictly respected, there could be no conflict with any other special science or with philosophy itself. Its limited validity and strength would lie in its internal coherence and effectiveness for its specific purpose. A third articulation would be reached (and actually often is reached) when a whole-world view is expressed and upon the religious experience alone not a special science but a philosophy is grounded. It is this articulation which is challenged and justly challenged. There may and must be many special sciences. Philosophy must be one. The religious experience is one of many. Its specific contribution to truth is only part of the whole truth of the universe. The unity which philosophy seeks can never be attained by the subordination of the deliverances of other realms to the dictation of religious testimony. The whole must judge every part. Much confusion would be avoided if religion were accepted as an ex-

/perience

perience suitable to be articulated into a special science but not by any means comprehensive enough to be the exclusive data for a philosophy. This would confer rights as well as impose limitations. The biologist refuses to describe or define the processes, which he studies, by the categories supplied by mechanism. The theologian in like manner is entitled to use categories indigenous to the field he investigates. No purely biological processes could ever account for the religious experience. But so unique is the religious experience in its relation to the rest of experience that it seems to have an absolute of its own and so we find its object referred to as the creator of the world, the providential immanence, etc. But this is trespassing in other fields. For these are objects to which there are approaches and of which there are interpretations other than the religious one. God and the Absolute are both ultimates but each in a sense different from the other. To consider the deeply involved contacts of these two ultimates is the purpose of this thesis.

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

Religion, like philosophy, has its origin in experience. Philosophy starts with a mind knowing a vast concourse of objects and develops by cognising that concourse as a unity or world. Religion starts with a unique experience. If every deduction drawn from that experience were erroneous, the experi-

ence would remain. It can and must be explained: it cannot be repudiated. If the deductions drawn from that experience lack the logical coherence and force of those found in a natural science, it cannot be disputed that the religious experience itself is par excellence. No other experience can compare with it in intensity and character.

"Yea with one voice O world though thou deniest
Stand thou on that side for on this am I".

Augustine says, "I know not how any rational demonstration of God could satisfy me; for I do not believe I know anything as I desire to know God".¹ Newman speaks in the same way "Starting then with the being of God (which as I have said is as certain to me as the certainty of my own being)".² Whatever ultimate investigation may yield on this point, whether an unsuspected depth of one's own self or an objective supreme being, here is data which compared with the data of the special sciences is unique and overwhelming. It is not the merely given. It is the captivating. Inevitably only he who experiences it can appreciate this data. Any analysis from another point of view, valuable and authoritative in its own realm though it be, is no substitute for or refutation of this experience.

In any experience, the self, like Wordsworth's cloud
"moveth altogether if it move at all". But in the religious
/experience

¹ Sol. 1. 2. 7.

² Apologia. 217. Everyman's Series.

The term "God" here appears. Hereinafter it will simply connote the object or the origin of the religious experience.

experience the whole self is more deeply involved than in any other experience. In extreme instances there may be an emotional, a cognitive or a conative emphasis. But that is exceptional and merely incidental. In religion the initial unrest is not due to an apparent contradiction eliciting a deeper analysis and synthesis. It is the birth pangs of a whole self "moving about in worlds not realised". Its satisfaction lies not merely in the attainment of logical coherence but in loving adoration and self-forgetful service as well. The religious experience comes not to destroy but fulfil a personality. Characteristics are not obliterated but sublimated. Hence individual religious experiences reveal a wide range of diversity. Nevertheless in religious experience, particularly of the higher kind, there are great unchanging universal characteristics.

The subject of this experience¹ finds relief from his deepest loneliness. He sees that his spiritual life is not enisled but annexed to an appropriate universe. He feels he is saved, saved from a helpless isolation: he enters a spiritual context wherein his life finds a new and deeper significance and purpose. This inner adjustment may be variously interpreted according to past experience or contemporary thought but its essential character is at-one-ment. That outgoing instinctive craving of the self finds an environment and, in correspondence with it, a satisfaction

¹ Denoted hereafter by the term "saint".

faction. This urge in its highest reach seems to carry the very self with it. Hence its tragic intensity. Has it outdone itself, is it an audacious impertinence and is it to find the universe, so responsive to other modes of approach, to be a spiritual vacuum? Is this new emergence merely an orphan fact? The saint declares he has found it otherwise. The deep without has answered to the deep within.

This experience is not merely the discovery of a unity but is also an adoption into it. The life of the whole begins to fill the part in a unique way. There is a new sense of power. The narrow unsundered self does not appropriate this power to devote⁴ to its own selfish purposes. This power changes what it charges. The abstract self in expanding with the life of the whole comes more fully under the control of the whole. The resultant experience is more than a mere inner ecstasy, more than a mere strengthening of the will; heart and mind are transformed too. So this experience has its trans-subjective effects. The saint overcomes the world. The overcoming may have different modes in different saints or in the same saint at different times. For the other-worldliness of the saint has varying relations to the so-called "this-world". It may be a flight from this world, a monastic or mystical exit. It may accept this world as the symbol, and its activities as the sacrament, of the spiritual or other-world. It may also adopt this world as the means to its end. This world may be accepted as just the raw material to be informed and fashioned by spiritual
/agency

agency into the other-world. Diverse are the religious interpretations of this world. But, as the saint accepts his world, and perhaps for his highest good at the time rightly accepts it, so he overcomes it. He lives an empowered life.

This is accompanied by a feeling of rest and security which is generally in some measure an immediate endowment and not the reward for a prolonged effort. This deep, calm, satisfying experience is frequently enjoyed before any analysis has been made. And when an analysis has been made it does not find the grounds of this rest and security in the unreality of the human failure or in the inevitability of human success. That would give to the self a prominence that does not belong to it in religious experience.

"Not what I am but what O Lord Thou art

That that alone can be ^{my}the soul's true rest".

The philosopher confidently tackles an apparently recalcitrant fact not because it necessarily reveals the promise of capitulation to an ascertained unity but because the unity so far ascertained inspires him with the hope that all is a unity. The saint's rest comes not from the discovery of anything hitherto unsuspected in himself but rather because he has found that his spiritual nature is not wandering in an inhospitable universe but has a home, and that in God. This rest lay not in what he would be but in what One already was - an actual present fact. In the immediate religious ecstasy neither the failure nor success of the self is; God is all and in all. When the emotional

/intensity

intensity yields its cognitive implications or conative applications, or both, the saint's rest is still in what God is and in what God achieves through His servants' agency. There is an inward harmony deeper, richer, more possessive than the satisfaction given by achievement in any other department of experience.

Without assuming anything with regard to the objective reality of the source of this experience, we can analyse a little what seems thus to appear to the saint. Every genuine experience yields an ultimate. That is not something merely deduced but something that subdues and captivates. There the ultimate is consciously felt as the Alpha as well as the Omega of experience. The source of this experience moves the saint to awe. This has a unique quality. The term "fear" without qualification does not connote it. The fear of God is something quite distinct. The terror that a physical monstrosity can create is far removed from it. The latter lacks the intimate and personal grip the former brings. This, in the riper religious experience, is often sublimated but never eliminated. Yet this awe is accompanied by a fascination. The saint is held in its superb spell. Whether this is felt immediately as in a mystic rapture or mediately through a religious ministry, its incomparable grandeur is unquestionable. It is also the same whether God comes as the contrast in an ideal which humbles the saint or as a grace which raises and exalts him. And this object so beautiful and awe-inspiring is one of measureless power. In His
/presence

presence the saint feels weak and worthless. It is power that is akin to the religious experience. Whether it of itself can yield a ~~general~~ omnipotence or omnipresence is at least doubtful. These things at the moment are not in the saint's consciousness. The overwhelmingness of the object of religious experience has an omnipotence and omnipresence of its own kind. But this should not be transported from its own field of reference to another without at least a recognition of the consequent change in connotation that must have automatically taken place. Above all this object of religious experience is one of worth. It produces primarily not intellectual investigation nor practical activity but adoration. The characteristic attitude before it is worship. The non-self that confronts the self in religious experience is always ^{not to be} higher than the self.

THE DISTINCTNESS OF THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

The term "religion" is not a mere synonym for something else and the experience it connotes is not a mere aspect of some wider experience. [Theology is as distinct a science as chemistry or biology and its data is as homogeneous as that of other sciences.] Yet the relation of religious experience to the rest differs from that of any other to its fellows. It is not one among the many but something that may fill and transform the rest. It does not supplement the kingdoms of this world but endeavours to make them constituents of its own.

/There

There is nothing a man can do that cannot be done religiously or irreligiously. As Bosanquet says a man may even "sin religiously". Yet this ubiquity of the religious experience does not involve that religion is resolvable into something else. Like philosophy, it seeks an ultimate. Yet it is not the "metaphysics of the vulgar". One sees, in such philosopher saints as Augustine, Plotinus and Eckhart, the saint seeking and, to some extent, finding a God of great and attractive fulness and the philosopher concluding on an Absolute exceedingly empty or abstract. Neither interest was weak enough to be suppressed by the other and each was so distinct from the other as to prevent capitulation in either direction. The religious apprehension is 'sui generis'. The saint's interpretation of it may be inaccurate but he will resent a complete denial of its reality or a resolution of it into something else. For the religious attitude is quite distinct from the philosophic. Anything, "flower in the crannied wall" etc. will yield to ultimate research an absolute. Yet nothing merely so investigated will yield the God of religious experience. Francis Thompson could not find God though he descended "the labyrinthine ways of my own mind" and "troubled the gold gateways of the stars". Yet these all proclaimed a unity, even a oneness of purpose. Thompson consciously beset behind, before and within with the Absolute confesses that in a sense he wants more. A change of attitude is adopted - "Naked I wait thy
/love's

love's uplifted stroke" and without cognising another fact, he enjoys a deep, satisfying experience. In the absence of this attitude "neither in this mountain nor in that" will the religious experience be enjoyed. The object of the religious experience awes, elates and transforms the saint. The philosopher would not be less a philosopher, did not the Absolute do that for him. The Absolute is the goal of a purely intellectual search. God is the object of a personal quest we will name provisionally "faith". The philosopher must find unity whether personality is found or not. The saint, with certain exceptions, must find a personal objective whether unity be found or not.

And religion is as distinct from morality as it is from philosophy. If the moral quest is subsumed by religion it is transformed in the subsumption. Religion is not the handmaid of morality to bring success where failure would otherwise be inevitable. The confessions of Paul, Augustine, Bunyan, Wesley, etc. may be interpreted to imply that their great endeavour prior to conversion was to keep the law. This is partly if not wholly wrong. Had they kept the law to the last jot or tittle without finding God, their anguish would not have been appeased. The inadequacy of morality for the religious aspirant is revealed as much in the moral successes as in the moral failures of such persons. It is often said that Paul's conversion turned his moral failures into successes. It would be equally true at least to say that it turned his moral successes into

failures. The fact that he was "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless"¹ appeared to him after his conversion, as "dung". The aspirant after eternal life was not seeking a power that could turn a moral failure into a success. "All these things have I kept."² He was seeking a satisfaction no moral success could give. Whether there is such a thing as mere morality and if so, whether there is a type of person to whom it yields an adequate satisfaction, is not in question. What is obvious is that it is not a substitute for or an equivalent to religion. Were a saint's moral conduct to coincide outwardly with that of a moralist the significance of the saint's conduct for himself would be vastly different from that of the moralist's conduct for himself. Religion is a distinct and autonomous approach to reality. Rudolf Otto³ endeavours to keep the distinct nature of religion clear but he seems to consider as essential to that its separation from every other interest. He declares that to moralise or rationalise religion is to weaken, distort and mortify it. But while religion can never be interpreted in terms of something else it should and can fill everything else.

