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GOD AND THE ABSOLUTE

IN many quarters the idea seems to prevail that Idealism and Christianity have formed an alliance against all forms of Pragmatism. Both Idealism and Christianity, it is claimed, stand for the maintenance of absolute truth and value while Pragmatism has frankly embraced the relativity of truth and value. Is this presentation correct? I think it is not. Idealism as well as Pragmatism, it seems to me, has embraced the relativity of truth and value. Idealism as well as Pragmatism is a foe of biblical Theism. Together they form a secret alliance against Theism. Such will be the contention of this paper.

The method by which we would establish our contention is to show that the God of Idealism is not the God of Theism but is rather the God of Pragmatism. If Idealism and Theism differ radically on the concept of God they are bound to differ radically on religion and morality.

THEISM AND PRAGMATISM

Why should Theism¹ consider Pragmatism² to be its enemy? Is it because Pragmatism opposes Christian morality? Yes, but there is a deeper reason. Is it because Pragmatism is the enemy of the Christian religion? Yes, but for a still deeper reason. Theism considers Pragmatism its foe because Pragmatism serves another God than the God of Theism. Theism serves God; Pragmatism serves gods.

The Pragmatist admits, nay avows, that he serves other gods than the Theist. He likes to speak of "The Obsolescence of the Eternal." He holds that belief in God is due to "miasmatic exhalations of a false intellectualism."

What are these gods of Pragmatism? They are principles of goodness, truth and beauty. Humanity has, in its development, first postulated them and thereupon canonized them.

¹ We use the term Theism to signify biblical Theism, of which we take the notion of an absolute, self-sufficient, personal God to be the central metaphysical concept.

² By Pragmatism we signify not only the movement in Philosophy properly so-called, but also all other movements that openly avow the evolution concept as a metaphysical tenet.

Jesus saw that there are intelligent creative forces at the basis of the Universe. He told us, therefore, that the Father is love.

It is clear that this is the opposite of historic Christianity. Apart from questions of historicity, we may say that for Pragmatism the "ideals" of goodness, truth and beauty exist independently of Christ, while according to Christianity these principles issue from Christ. This distinction one finds to be a never-failing shibboleth.

The same shibboleth can serve to distinguish Pragmatism from Theism for the sufficient reason that Christianity is Theism in a world of sin. Christ is God. Principles of value proceed from Him because He is God. God is the source of all value as well as its standard. But for Pragmatism value exists independently of God as well as of Christ. More than that, "The