Nevertheless, although religion has its peculiar ubiquity and reaches an ultimate of its own kind, the science of religion is only one among many. It is one of the several approaches to reality. Its approach to its object can on the one hand be immediate as in mystic communion or on the other hand mediate as in the

/transformation

¹ Philippians 3.v.6.

² Matt. 19.v.20.

³ "The Idea of the Holy".

transformation of "the menial round and the common task". However religiously a specialist may make another approach to reality that approach still remains distinct and its finding authoritative in its own field, e.g. religion should make a scientific investigator more scientific rather than less and should drive him to a conclusion freest from all prejudice even so-called religious prejudice. At the same time that would not annihilate the religious approach and conclusion. If the conclusions conflict no one has power to cancel the other. Each must keep to its own terms of reference. Only philosophy then can adequately adjudicate.

REALITY OF THE OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

Underlying this contention is the assumption that real religion cannot be separated from man's ontological consciousness. The saint believes in the trans-subjective reality of the object of his religious experience. His most characteristic act, worship, is, of all men's acts, the most incongruous, if rendered merely to one's self or to the objectifications of that self. He may be wrong in his conception of what he worships, and wrong through not knowing all that the self is, but such is his faith. Religious experience seems to him to bring him into the presence of a non-self that is higher than the self. No dogmatic assumption need here be made about the line of demarcation between the self and the non-self nor concerning its immobility or permanence.

/But

but the fuller surrender of the saint to the object of his religious experience never leads to any confusion about the reality both of the self and of its object. A one-sided, extravagant mysticism may lose the self in God but by no process, that can in the least be called religious, can God be resolved into the self.

In all experience of the world we are conscious of something which is not the consciousness itself. There are extra-conscious conditions of our knowledge, viz. what in fact we mean by the phrase "the objects themselves". Is the object of religion equally real? The extra-conscious conditions of religious experience are certainly what may be called sub-conscious. But are they wholly so? It may be observed at once that if the term "self" must be made to denote, beside much else, God as the object of the religious experience, then the connotation of the term must undergo a transforming expansion and to the normal conscious self one of its greatest objects would be simply its own religious objectification. It would contain within itself its most completely "other". But this is a conclusion which, were it substantiated in other ways, psychology is prevented from reaching legitimately by the limitations inevitable to its nature. It deals with mental states as such and a certain mental state could not more be God to the saint than a perception of a table could be a table to the ordinary /percipient.

percipient. To accept, as psychology bids us, the idea of God as a projection of our consciousness and prayer as a mode of auto-suggestion is not to deny the reality of God and prayer. It only indicates that the religious consciousness works through the same agencies as our consciousness of the external world does. But of all the contents of the religious consciousness revealed by psychical analysis nothing could be more obvious than the saint's conviction of the reality of God and of his intercourse with Him. If it were conclusively proved to the saint that his religion was only a happy and effective delusion, his faith and his whole religious life would ultimately wither away. Psychology will enable the saint in many instances to separate the temporal from the eternal and the contingent from the necessary but it is not psychology that can deny or affirm the ontological validity of a belief in God. A saint who happened at the same time to be a psychologist would emphatically assert that what in the religious experience he analysed as a psychologist was not what he as a saint enjoyed. The former is to the latter only what the vibrations in the luminiferous ether are to the lovely panorama, say, which produced them. And this view cannot be shaken by the increasing emphasis placed on the unconscious without also every view which is opposed to it being equally shaken. Give the unconscious complete control, and not only religious belief but the psychology of the unconscious goes too.

The world of objective reality so great and rich admits of many methods of approach and intercourse. There are partially unified realms of experience each corresponding to different worlds within objective reality. Religion cannot, therefore, be suspected if it has an approach to and intercourse with objective reality peculiar to itself. The admissibility of many approaches does not justify a man in drawing a bow at a venture. But should he do so, intercourse with reality would inform, refine and discipline the approach. One of the characteristic features of the religious experience is that its approach is to an invisible, a non-sensuous objective reality. But if this invalidates the ontological value of the object of the religious experience, more than that is invalidated, for art and morality really deal with the non-sensuous. They like religion are really the sacraments of the sensuously invisible. Moreover only in experience can the defects of experience be rectified and its delusions shattered. Error or fault in our approach to objective reality will be eliminated only by continuous intercourse with that reality. Therein one notices that religion can claim the same ultimate grounds for the reality of the object of its experience as other departments of experience can respectively for the reality of their object, e.g. art, science and morality. In its objective one finds universality.

Religion comes not to destroy but to fulfil personalities. It eliminates no diversities of character and conduct save such as are regarded as sinful. Yet when due allowance has
/been

been made for time and place, its universal nature is clearly cognisable. "All the saints agree" says Dean Inge, i.e. all the saints as saints. Religious like any other feeling is private but God is not. Priesthoods and sects have claimed a certain monopoly of God. But the history of religion shows that the only monopoly, if the phrase must be used, like the monopoly of the object of any other experience, is in the hands of the right approach. Reality imposes conditions of successful or real intercourse. That part of it known as the object of religious experience is no less exacting although its appeal is so comprehensive. It is imperative in other experiences to "use only the categories which have been found by fullest experience to be adequate to the subject matter in hand".¹ Religion cannot be less imperative.

"How can I tell you or how ye believe him
How till he bring you where I have been,"²

i.e. in the experience. Religion cannot claim exemption from ordinary logical analysis and provide tests of its own. But whatever unique characteristics logical analysis may elicit within the distinctive field of religious experience, these must be accepted as valid as those elicited by the same analysis in other fields of experience. To read the devotions of the saints, to observe their character and conduct, to study the psychology of religious experience is not to approach God as the object of religious experience. But for those who make the right

/approach

¹ Viscount Haldane. Contemporary British Philosophy, p.142.

² Myer's "St. Paul."

approach the object is always there, a real universal. One of the meanings of the word "righteousness" as applied to God in the Old Testament is faithfulness. He would remain true at all times and in all places. The diversities in the articulation and application of religion do not militate against this assumption. The more mediateness is reduced, as in mysticism, the more is the harmony revealed. The mystic of the East and the mystic of the West differ but little in religious essentials. The manifold embodiments of the religious life are of supreme practical religious importance and should not confuse the mind of those who accept religion as the transforming power of all life. Emile Boutroux says that James eliminates "from the essence of religion all that is objective, intellectual and unpractical in the material sense and that can be transferred from individual to individual for instance dogmas, rites, traditions".¹ The essence of religion truly cannot be transferred from individual to individual - and need not be - for religion must be a personal discovery. Yet what is discovered is never a private affair; the experience is not merely that such a thing happened to me, but that such is and can "be perceived by anybody endowed with normal sense and intellect who observes phenomena in those conditions wherein it is offered to me now".²

In any department of thought, a deepening intercourse

/with

¹"Science and Religion", p.333.

² Do. do. p.333.

with reality reveals the categories by which it can be comprehended and the modes of most effective approach. Religion is no exception to this. Religious experience is a great discipline, and as it develops the necessity involved therein becomes more and more obvious and the object increasingly corrects all subjective delusion. "God is not man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent",¹ however ardently man may wish that He would. The increasing committal of the self to the object of religious experience makes clearer the reality of that object and its distinctness from the self. There is order in the real religious life. The reality to which it responds increasingly reveals and imparts itself as what is already revealed is honored and what is already offered is accepted. Evelyn Underhill notes that religious experience brings "a progressive purity of vision, a progressive sense of assurance, an ever increasing delicacy of moral discrimination and demand".²

Thus the way in which the saint concludes or may conclude regarding the objective order with which he corresponds is not essentially different from the processes of thought by which we come to believe in the reality of the objective world. We cannot get outside of the knowledge of a fact to see if that knowledge corresponds to the fact as it is when it is not cognised. We can correct experience only by experience and

/within

¹ Numbers 23, v.19.

² "Life of the Spirit". p.170.

within experience. The increasing enlargement, the progressive self illumination, the growing systemisation of a genuine religious experience indicates the fruitful influence of objective reality.

Interpreting God as the object of religious experience, we must still not straightway assume that we can have anything corresponding to a science of religion or that if it were possible, it would be anything but prejudicial to real religion. Otto while contending strongly for the uniqueness of the religious experience, protests against its being subject to "schematisation". He denotes the unique element in religious experience by the term "numinous" and makes it in his treatment to appear as a religious "thing in itself". "It is salutary" he says, "that we should be incited to notice that religion is not exclusively contained nor exhaustively comprised in any series of rational assertions".¹ Is any experience, we may ask. But what is not contained in a rational assertion concerning the religious or any other experience is surely not something irrational. Otto labours to establish the "wholly other" character of the religious experience and so save it from confusion with any other, e.g. morality or philosophy. But does such distinctiveness require the irrational? Curiously enough he traces a distinctive development in the "numinous". "The 'daemonic dread', after itself passing through various gradations, rises to the level of

/'fear

¹ "The Idea of the Holy". p.4.

'fear of the gods', and thence to 'fear of God'.¹ The "numinous" thus seems to carry a latent rationality. Moreover, a completely pure immediacy would be almost, if not wholly, incomprehensible to us. The extreme mystic who endeavours to strip our conception of God bare of all image and metaphor finds that he renders himself almost dumb concerning his religious experience. At the same time it is necessary to recognise that ordinary religious confession is inevitably full of metaphor and must not be accepted as a scientific or philosophic statement. We must further recognise that the elucidation and systemisation of what is given in the religious experience is not an equivalent for the experience itself. The science may seem to miss out something the poet and lover feel but that is inevitable not because that something is irrational but because the science of it is not the experience of it. It would be easy to dispose of God by describing the ground of the "numinous" as the great unsearchable. But religion itself would suffer most. Religious experience rightly interpreted cries for "schematisation". The saint very firmly believes in the real existence of God but to put the experience "out of bounds" to rational investigation is to preclude the very process by which the ontological validity of belief in God could be established. This prohibition would prevent the elimination of the contingent from the necessary and

/the

¹ "The Idea of the Holy", p.114.

the elucidation of a synthesis underlying such immediate utterances of faith as are incoherent or contradictory in themselves. There must be selection and valuation but selection and valuation by principles germane to the religious sphere.

There, as elsewhere, it must be recognised that the last fact has not been incorporated. Faith must ever be what Sir Henry Jones called it "a hypothesis on trial": "We know in part".¹ Even the apparent disharmony between theology and science may be due not only to the inherent differences of the fields they respectively work in but also to the fact that finality has been nowhere yet attained. The development which theology itself shows proves that any particular theology can be only a tentative approximation towards the truth concerning God.

The graver question is, can there be a science of religious experience. A.N.Whitehead says that nature for the scientist is closed to "moral and aesthetic values whose apprehension is vivid in proportion to self-conscious activity". This has to be understood in the light of his definition of nature which he describes as that "which we observe in perception through the senses". This inevitably would make a science of religious experience very different from the physical sciences. God is not perceived through the senses. The sciences differ too one from the other in degrees of precision. Professor J.A.Thomson says, "It is no reproach to biology, psychology and sociology to

/call

¹ 1. Cor. 13. v.9.

call them 'inexact' sciences; they are limited by the complexity of the material and by the emergencies of such 'imponderables' as intelligence".¹ Theology therefore may be the most inexact science. Yet no realm has laws more inviolable than those of religion. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away".² Thus having its laws it is capable of systemisation. The results of this must be presented with the results of scientific research in other fields and it is the task of philosophy to elicit the underlying unity. If religion yields something the others have not yielded that peculiar contribution must not be rejected merely on account of its uniqueness, especially if it implies the rejection of the higher by the lower. At the same time the higher never repudiates the lower however much it may subsume and transcend it.

¹ "Science and Religion", p.4.

² Matt. 24. v.35.

DEDUCTIONS.GOD.

We now pass from examining exclusively the religious experience as such to its deliverances in relation to the wider context in which it stands. The religious experience could be described as a unique relationship with the Absolute. But many a non-religious experience could be so described. The religious relationship is not with the Absolute in general as such and certainly not with something or someone outwith the Absolute but with one who is named God. Every genuine saint would affirm, however much he appreciated other experiences, that this was the highest. To interpret this in terms of lower experiences would be to exclude its most characteristic features. What by this act he finds the Absolute or God¹ to be is something not found by any non-religious act. Religious faith finds in God that which gives a congruous acceptance and response. The relationship thus established finds its nearest (nevertheless actually remote) analogy in the highest personal fellowship between human beings. What religion really requires theoretically is not that God of the Absolute should be defined as a person - that is a matter of

/terminology

¹ Footnote. The difference between these two terms is not here clearly stated and they are also used somewhat loosely as it is felt inadvisable to anticipate here much of the Conclusion, in which these terms will be more strictly defined.

terminology - but that this relationship should be accepted as being not a pious soliloquy of the soul but a genuine communion of the soul with God. In the religious experience the saint does not feel he is harnessing a passive power. God is never discovered in spite of Himself. However passionate and for long unsuccessful the quest of the saint may have been, what he does find in the satisfying experience is One who had been seeking all the time. The saint ought readily to grant that this experience far transcends what he experiences in the highest transports of human fellowship. Yet he would insist that the best or essential characteristics of the latter are subsumed and not destroyed in the former. All that absolutism demands concerning the supra-personal as such is in contradiction with nothing that religion yields. There is, of course, in the actual experience a warmth and an intimacy that seem entirely to elude all philosophic phraseology. But much of the content of that experience is never found in any fellowship with a human being. Hence religious experience itself indicates that to describe this relationship as personal is very inadequate although perhaps of all available descriptions it is the least inadequate. Professor Muirhead suggested to C.C.J. Webb that the personal relationship with God or the Absolute may not be the fixed and final form beyond which there can be no further development. As religion would not allow lower kinds of experience to declare "Thou shall have no higher categories than mine", religion itself cannot justly utter

the same dictum. But the crucial point is that religion probably suffers more from inadequate metaphors and categories than any other experience and it certainly is the experience that seems most open to development if not transcendence. There is in the experience nothing of the nature of a final limit but what is of most practical concern is the elucidation of what is now involved in the experience and at present our categories yield a very inadequate articulation. This must involve a tentativeness and reservation in any decision on a personal God or personality in the Absolute. It may mean e.g. that if the characteristics of human personality were not logically attributable to God or the Absolute, religion would not thereby inevitably suffer because the inapplicability might be due to God or the Absolute being more rather than less than personal.

Philosophy seeks an intellectual satisfaction which can be found only in an all-comprehensive unity. Religion offers in most cases a fellowship with what, with the above reservations, we will call a personal God. Can the unity desired by philosophy be personal? We shall observe first how the analogy of human personality holds good for God or the Absolute and then how it breaks down in the wider application. We note there is no unity so intense as personality and personality deepens as its content is unified and its unity is expanded. "There is nothing" says Sir Henry Jones "save self-consciousness that overcomes external relations. It alone achieves unity in

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difference".¹ But can the Infinite be self-conscious? It needs to be noted that we know of no self-conscious being that is merely finite. Man is finite and more. We need not assume man can ever "be the Absolute" any more than the part can ever be its embracing whole. But what limits otherwise can be put to the human self? What remote constituent cannot come within his comprehension? What member of the human family can be ultimately indifferent and impervious to the rest? What limits can be put to the saint's increasing incorporation of God - an incorporation which intensifies and enriches rather than dissolves personality? Thus great caution needs to be exercised in the use of the term supra-personal when it connotes a region of life beyond the personal. For what are the limits of that which we call personal? As the spiritual is the natural at its best, so may the supra-personal be only the personal at its highest.

Further, "We belong to reality, as reality does not belong to us" and the human self can find in that reality a non-self such as God or the Absolute cannot find. . "No non-self no self" we say. Is that true of God? If so, what can be His non-self? We note that the line between the human self and its non-self at any given time is not a fixed and final demarcation. In what is at that time his non-self lies the content of his original
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¹ "A Faith that Enquires", p.321.

potential self. The self grows by the gradual reduction of the non-self to the self. The being which held all in its being would not thereby be inevitably impersonal. Moreover, although that gradual reduction of the non-self to the self is a condition of the creation of a human personality, it is not logically inevitable that an eternal personal absolute would require the same conditions. However, we do not desire to make a temporal retreat to an acosmic deity or argue away to a divine solipsist. We can hardly think that the evolution of the worlds can be to the Absolute nothing more than the actions of our involuntary organs are to us. But it is not there that one would look for an equivalent to what we experience as a non-self. Personality as we know it implies purpose, an ideal hovering over a discrepant reality. We cannot suggest that the physical world as such is other than what the Absolute would have it to be. But ~~the~~ view of man given in the preceding chapter does allow for such a discrepancy. There is no question of man being in the Absolute. It is a question of mode. The nail driven into the vine may be as securely there as the healthy branch. But the mode of its inclusion is different. Human experience is a realm where readjustment within the Absolute is not only possible but desirable. Self-transcendence, as Bosanquet admits, may take two directions and God is concerned about the right direction being taken. Where the wrong direction has been taken, there God's will is not done on earth as it is in heaven. The mode of

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inclusion is not as the Absolute desires or as the whole demands. So that recalcitrant part offers to the whole something which presents not only a task but what to the Absolute would be somewhat equivalent to what we know as a non-self. This may sound like an argument that would do more than was required of it, viz. prove that our perfection would depersonalise God. It may seem to suggest that human imperfections provide God with the conditions of personality. It could be pointed out that it is possible that there will always be somewhere imperfect human beings. But the assumptions underlying the statement above need not be granted. Whether the finite individual will ever reach a state of static perfection is to be questioned. Moreover the spiritual improvement of a society instead of reducing rather increases the capacity of the individual for serving others and being served by them. Improvement multiplies and refines purpose. God cannot be considered as excluded from rendering greater service. So a heaven, far from eliminating, would rather heighten purpose and therefore the conditions of personality. So far the analogy between the human and the divine personality may hold.

But in other respects the analogy needs to be reversed. Man's non-self offers to him his complete self. God offers Himself to His non-self, viz. humanity. It is man's ideal self embodied potentially in his non-self that should dominate him. It is God's actual self that should and does endeavour to dominate His non-self. This non-self, viz. humanity, is posited by the

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Divine self as we did not posit our non-selves. This non-self to God is merely potential manhood. More could not be posited by God. For God cannot give goodness ready-made or manhood as an endowment. Here, then, is limitation not from without but from within, a limitation that does not bind the finite but inheres within the infinite. Here too is a non-self even for God. But while the content of our self has to be acquired from a non-self, God's personality has simply to be maintained in or imparted to His non-self.

It may, however, be asked, can we speak of a non-self that is self-positing. Would not such a non-self be simply a mirror in which the self saw itself and thus God's communion with us would be simply His soliloquy in the presence of His own reflection. That would be so, were the assumptions of some types of Absolutism granted. But this may not be necessary. For it is self-hood He is positing which in time will become partly distinctive and self-determined individuality. Moreover, "The higher we rise in the scale of subject-matter within which the will is exercised, the more persistently does freedom enter into the end that is willed and form an essential element in it".¹

This positing, however, must be considered not as a temporal but as an eternal act. We cannot think of God waiting half an eternity before doing what He knew to be good. For we should have otherwise to believe that something outside of God

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¹ W.R. Matthews. "Studies in Christian Philosophy", p.209.

made such an end possible or desirable or both. The eternal act referred to does not necessarily imply the eternal existence of a humanity upon this world or some other. God's non-self may have been found in other orders of being prior to man. Moreover, God is not necessarily a bare simplicity. The Christian utterances of faith give us a God who is a triunity. This deliverance was made not in any theoretical interest but merely as an honest transcript of a rich and thrilling experience. This much, however, was certainly implied that in the Godhead there was a unity that was not a bare simplicity and a wealth of personal life that did not impair that unity.

THE WORLD.

We have endeavoured to establish the distinctiveness of the religious experience and the reality of the object of that experience. Between this object and the saint a relationship is developed which has the moral exaltation and spiritual delight of the highest human fellowship - and more. In the world, however, this meets with much that is indifferent, if not antagonistic to it. The emergence of the personal element, especially in its religious manifestations, while adding to the rich diversity of the world seems to threaten its unity. It is, therefore, asserted sometimes that religion implies, if it does not demand, a pluralism that the spiritual and the natural constitute a dualism or that only a state of benevolent neutrality exists

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between God and the Absolute.

It must be noted that the term "world" here, to do justice to the religious conception, must denote all that we experience save that for which human agency can be accounted responsible. The confessions of the saint abound in references which imply that his spiritual life is deeply involved in the physical world. Here it is very essential to distinguish between the contingent and the necessary. The saint often speaks of his gratitude for "temporal mercies". Dependence is a characteristic of saintliness. But dependence for physical benefits is not an exclusive or necessary religious attitude, as Rudolf Otto has clearly shown in his references to Schleiermacher.¹ The attitude can be maintained when that dependence seems to be betrayed. "Though the fig tree shall not blossom neither shall fruit be in the vine..... Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation".² If there is anything distinctive in that dependence it is due to the general religious attitude which influences but does not negate the non-religious attitudes. What is the distinctively religious attitude of dependence is reliance upon God for spiritual sustenance. In the light of this fact one of the defects of the traditional arguments for God becomes obvious. The inadequacy lies not merely in the fact that the conclusions contain more than the premises hold but that so far as

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¹ "The Idea of the Holy", pp.9 ff.

² Habakkuk 3, v.17-19.

they are supposed to prove the existence of God as the object of religious experience the conclusions are presumed to hold something entirely different from what the premises contained. The contingency of the physical world is not necessarily an argument for the existence of the source of religious experience. Thus creation may be a useful religious metaphor but not a logical necessity of the religious experience. A similar argument must be applied to the claim for "interventions". Here we have first to ask what are the facts that are supposed to imply interventions and what is the complete order that is supposed to be subject to intervention? Criticism and theology are still speaking on this point with an uncertain voice. Assuming for example's sake that some of the New Testament miracles did happen, we have yet to ascertain whether there is not a realm of law which is at present unapprehended but with which they are perfectly harmonious. The united voice of all the sciences cannot yet answer Carlyle's question "what the complete statute book of nature may possibly be?" To a world of mere mechanism the advent of teleology would appear as an intervention. But that would be an intervention which would subsume rather than negate the lower realm of mechanism. In like manner the intervention of religion must subsume mechanism and teleology and not negate them. Thus intervention, if we may use the dubious term, suspends no law but reveals laws other than those already apprehended. Real religion is not fettered by natural law nor substantiated by any

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violation of it. The religious experience must bear its own credentials and upon those credentials alone the supreme Teacher sought to ground the faith of His followers. The demand for a sign was a weakness. The saint cannot religiously demand nor be religiously benefited by spectacular disorders, fantastic novel- ties or physical compulsions. The Absolute does not contradict itself: one sphere of reference is not antagonistic to another. The lower cannot bind the whole universe to its limitations. And what in religious experience is called intervention, in teleology would be called discovery or in mechanism, invention. The unique connotation of "intervention" comes from its sphere of reference. In other spheres the object of our quest seems passive. It awaits experiment and observation. In religion the object seems active. What the religious aspirant finds is One who all along has been seeking. "Ye have not chosen me; I have chosen you".¹ Thus religious achievement may be more conveniently denoted by the term "intervention" than by the terms "discovery" or "invention". And this intervention is in and through the saint's experience. To all else "winds blow and waters roll" as of old. Such things in themselves (if the abstraction can be pardoned) are not modified nor do they violate their nature but the experiencing soul is modified and in the light and the power of its change "all things are made new". The spirit that fills all things does not impart itself in an

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¹ John 15, v.16.

indifferent diffusion. Philosophy speaks of grades of reality and religion speaks of a grade in the making, a realm where the operation of that spirit is contingent on the co-operation of man. But this involves a later chapter.

Religion, then, brings no violation of laws in lower realms but that does not leave it isolated from the physical world. It is charged with and accepts a cosmic responsibility. A good God and a bad world are said to be contradictory. Before we ask, can the assumed contradiction be overcome, we ought to ask, is it obligatory on the part of religion to try to overcome it. According to the assumptions underlying this thesis, this involves the question, can one sphere of reference be responsible for another? We do not ask mechanism to explain what may not be agreeable to us in chemistry. Should religion, then, be asked to explain or justify, say, an earthquake? A solution to this problem is sometimes sought in the theory of a finite God. But this is often presented in a way that would isolate religion from other spheres of reference and tacitly if not openly would deny the Absolute. This, to say the least, is not in harmony with the testimony of the saints. The "sovereignty of God" is more than a pious hyperbole. On the other hand if by finitude is meant the inability to deny Himself then God is inevitably finite to that extent. Moreover, it is a religious infinitude which the religious experience yields. That must be its distinctive contribution to a synoptic view of the world. And it may be

questioned whether religion in its own sphere of reference can require or find more. There is nothing in the physical universe that can defeat the religious purpose; nothing can separate the saint from the object of his faith.

This discrimination is not made as if responsibility for the world is something prejudicial to religion. Moral evil will be dealt with later and consequently, implicitly or explicitly, also the physical ills which are due directly or indirectly to man's abuse or misuse of nature. The appearance of waste may be unjustifiable in itself. Yet it is difficult to see how nature could work without large reserves. Anthropomorphism needs to be avoided as much in relation to orders lower than man as in relation to those above him. The struggle, the suffering and the death which we witness in nature must mean for the non-human subjects something entirely different from what they mean for us. They are not sufficient to justify us in calling the world bad. And one cannot ignore the positive gains that accrue from the struggle itself. Much of the sting of physical evil is withdrawn when it is seen that such evil may serve higher ends. What lovely ministries, what qualities of character it has drawn forth! And pain itself is nature's red danger signal. We must also guard against anthropomorphism in the higher direction. There can be in God no indulgence, no concession to our lower desires. The goodness which we anticipate in Him is not necessarily what would please us in our states of imperfection nor can it support

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any hedonistic test as applied in this connection. Moreover, psycho-therapeutics is increasingly suggesting that the ills of life may not mark the limitations of man but are only the consequences of his ignorance or lethargy or both. The physical world is surely physically good and more than that should not be expected.

But can the responsibility for the world be imputed to the object of only one of the many approaches to reality? In doing so, would not one be charging a part with the responsibility of the whole? On what does the saint ground his belief in the sovereignty of God? Accepting religion as one of many types of experience, we should expect to find it at least congruous with the rest. If these by themselves when analysed and systematised do not yield a personal God, no complaint need be made. But it must surely be gratifying to the saint to observe that the order and beauty which are everywhere revealed by the special sciences in no way conflict with what the religious experience yields and to say the least they are congruous with the idea of God. But we really need to go further and admit that the saint's belief in the sovereignty of God is ultimately grounded in the sovereignty of the religious experience. Mechanism can subsume chemistry, teleology can subsume both and turn them to its own ends. Religion can subsume all others. "All things are yours"; for yours is the sovereign experience. Religion is in the world of lower categories but is not of them. Their reality and character are not prejudiced by its presence. Religion at the

same time can make them all its own. Therein lies the sovereignty of the object of religious experience. Herein lies a clue to the cosmic responsibility of God. According to the principle of this thesis, God is the object of the religious experience. Roughly speaking, He is then a constituent of the Absolute. Is such a conception illogical or irreligious? Not if God is in the Absolute as religion can and should be in human experience. God would then be, to use a rough simile, the sovereign constituent of the Absolute, its supreme and characteristic life. This, however, anticipates the conclusion.

MAN.

In man we have the part which, so far as we know, is most deeply involved in the Absolute and the supreme or exclusive sphere for the operation of religion. It is well to recall here the different attitudes presented respectively by religion and philosophy. Philosophy is the spectator of all time and existence. Religion, with its more practical attitude, concentrates on the most strategic point in existence and accentuates all that pertains to this, the most prominent, *nisus* towards the Absolute, viz. the human soul. Much, therefore, which philosophy yields is not, and is inevitably not, contradictory but is rather irrelevant or inapplicable to the immediate religious task. At the same time when the theologian wishes to reach a synoptic view, he must recognise much that was irrelevant or subsidiary to the soul's ascent to God. The accentuation of the finite *nisus* has some-

times amounted to the assumption of a false independence and so metaphors have been borrowed for the articulation of religious experience from the world of "claims and counter claims" more to the detriment than the help of religious thinking. Bosanquet says, "There is no question of 'being in the Absolute' or not but only of the mode".¹ The implications of religion substantiate the former and carry suggestions concerning the latter. Religion is so deeply concerned with the next spiritual investment that it frequently fails to recognise that all its capital is either a direct or an indirect inheritance. Yet that is implied and the implication gives the resolution of one of the many paradoxes of religion. In possibility man is of infinite value: in mere isolated actuality he is utterly worthless. He starts with only a possibility. Jesus spoke of the soul not as an endowment but as an acquisition. "In patience win yourselves souls".² It was in itself a contingency. It could be lost. And the very possibility was not our creation. It is religious experience itself that substantiates most fully our "being in the Absolute". The goal of the saint's aspiring and the initial unrest that prompted towards it are one. That is implied in Augustine's dictum, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and restless are our souls till they rest in Thee". The saint is aware that he is "beset behind and before". His hope is sustained with the knowledge

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¹. Footnote. "Value and Destiny". p.130.

². Luke 21. v.19.

not only that God is in His heaven but that, to quote his words, "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."¹ The source of the sinner's dissatisfaction is exactly the same as that of the saint's satisfaction. Even difference from God involves some relation. Herein lies a contrast between the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Hound of Heaven". The latter makes explicit what in the former was at best only implicit. The pilgrim journeys to a separate God through an alien world. Thompson, seeking a finite good, finds he cannot evade the Absolute. The gold gateways of the stars, the labyrinthine ways of his own mind, his own nature, the only final satisfaction for him and the Hound were obviously one. There was no question of being in the Absolute or not. Herein, as in our earlier analysis, we see how religion implies the Absolute. The Object of religious experience is the Alpha as well as the Omega of that experience. Between God and the seeking soul a very real gap seems to exist. But into that gap the soul has only to fling its own selfish, abstract self and upon it pass over into the happiest union with God to find that all along in deepest reality they were never but one. The gap was the soul's own refusal both to think so and to live up to the implication of such a thought. Much in religious testimony which ascribes to God the upholding of the world, the immanence in all being carries great absolutistic implications but these, as pointed out earlier, are not exclusively german to

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¹Psalm 139. v.8.

the religious experience and their import when found there has been recognised in a previous chapter (Page 37). We note at present the tacit endorsement religious experience gives to the assertion "There is no question of 'being in the Absolute' or not but only of the mode". We consider the question of the mode. Thompson when pursued was always and everywhere in the Absolute. But the mode of his inclusion when evading the 'Hound' was different from the mode of his inclusion when capitulating to the 'Hound'. He was never outwith the Absolute but something of the Absolute was not and could not be his till he made his capitulation. And it is that capitulation which is the deepest concern of religion. It is a question of mode.

What has led religion to adopt metaphors from the world of 'claims and counter-claims' instead of from Absolutism is not only that the former provides something simpler to the unreflecting communities to be served but partly also because a greater reality is assumed for the self in the former than in the latter interpretation of experience. The unreflecting would be satisfied on being assured that man at least was not more unreal than other objects in the world of empirical fact and would welcome the assurance Bradley gives that "The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness, seeks he does not know what".¹ But to the reflective religious consciousness the mode of man's inclusion in the Absolute depends as much on his
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¹ "Appearance and Reality", p.449.

attitude to the whole that anything that diminishes the importance of that attitude and of the individual who bears it is looked upon with grave suspicion. To speak of man as merely adjectival would seem to involve a confusion if not an error and it could be questioned if Absolutism necessitated that. Bosanquet allows individuality only to the Absolute because it alone is all-embracing and self-sufficing and on that assumption one may grant that man has not individuality. But then we would still need a term to denote the unique characteristics of personality. Let it be granted that the content of this personal unity is all given in universals, nevertheless the sum of such universals not so unified does not yield a personality. Psychology finds in a crowd something which no constituent individual, as isolated, brought to it. The crowd of relations or universals we find in or as constituent of a person yields in that unity what the parts in isolation did not contain. If it is hard to say what the self would be without its content, it is quite as hard to say what the content would be without the self. Moreover, for some of the very values which are presumed to have a permanence and reality the individual has not, finitude is necessary. But not only is man spoken of as adjectival, appearance seems to be substantised. It would be better to speak of reality appearing than of appearance and reality or the appearance of reality. Certainly the reality that so appears is not the whole of reality but that is only saying that the part is less than the whole. And so to believe in the reality

of separate elements is not to believe in the separate reality of the same. There is no reality isolated from the whole. The question centres in the mode of inclusion. The finite takes its finitude, its content and its nisus towards the whole from the Absolute. Its presence in the whole can hardly be interpreted as antagonism to the whole. "If there is to be a perfect system with detail and differentiation" says Bosanquet, "there can be no infinity without finiteness."¹ And "So far as the provisional individual is apprehended in its true place and in unity with the superior whole, it is or would be real and that so apprehended it may fairly be called substantial".² But that is not inevitable. "In all volition the finite-infinite or self-transcendant nature is in play, but in some volition negates its own infinity by affirming a partial end against the infinite whole with which the good self is identified".³ This must in some way involve different modes of inclusion in the Absolute. How can the difference be described? Religion would not permit one to speak of the vice of finiteness. Are we to convict all unconscious and inanimate things of vice? Moreover we need the word 'vice' for something truer to its connotation, viz. the vice not of finiteness but of accepting a finite as our real nature, as carrying for us the authority of the whole, "a very partial end against the infinite

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1. "Value and Destiny". p.14.

2. Quoted by Muirhead in "Mind" 1923. p.407.

3. "Value and Destiny". Footnote p.247.

whole". Because self-transcendence can take modes so divergent as to lead to either self-stultification or self-realisation, religion throws the weight of its emphasis there. And religion not only does not accept finitude as a vice but it also indicates that the "more than finite" tendency in the finite and the fuller incorporation of the Absolute does not work towards a loss of 'detail and differentiation' or the elimination of mere finitude. The most outstanding religious figure is depicted as one who never chose a partial end, who in self-transcendence was always "one with the Father". Yet finitude as such was no barrier to the perfections He came to reveal. The direction He set for the self-transcendence of the finite, when followed far enough, would certainly lead to what at present is inconceivable but it also points to something more than mere escape from finitude. Thus religion, except in extreme mysticism, seems to have a more definite goal for man than Absolutism has. The perfect satisfaction according to Absolutism has been described as being in possession of the Absolute or being the Absolute. This needs qualification. Does any individual really desire the unique privilege of being in all the parts or being the logical prius of all things? All logical roads from anything lead to the Absolute but the self-transcendence of the finite^e in religion is a logical process and more: it is towards not the Absolute in general but towards God, someone within or some aspect of the Absolute. Bosanquet says, "I cannot believe that the supreme end of the Absolute is to

give rise to beings such as I experience myself to be.⁷¹ The self at its present level of attainment would certainly seem to be a poor object as the supreme end of the Absolute. But "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." And it is also difficult to think what worlds the Absolute can otherwise seek to realise as a supreme end. Can "beauty, truth and love in different renderings through different created systems" in abstraction from finite selves provide an adequately supreme end to the Absolute? Why abstract selves from values or values from selves? Moreover, is the goal of self-transcendence "to be the Absolute"? If our supposedly transcendent selves are to be only instrumental as trivial elements in a world of abstracted values, it must be admitted that our experience does not point that way. The fuller incorporation of the Absolute by the finite self does not lead to any diminishing of selfhood or its distinctiveness. Individuality and finitude are not inevitable opposites. Self-transcendence, so far as we know it, is the upward transition from one level of finitude to another not the gradual escape from finitude itself. The incorporation of the universal is not the elimination of characterising limits but their expansion. They

"Far from vanish
Decompose but to recompose."

Bosanquet says, "If I possessed myself entirely I should be the Absolute". But the Absolute is the home and realisation of many

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¹. Aristotelian Proceedings, 1917-1918. p.492.

other finites of very different orders. Has not the Absolute something of itself distinct for each? Religion at least claims that it has. The self-transcendence the saint enjoys points to a greater likeness to God within the limits of human finitude. To the saint any endeavour to be God would be sacrilege and to be the Absolute would be meaningless. Thompson in flight wanted more than the all-embracing Absolute was giving: Thompson in capitulation is satisfied with less than all the Absolute. Religion discriminates within the Absolute and accepts for its goal what, if the rough metaphor be allowed, may be called the Absolute's *nisus* towards man, viz. God.

IMPLICATES.FREEDOM.

Attention has been drawn to the emphasis religion places on the human nisus towards the Absolute and on the hazard and responsibility involved in the possibility of self-transcendence. The problem of freedom is not peculiar to religion but religion has its own distinctive contribution to make to a solution of it. Bosanquet says, "Created spirits are either a part of God or they are not; if they are not they cannot be completely dependent upon him, if they are they must be determined by the whole of which they are parts and can have no independence or freedom". The antithesis here is sharply drawn and the "either or" rather rigidly applied. The subject matter is too delicate for the spatial metaphors employed to express it. In fact, it will be found that freedom and determinism do not constitute an irreducible antithesis. In order to denote the conative activity of man either phrase if used must carry considerable qualification. If the term 'freedom' be used, it must connote freedom only from certain kinds of determinateness and if 'determinism' be used, it will mean determinism by a self which cannot be, as we have seen, resolved by analysis into a sum of the universals that form the content of that self. We are not thereby driven to conclude that the home of freedom is a surd; one reason among many for our not being so driven is that we do not know the whole content of

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the self. Where all the knowable is not known a surd cannot be located. Thus the word "freedom" will be used here, but as connoting a specific type of determinateness, as constituting a new category which, in harmony with previous conclusions, does not contradict and annul but subsumes and transcends the lower. Bosanquet says, "The basis and character of freedom lay not in simple initiation but in an equipment capable of extraordinary delicate responses to extraordinarily varied environments".¹ So even though we find in the self a mere assemblage of universals with a "thisness", we should recognise still that that peculiar and rich centre of unified universals gives us so unique a type of individual,

"That out of three sounds he frame,
Not a fourth sound but a star".²

Thus when that unique individual is in a determination it enormously differentiates that determination from all lower ones.

The religious act of communion with God involves a willingness in both parties to the act. In that experience the self who wills can hardly be described as the disguised mechanism of an impersonal Absolute - and the communion itself could not be interpreted as the soliloquy of the Absolute. The acquired and dependent reality we have assumed for the self renders such conclusions unnecessary. Religion gives also a new acuteness to the sense of responsibility. Where is regret or chagrin more

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¹ "Contemporary British Philosophy". p.68.

² Browning. "Abt Vogler".

poignant than in the penitence of the saint? Yet nothing could be more incongruous than the supposition that the cause of that penitence was only the misinterpretation of a natural process. Religion gives a new intensity to the paradox between freedom and determinism as unqualified and round each half of the paradox has gathered a camp of stern dogmatists. But religious experience offers to some extent a resolution of its own to the paradox. The saint often speaks of a volitional incapacity pending the solicitation of a spiritual environment. "The good that I would I do not."¹ "Without me ye can do nothing."² This real freedom has to be acquired and acquired from a source that is not spiritually neutral. The grace that enables is not characterless. Man having adopted it cannot turn it to any ends merely of his own. Although grace comes to develop the will, it brings its own determinateness and any freedom from that would appear as the greatest bondage. St. Teresa cries, "O free-will what a miserable slave art thou to thy liberty, unless thou art fixed by the love and fear of Him who created thee. May He live and give me life; may He reign and may I be His captive! My soul desires no other liberty. How can he be free who is not subject to the Almighty"³. On the higher levels of devotion and ecstasy this grace may be so captivating as to give some justification to the saint's holding that he was predestined to the glory which grace is given to

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¹ Romans 7. v.19.

² John 15. v.5.

³ "Of Self-Abandonment".

promote. So long as he speaks thus for himself he offers important data for the problem under review. Far less important for our purpose is his opinion, if such it be, that others are predestined to damnation. That is not given in his experience - and when such a saint as Cowper says his experience drives him to that conclusion, we simply do not believe him. We find mental causes for his melancholy.

Thus religious experience shows there "is no question of our being in the Absolute or not". "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there".¹ The miseries of the far country are due to man's being more than finite. There was no famine among the merely finite. And He who "stands at the door and knocks" says afterwards to those who have given Him entrance, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."² When the saint accepts grace he discovers something that was anterior to his choice - grace seeking and accepting him. "We love Him because He first loved us."³

Previous chapters have led us to expect that religion would yield and require higher categories than those of lower experiences yet also that the former may transcend ^{but} ~~and~~ not annul the latter. Somehow self-determination must not stand as an alien or surd among other forms of determinateness. And it is interesting to note that these do not constitute one undiversified

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¹ Psalm 139. v.8.

² John 15. v.16.

³ 1. John 4. v.19.

grade in sharp distinction from self-determination. There is much animal activity that is closed to mechanical interpretation. A broken nerve rebuilds to "a plan that spells the future function". Yet during the time of regeneration the broken nerve is functionally useless. L.T.Hobhouse says, "There are grades, probably several grades, of conation below explicit purpose". In tracing the development of mind he observes that "some qualities of mind are biologically too useless and others a great deal too useful to be explained by natural selection".¹ Thus self-determination is not unrelated to the lower forms of determinateness. Man has continuity with nature by this determinateness which is a characteristic of the whole of reality. Yet this is not saying that self-determination is merely the determinateness of the lower order with motive or character as the antecedent determining factor. There is no such motive or character apart from the self. Self-determination issues no more from a self-less content than from a self abstracted from its content. It is from the concrete self that the determinateness known as self-determination takes its distinctive character. If the self is determined by less than that, it is committing evil. Such confessions as "I acted from impulse" or "I was beside myself" imply determinateness of the lower order where self-determination should obtain.

The relation between self-determination and the lower forms of determinateness is a subject meriting patient research.

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¹ "Contemporary British Philosophy". p.178-179.

Here, however, we are dealing with the higher rather than the lower limit of self-determination - a limit where are found awesome responsibilities and splendid perils. Yet this is quite congruous with the lower limits of self-determination. As the self began to recreate its world, it simultaneously began to acquire thereby its own nature. Far from opposing the self-determination of the finite individual the world has given the content of that determination. In religion the world is reorientated. The saint's intuition and aspiration find and enjoy a world of spiritual as well as material reality informing, challenging and augmenting his freedom. "The truth shall make you free."¹ By faith he has brought himself into the scope of new and higher forms of determinateness. Thus by "an affirmation and an act" he bids eternal truth be present fact. As truly as ever before he has nothing but what he has received, yet he has made what has been so received his own as nothing else could be.

Here we may well ask, what, in this view, stands in jeopardy? Is it freedom? If absolute freedom is meant, yes. It is jeopardised, and, we trust, refuted. Such freedom is only a chaos of unimaginable possibilities. No less undesirable as well as unreal would be a freedom that could be free from its content. There is no freedom that can either acquire or dispense with self-hood. We can find no self abstracted from its content neither can we find a freedom abstracted from the determinateness

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¹ John 8. v.32.

of its content. What is really desired in freedom is freedom from unworthy determinations. This is precisely the freedom the saint desires and claims. He would bring an enormous qualification to the term "self" in self-determination. Determination exclusively by the present actual self is not the freedom for which he craves. For what he recognises as his true, real self is elsewhere, in the hands of God - and where his real self is there also is his real freedom. The forms of determinateness from which he seeks freedom include self-determination of the poorer type. His real nature is in God and his real freedom is with it. So his freedom is God's blest control.

This does not imply that the individual is jeopardised. The content of the self has been transformed in the adoption. What it is as part of the self it never was prior to the adoption. One cannot analyse a self into self-less universals. But if the real individual is not in jeopardy, the abstract, self-centred individual is. The universe is not indifferent to man's choice. The bad will is not a particular embodiment of any universe. It is an embodied defiance of the only universe. Its volitions gradually negate the self. The smallest finite lives by being to itself true. Man ultimately and really lives on no other terms. "Dunsinnane Wood" represents the universe as it moves against the wrongdoer. And were that abstract rebellious self not in jeopardy the social order would be. The fact that "The wages of sin is death" is one of the guarantees of the stability

of the universe. In reality the universe wins immediately every time. This, however, calls for further consideration. To some even the qualified freedom referred to above appears as the thin edge of pluralism. It is assumed also that religion requires a pluralism. The assumption is generally supported by a too literal interpretation of the metaphors used by the exponents of religion. But what the saint immediately perceives, as we saw in an earlier analysis, is an object of awe-inspiring beauty and power. "The Lord reigns." He is omnipotent within the limits of His nature and purpose. The saint never cracks the universe nor discovers more than one. In the most daring exercise of self-determination, viz. prayer, one will alone is recognised as supreme. The Saint of saints qualifies His prayers with the condition "Not my will but thine be done".¹ And any prayer of a saint which really implied that the saint's will not God's should be done would be straightway ~~be~~ counted as blasphemy. As potentialities become actualised by the saint's faith and devotion, the universe is enriched without being impaired. Whatever was safe before the advent of man, remains safe in his presence and will continue so after his departure. But the universe was not necessarily completely disclosed or engaged prior to the advent of man or to his development into a mature saint. There is no reason to doubt that its determinations may engage our relative freedom, that "The Immanence in the activity of the universe

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¹ Luke 22. v.42.

becomes in man an activity that is free".¹

MORALITY.

Although, as we have seen, religion is not identical with morality, it claims, especially in its highest expressions, a most intimate connection with it. The conduct of the saint as such neither issues from an obedience to a stereotyped law nor is it merely an effort towards a moral ideal. It is rather the inevitable consequence of loving intercourse between himself and God. On a given occasion the outward act of the moralist may be precisely the same as that of the saint but there would be a vast difference between the grounds or the contexts of their various acts in so far as the one kept his morality and the other his religion in view. And morality does not stand by itself. The "ought" must be related to the "is". The embracing synthesis is deeply involved in any view of God and the Absolute.

The saint in his devotion feels an awe-inspiring attraction towards God, yet, except in extreme mysticism, never is that attraction conceived as an absorption in which all relationship and finitude are lost. No saint wants to be God. Finitude as such is no evil. It is significant that millions of Christian saints find a sufficient spiritual ideal in a finite embodiment of God, viz. Jesus Christ. The greater appropriation of God by the saint involves not an elimination but an expansion

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¹ Sir Henry Jones. "A Faith that Enquires." p.153.

of finite limits. Even the suggestion of spatial metaphor here is misleading. The saint is not completely distinct from yet certainly not identical with God. God is in him and he is in God. Religious experience like morality carries an autonomy and a heteronomy. "By grace alone" the saint is saved. But that is accepted and appropriated grace, grace which has been welcomed as the content of the real self. There is no significance in our wills being God's unless we willed they should be. But for the saint, in contradistinction for the moralist as such, the heteronomy is a theonomy. As the "ought" always implies a possibility, so the saint's progress is always possible. God is sovereign. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"¹ - nothing except ourselves. And omnipotence cannot give us spiritual perfection in spite of ourselves. But the God who can impart that "in spite" of everything else

"Sits on no precarious throne
Nor asks for leave to be".

God cannot be a finite among finites. Yet the saint yearns to be like God and speaks of the moral splendours of God. That statement should not be taken too literally. We cannot imagine God progressing morally as we do. But we may accept morality as goodness under the form of time. There is for goodness, as for other things, an identity of principle with most diverse modes of application and this identity may hold between God and man. God's faithfulness in providing the grounds and giving the inspiration

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¹ Romans 8. v.35.

for the good life can be accepted as the expression of a principle not alien to our own life. This faithfulness, ^{as we have seen,} is the meaning which the Old Testament word "righteousness" carries in certain places and it is not foreign to one aspect of human goodness. Much of a good man's conduct is the maintenance of a noble character. It is the endorsement of previous estimates and attitudes. God's constant faithfulness in promoting man's spiritual life may be accepted as one aspect of His goodness. Whatever moral neutrality may in some quarters be attributed to the Absolute, the saint, providing he be not a pantheist or an extreme mystic, would never attribute such neutrality to God. His own increasing god-likeness, far from obliterating the distinction between good and evil, has rather deepened it. And experience leads him to anticipate that what God is beyond is, not the distinction between good and evil as such, but beyond the forms in which we find them embodied for our experience here. God is the source of all goodness but is the origin of no moral evil. "An enemy hath done this".¹ It is necessary, however, to note that in human experience the form and content of a life of spiritual maturity is very different from those of a beginner in virtue's ways. Consequently goodness in God, however identical in principle with our own, must often in unimaginable ways transcend the forms which embody it in our experience. Moreover, to be the unchanging ground which makes our own spiritual progress possible must be forever different from

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¹ Matt.13. v.28.

being a unit in and through which the progress takes place. Here as elsewhere, anthropomorphism is inevitable. But its limits should as far as possible be detected and acknowledged.

On the other hand some types of thought which postulate an Absolute "beyond good and evil" do not thereby attribute a sheer neutrality to the Absolute. If in the good form of self-transcendence the finite individual incorporates more of the Absolute and in the evil form, less, the Absolute is not indifferent to or equally receptive of both. The more the finite individual fulfils the purpose of the whole, the better he is. His good act is a particularisation of a universal. An evil act is never that. It has no universe of its own. "Whether anything is better or worse does undoubtedly make a difference to the Absolute. And certainly the better anything is, the less totally in the end is its being overruled",¹ says Bradley, who also declares, "Evil is transmuted and, as such, is destroyed, while the good in various degrees can still preserve its character".² The difficulty here is partly a problem of terms. While admitting that the Absolute must be beyond good and evil as we know them, we need to define that characteristic of the Absolute by virtue of which it endorses and subsumes the goodness of the finite individual in a way in which it does not subsume much less endorse the evil of perhaps the same person. In other words, we need to describe how the supra-moral differs from the non-moral. For

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¹) "Appearance and Reality". p.430.
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although it is the permanent ground and we the changing units, although it is the self-giver and we have nothing that we have not received, we can still recognise a moral kinship seeing that our good is a greater acceptance of the Absolute and our evil is the rejection of that for some narrow selfish interest. Moreover, although the older type of religious dogma may have attributed a great measure of reality to evil, the direct utterances of faith, while describing sufficiently the evil of sin, never attributed to it reality in the highest sense of the term. Sin is not obedience to the law of an order of reality antagonistic to the good. "Sin is the transgression of the law".¹ The New Testament words for sin are negative terms, viz. "harmatia", missing the mark, "anomia", lawlessness, "parabasis", an overstepping, "paraptoma", a falling beside. A man's evil deed is really a consecration to a negation. It does not crack the universe but gradually drives him from it. While this implies a reality and system for goodness evil has not, the choice of the latter by the individual is a dreadfully significant thing for him. What really is the significance of this?

The conception of the self the religious experience implied seems to prevent the resolution of the self merely into its relatedness. In like manner the same experience in its moral expressions makes the resolution, say, of a bad will to be a greater matter than the redistribution of its constituents. For

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1. 1 John 3. v.4.

the moral judgment is never passed on the content of the will in abstraction from the will or self and could not be, e.g. self-preservation may be good or bad according to the concrete situation in which it is possible and that situation centres in the finite individual. As it is only through the consciousness and volition of a self that a natural fact passes into a spiritual one so the possible contents of a will prior to their adoption by the will are neither good nor bad morally. Consequently any redistribution of the contents of the will in abstraction from the concrete will would not resolve the evil into good. While this conception of the moral life deepens the problem of the self, it lightens somewhat the problem of evil. Even Theism does not always appropriate the advantage gained thereby. Professor Galloway says, "We shall be told that to say that a Being who permits moral evil and does not prevent an evil He could have prevented is in no way responsible for it, savours more of sophistry than of common candour"¹ "In the end no doubt God must have a certain indirect responsibility for moral evil."² With reference to the former statement, it must be admitted that God could not have prevented evil and still made moral goodness possible. If man is to be more than a non-moral being he must take with the chances of being a saint the risks of being a rake. It is impossible on the view of the self given above to deny that man has real responsibility in moral

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¹ "Philosophy of Religion". p.527-528.

² Do. do. do. p.541.

choices and, in so far as he has, complete responsibility cannot be attributed to God. Instead of charging God with "a certain indirect responsibility for moral evil", it would be better to acknowledge His direct and full responsibility for the possibility of moral good and evil. The problem for Theism is not to prove that an assumed bad world and a good God are compatible for more than God is involved in a morally bad world. The problem is to justify the evolution of the natural into a moral order. For the advent of man marked the moral adolescence of the world.

The self, then, with its dependent reality ever seeks self-transcendence. It can increasingly accept the purpose of the whole which carries the content of its real self or choosing some false ideal gradually work towards self-stultification instead of self-realisation. In this life neither process seems to reach a final termination. We ask if life is continued beyond the grave and so approach the next chapter.

IMMORTALITY.

Immortality constitutes a problem that is not exclusively nor even necessarily religious. "This world" and "the other world" in correct religious terminology are not divided by the narrow stream of death. They are both on this side of it and may overlap it. Bosanquet advises us to look for life's extension in a "lateral" rather than a "linear" direction. The transformation and expansion religion brings does not exactly take either

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direction and any spatial metaphor would somewhat conceal or obscure the true inwardness of the experience. The emphasis of religion is not on immortality but on eternal life and the connotation of the latter term is primarily one of value. Duration comes in by way of implication. There may be a conception of immortality that is almost or entirely bereft of eternal life, e.g. some ancient animistic and necromantic religions with their survival beliefs. The objective of spiritualism is more a matter for science than for religion. Religion no more gives prolongation to mortal life than it gives success to merely moral life. Mortality and morality are swallowed up of life. On the other hand the saints of Israel for centuries enjoyed eternal life without, at least, any clear conception of immortality. They experienced an "other" life which was life in God here and now. The earliest conception of immortality Israel had was only a pagan borrowing from other lands. Sheol was a place beyond Yahweh's jurisdiction and it offered to man only a shadowy existence void of all moral distinctions and religious joy. It is thus clear from Israel's experience that on a certain level of intellectual and religious achievement there can be a vigorous spiritual life without belief in immortality and there can be an immortality for which religion has no use. This negative attitude, however, carried positive suggestions. The race, not the individual, was the unit with which God was supposed to be dealing and it would last as long as God's purposes required. As

the conception of personality developed, as it was seen that God had a purpose for the individual as such, immortality became part of Israel's faith. The earlier faith without immortality was quite consistent with the later faith with it. The view of eternal life in its essentials was one in both stages. In like manner the teaching of the New Testament lays little or no emphasis on immortality as such.¹ It is concerned primarily with the creation and augmentation of values as realised in men and women and the only duration it is interested in is the duration those values require. It offers no proof of natural immortality but gives expressions and guarantees of eternal life. Its teaching in no way suggests that immortality is given to any kind of life for any purpose. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."²

Professor E.S. Brightman says, "One's attitude towards immortality is fundamentally determined by one's world view and not by this or that particular fact"³. For the next world and this are within one universe and the most comprehensive and unified knowledge of this is the safest guide we can have to that. What is true of this, the philosophic, attitude is also true of the religious attitude. Israel's belief in immortality grew *pari passu* with its view of God and the world. Some account

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¹ The resurrection of Jesus does not call for treatment in a paper that limits the data under survey to the religious experience of the saints.

² 1 John 2. v.17.

³ "Immortality in Post Kantian Idealism." p.57.

has already been given of the world view implied in the developed religious experience. We may now elicit its implications for immortality.

This subject has undoubtedly been "sickled o'er" with rhetorical imagery and homilectical inducements. But the clearest argument against any literal acceptance of such descriptions of immortality is the lives of the saints themselves. For many have abandoned secular heavens without a whimper and consigned themselves to hells on earth without regret. They desire an immortality

"Not for the sake of gaining heaven
Nor of escaping hell".

Religion brings a life and a death of its own - a life that did not issue merely from "this life" and a death that can take place while "this life" continues. It is quite possible then that its life may continue after "this death". Ishi, the converted Japanese criminal, writing within a month of his execution, says, "The problem of this world's life and death never occurs to me now. The only thing that concerns me is the life and death of the soul".¹ In the relationship between the saint and God there is a personal warmth that is absent from the relationship between the philosopher as such and the Absolute. In the higher religions, God is conceived as being full of benignant love for His saints and craving their voluntary fellowship. It is difficult for the saint to find any reason why God should be

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¹ "A Gentleman in Prison". p.118.

satisfied to terminate abruptly that relation in the physical event known as death. Augustine says, "Never would God have done such and so great things for us, if with the death of the body, the life of the soul came to an end". The saint, although admitting the agnosticism inevitable here concerning this subject, will still feel that his experience entitles him to a limited but sufficient affirmation.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air.
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

The saint as such does not crave for any mere extension of life beyond the grave. "Thy lovingkindness is better than life."¹ He seeks not more mere duration but more of God. That craving is never finally satisfied, neither are the possibilities of his fellowship with God exhausted on this side of the grave. So great do those possibilities appear to be that the self may experience inconceivable transformations without ceasing to be the self. Yet the self in abstraction hereafter would be as empty as it would be here. While it is not to be merely identified with its content, it is as nothing apart from it. This must hold true of any anticipated future life as it does of this life. "Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee."²

Here we note that the saint has no special evidence of the future life as such. His distinctive contribution is the

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¹ Psalm 63. v.3.

² Psalm 73. v.25.

anticipation that has its grounds in his own unique experience. There are naturally other anticipations grounded in different experiences and philosophy alone can finally adjudicate between these. But we note with regard to the hereafter as with regard to the present life God seems to allow to the individual a measure of distinctness that the Absolute as portrayed in ordinary absolutism does not. At the same time, in its reference to some vital aspects of this question, absolutism is somewhat indefinite. It really gives no answer to the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" If the self is only adjectival, a temporary embodiment of eternal values, it does not follow from that alone that the values dispense with their embodiment at the moment of death. If our end is to be the Absolute, it may be that the grave does not bring us abruptly to that end. One can hardly think that the physical event known as death will strip us of our finitude. Even though the assumptions of absolutism on this point were granted, it would still be possible to hold that if a man die, he might live again. Moreover, Bosanquet says that "While we serve as units, to speak the language of appearance, the Absolute lives in us a little and for a little time: when its life demands our existence no longer, we yet blend with it as the pervading features or characteristics which we were needed for a passing moment to emphasise"¹. Such a conception could suggest no definite time when the Absolute would demand our existence

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¹ Aristotelian Proceedings 1917-1918. p.506.

no longer. The early deaths of some geniuses and saints do suggest that the Absolute could continue to emphasise or could emphasise more fully certain characteristics were these geniuses ^{and saints} to continue to live elsewhere. And Bosanquet's contention does not make untenable the Absolute's demanding their existence in other spheres. Absolutism does not preclude the possibility of post-mortem life. On the other hand the anticipations of religion should be marked by great caution. If Absolutism means by our blending with the Absolute hereafter nothing more than a much richer involution in the Absolute of the same kind as we experience here, religion could offer nothing to the contrary. Moreover the self may be capable of transformations utterly inconceivable to us at present. It may be that the ultimate condition of the self is one in which a man would not recognise himself without having first experienced all the intermediate stages between his present condition and that ultimate one. The only position in which he could appreciate the last stage of self-transcendence would be the penultimate stage of the same transcendence. Scripture grants a limited and temporary agnosticism here. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."¹ We gain our insights as we approach our objective. Yet necessary, therefore, though great caution be, there seem to be two stipulations human experience can now lay down concerning the ultimate end or condition of the self. It must be self-accepted. A man would fail,

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¹ John 3. v.2.

perhaps, at present to identify himself in his ultimate condition but that would not refute the fact that therein lay his truest and fullest self. Nevertheless, if in his penultimate stage of transcendence he could not then recognise and accept that condition as being his best, it could not be the best for him. So far as this goes there may be ahead a wonderfully intimate union between God and the individual wherein at present we should think the individual was lost. But our present judgment on this matter is not finally authoritative even for ourselves. On the other hand as this world and the next must be in one universe, experience here must lend some clue to experience hereafter. The process of self-transcendence here will indicate the direction of future self-transcendence. So the Christian saint relieves his agnosticism on this point. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."¹

In the saint's conception of immortality we see among other ideas the logical consequences of his conception of the self. If we hold with regard to the future life what we held with regard to the present life, viz. that we must not abstract selves from values or values from selves, we see that there are excluded the ideas of impersonal immortality and merely natural or self-centred and atomistic immortality. No "choir invisible" nor value impersonal can fulfil the promise of the saint's life

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¹ 1 John 3. v.2.

here. A heaven of values abstracted from all finite selves seems at least incongruous with this world where selves are so deeply involved and to many it would appear as much poorer than anything we know here. We cannot conceive of a world of abstracted values which could be counted as the consummation of this world. And selves do not live again in the "Choir invisible". The immortalisation of influence sacrifices all the selves of previous ages to the living of today. And so the last generation of human beings would have to justify the travail and sacrifice of all previous generations - and then itself pass away. All this seems incongruous with the positions we sought to establish concerning the self on pages (36-4). As equally impossible is it to establish on the grounds of experience here any hope of a self-centred and atomistic immortality. Such a conception is quite irreligious. Hereafter as well as here the saint admits

"What is my being but for Thee?"

And in no world, according to religion, is the soul apart from God anything more than a worthless and abstract object. If against this the protest be raised that such a conception involves conditional immortality, it could be replied, as only one of many ways of replying, that that immortality is no more conditional than life here is. And does the self really want or could God really endure an unconditional immortality for any kind of being? It may sound strange to suggest that man's tenure of existence is an acquisition. Can a man be mortal one day and by an hour of

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glorious life become immortal the next? But the same kind of difficulty comes with equal force to those who contend for natural immortality. If a man is naturally immortal, is he so only an hour after birth? If so, is he immortal an hour before birth? And if so, can we deny immortality to a devoted and faithful dog? But the phrase "natural immortality" itself raises a suspicion. What is characteristically human is just what transcends the merely natural order in man. Thus, often the argument for natural immortality asserts that the mortalities of the physical world should not perturb man for he is more than a member of it. In other words natural immortality is defended by reference to the spiritual qualities in man. But that is just the realm where contingency creeps in or natural inevitability is transcended. For the sake of illustration we adduce what to us can be only hypothetical, viz. the case of the finally worthless and impenitent. Is it not a false gratuity to call such a man? Is he not a being who has lost his manhood? Can the doctrine of the natural immortality of man refer to such? Is there any conceivable reason for the immortality of such? Endless punishment merely for punishment's sake is incongruous with the Christian^{conception}, as well as many other, conceptions, of God. The hypothetical case is beyond redemption. No saving purpose can be effected by longer life. In philosophic phraseology we can speak of such a being as being out-with the purpose of the universe, sundered from the Absolute. This is a test case. Professor Pringle Pattison says, "Such

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absolute freedom is an abstraction of the intellect and the final determination to evil is inconsistent with what we believe of the omnipotence of love and the constraining power of goodness".¹

This indicates the acuteness of the problem. In spite of the difficulty this brings, Professor Mackintosh still clings to natural immortality without resorting to universal restoration as Pringle Pattison tentatively does in the statement given above. Professor Mackintosh declares that "To say that God cannot tolerate to all eternity a dead limb in a redeemed universe is undeniably to assert future punishment of the direst kind".² To many it would appear the greatest mercy to all concerned that such should become extinct. Suffice it to point out that we are here in a region where experience and even language fail us. The finally impenitent is dead so far as the universe of order is concerned. Lawlessness has become his law; self, his God. Whether that means total extinction it is difficult to say. We can only admit that the finally impenitent is a hypothetical case and, were there such, their immortal existence would be exceedingly irrational.

The difficulties of this view are relieved by the acceptance of the doctrine of Universal Restoration. Those holding this doctrine can easily accept conditional immortality because they assume all will fulfil the required conditions. Professor Pringle Pattison in his careful treatment of the subject says, "So long as any good at all remains in a nature, it is accessible to

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¹ "The Idea of Immortality". p.202.

² "Immortality and the Future". p.221.

the spirit of God". But he adds, "And the little leaven must work till it leavens the whole lump".¹ The necessity for this is not clear. In fact he suggests elsewhere that it is dubious, e.g. "Nothing seems more fatally easy than the dissolution in this fashion of the coherent unity we call the mind, if the process is allowed to continue and to spread. We can observe the phenomena frequently in the case of disease when it affects the practical activities of life; but the mere relaxation of the moral effort may initiate the same process in the spiritual sphere."² This possibility receives great emphasis from the religious consciousness. Any veiled compulsion which would neutralise such a possibility would vitiate the universal restoration and make it very much poorer in spiritual qualities than the possibly smaller but freely willed heaven. On the other hand instead of the assertion that none can finally refuse their eternal good it is said that none will do so. The prediction may be true. One cannot estimate what the light of other worlds will reveal and what spiritual changes that revelation will produce. But there are some considerations which rob that prediction of dogmatic certainty. It cannot be asserted authoritatively that fuller light will inevitably bring the desired change. It does not always do so here. Moreover spiritual life hereafter for man cannot be different in principle from what it is here. It is gratuitous to presume that he who rejects the best spiritual life here will be

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¹ "Idea of Immortality". p.204.

subdued and won by that hereafter. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."¹

It is asserted that the reputation of God depends upon a universal restoration. God has failed, we are told, if one soul is lost. But can even omnipotent love command a spiritual result? Is Divine Love responsible for the rejections that it meets? There is beneath such contentions an underlying assumption that needs criticism. What is it that would finally reject the purpose and love of God? We must avoid the conception of a ready-made, self-contained, finite being. The possibility of the self is given: its content has to be acquired. The real content of the self has to be found in the service and life of God. When these are evaded, the self remains a mere but perverted possibility. An earthly father can feel little affection for the embryo of his future child. Neither for its own sake nor for his could he wish it three score years and ten, if at its birth its development were finally arrested. Whatever may be the physical and mental developments of man, if his life since adolescence has been one of greed and vice, he is still merely a spiritual embryo threatened with a spiritually prenatal death. If his real self is never acquired and the mere possibility of the soul is taken to that

"Sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain",

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¹ Luke 16, v.31.

we cannot say God has failed: He has not finished His work.

A religious interpretation is here given to the self. There are others and when they are adopted the problem becomes more acute. Universal Restoration seems appropriate to Professor Pringle Pattison "wherever a real self has come into being were it only through rebellion and actual sin".¹ Professor Mackintosh also says, "Character in the worst man alive has in it a spiritual force for which unending activities are not too great a field".² These statements give to the evil or abstract self a reality and duration the facts of experience do not warrant. A real self may be attained in spite of a temporary rebellion and sin and the worst character, if converted, may carry a potential eternity. But the self-destructiveness of the sinful life cannot be doubted and the immortal existence of a character directly and completely antagonistic to the Divine will sounds, to say the least, highly speculative. Professor Galloway says, "After all what man needs is an ethical and spiritual self-fulfilment not mere persistence of a metaphysical identity".³ Former chapters based on an analysis of the religious experience have led us to conclude that the true self is an acquisition to be found only in God. Not by any psychic-developments due to mere self-assertion has it risen to the status of a real and immortal self. Such independence is neither religious nor congruous with a spiritual universe. Where

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¹ "The Idea of Immortality". p.204.

² "Immortality and the Future". p.225.

³ "The Idea of Immortality". p.137.

the self's content is there also is its immortality, viz. in God. "Because I live ye shall live also." ¹

If these conclusions be endorsed, the initial unity is presented as enriched but not weakened by the enrichment. The Absolute is still Absolute and God, God. Contingency centres only in the self. Values are still values, although some men may despise them and the universe still stands, although some men may defy it. The sovereignty of God is as manifest in Hell as in Heaven. It is man's attitude to it that makes man's misery or bliss.

¹ John 14. v.19.

CONCLUSION.

Having analysed the religious experience and examined its most intimate contacts with philosophy, we are in a position to define somewhat the terms used hitherto rather loosely, viz. God and the Absolute. We have accepted God as the object of the religious experience and in the few references made herein to theology, have, for convenience sake, defined it as the science of that object. In actual fact it often implies much more or much less. It sometimes assumes the prerogatives of philosophy. Rev. R.M. Relton, D.D. says, "What we must contend for is the existence of a distinct Christian philosophy in rivalry, if you will, to other systems and one which must stand or fall on its own merits and its own intrinsic worth as the best solution of the problems which beset human thought".¹ Therein the most significant part yet really only a part would presume to be the whole. The highest categories there instead of subsuming would annul the lower. God would supplant the Absolute. On the other hand theology has at times sought a standing in the missing links of other sciences. The inability of the sciences also to say why things are what they are, in spite of their wondrous unfolding of how things are, such, has been taken as the opportunity for theology especially apologetics. But theology should not be accepted as a science of gaps. It should deal not with assumed holes in the natural order but with the positive content of a spiritual

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¹ "King's College Lectures on Immortality". p.228.

experience. The Godhead is not a cosmic monastery isolated from other areas of reality. God is not spatially in the Absolute in the sense of being in it but not of it.

Granting that theology as defined in this thesis is accepted, it presents unique difficulties to philosophy. The emergence into any settled unity of something higher than anything hitherto ascertained threatens the unity and attracts critical analysis. It should not be surprising that religion which promotes the transcendence of the finite self cracks and overlaps the neat and precise categories and systems of the lower realms of existence. Thus between God and the saint there seems to be a greater distinctness and yet a closer intimacy and oneness than there are between the Absolute and what may be called the sub-human parts. Here lies the crux of the problem in freedom, morality and immortality. Religious terminology undoubtedly needs a violent purging. But, when that is done, analysis and synthesis will reveal that religious thought constitutes a distinct sphere of reference requiring terms and categories of its own. Philosophy must subsume that in its all-comprehensive unity. This will not mean converting the term "Absolute" into a philosophical synonym for God nor interpreting the term "Absolute" as the unity of the sub-human order with God as a supra-absolute. We have endeavoured to prove that the granting of a measure of reality to the concrete self is not incongruous

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with belief in the Absolute. Such a self merely augments the rich diversities within the Absolute by making the possible actual. No part of the universe is jeopardised by the qualified freedom we have assumed man has. The purpose of the whole is always triumphant. Man can determine, not whether it shall succeed or not but whether he shall share in its success or not and so attain or miss respectively his own self-realisation. And as man derives his uniqueness and worth only from the whole, so is it only as we see God in the Absolute that ontological validity can be found for any belief in God. Theology is only one of the many sciences all dealing with reality. Philosophy is one. "A Christian Philosophy" is a dubious phrase. If the adoption of the religious epithet means the exclusion of anti-Christian elements then that can only imply that the work of philosophy is not finished. There are still antitheses to be resolved into a fuller thesis. If the epithet merely involves the exclusion of non-religious elements of reality then whatever system of thought may be built upon that narrow basis, it certainly cannot be called philosophy. What is thereby excluded has its ground in the Absolute. For to lack direct religious value is not to lack ontological validity. So there is much in the Absolute for which religion has no direct or practical use. This involves in one sense that the Absolute is more than God just as life is more than religion. If this were all that was meant by the statement that God is an "appearance of reality" no question could be raised.

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better, however, would it be to say that God is reality appearing, making itself known and in this connection, making itself known in unique ways and for what, at least at present, are the highest purposes. God, then, to speak the language of philosophy, is the nisus of the Absolute towards man, that which appeals to us and endeavours to draw us religiously towards the whole. This would imply a qualification of a statement referred to in a previous chapter. It is said that God who identifies Himself with one side of the struggle between good and evil cannot be the Absolute which embraces both. That is true. But God should never be presented as taking part in a cosmic duel. He is that which elicits our upward self-transcendence. He struggles against nothing in the Absolute. He is opposed to our acceptance of false Absolutes. There is no moral evil, so far as we know, outwith the will of the finite self and in so much as the Absolute grants self-realisation as the consummation of only one form of self-transcendence, it by that very necessity opposes all other forms of self-transcendence which negate rather than enrich the true self. In that sense the Absolute is against evil. But evil is not absorbed in the Absolute in spite of man or apart from man. In a sense evil never was and never can be in the Absolute. It would be truer to say that in so far as man is evil, he is outwith the Absolute. God, then, is not a finite among finites, a super-finite, a superior monad existing apart from other finite monads and related to them only in some inconceivable way. Neither

is it true to say that God is the Absolute only viewed religiously, as if the difference was only one of a finite point of view or of terminology. Whatever is distinct in the apprehension of the saint in a moment of religious exaltation is only data for reflection and not a closure on ~~its~~ reflection. It would be confusing, to say the least, to think of the Absolute as a bare empty neutral, a characterless unity, into which differences of content were imported by our different methods of approach. We must think of the Absolute as the ultimate ground of the rich diversified content of our experience, the religious experience included. Each approach discovers something distinct in reality. C.D. Broad in an essay in which he argues against belief in a personal God admits the probability of the above contention being true. "I think it more likely than not", he writes, "that in religious and mystical experience men come into contact with some Reality or some aspect of Reality which they do not come into contact with in any other way"¹. To some thinkers that is one of the very reasons why they resent resolving God into something impersonal. The inadequacy of the term "personal" has been admitted. But the whole inadequacy lay in the fact that what was wanted was a term connoting not less but more than that. No saint would ever agree that his faith was centred in an abstract content, an empty unity or a sum total of self-less values. The object of his faith is rather something which is more of what we

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¹ "Belief in a Personal God". Hibbert Journal
Oct. 1925. p.47.

know here, an experience which is also the ground of all our fragmentary experiences. Lord Haldane says, "It is just in those higher aspects of self-consciousness in which the knowledge and volition of selves display more and more of identity and less and less of difference which is the characteristic of the external world that the search for the foundation of finite self-hood seems fruitful".¹

Undoubtedly there is in actual theology much that is contrary to what is given above. But that does not militate against the aim of this thesis. It has been contended herein that while religious experience can fill all others without negating any, it is after all but one among the many. If its approach to reality elicits something distinct from what all other approaches elicit, as we believe it does, it should not therefore be suspected. That is a result rather to be expected. Nevertheless the immediate utterances of religious faith should be subjected to the same logical analysis as the deliverances of other experiences are. This is imperative if ontological validity is claimed for the saint's belief in God. Then, it will be asked, is that unique reality or aspect of reality to which religion has the exclusive approach but one reality or aspect of reality within the all-embracing Absolute? This is really the crux of the whole question and here precisely all terms and metaphors are most inadequate. The safest course is to let our

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¹ "Aristotelian Proceedings" 1917-18. p.581.

analysis of the religious experience give us not a conclusion but a clue. The categories which seem most adequate and germane to the religious experience do not cancel but subsume the lower ones. In a somewhat analogous way should not the connotation of the term "God" be something which does not contradict but augments the connotation of the terms denoting realities or aspects of reality which are the objects of other approaches? If, in objection, it be asked if God is only a part of the Absolute, the answer may be given, "Yes in the way that religion in the greatest possible saint is only part of his entire life". As a matter of hypothesis, there may be for finite individuals a relationship to the Absolute higher than the religious one and an aspect or a constituent of the Absolute higher than God as we now know Him. But such flights must be abandoned. Actual experience is sufficient to engage all our attention. In examining that experience we have observed that in the highest forms of saintliness justice is done to all aspects of life yet all are filled with religious emotion and motive. Is it derogatory to religion to think that God so fills the whole of ultimate reality? This seems to be the conclusion to which the religious experience points. Is God sovereign? Yes, as the sovereign aspect or life of the Absolute. Is He Lord of all? Yes, religiously so. By as much as the saint's best possible religious experience would be over all and in a sense would fill all others, so can we hold that the object of that experience stands in the same

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relation to the objects of other experiences. Is God, then, only part of the Absolute? This again is like asking if religious experience is part of one's total experience. The answer is, "It is only part in so far as the reality of other experiences is not questioned or jeopardised. It is however not a part external to the others but the informing and vivifying immanence in them all".

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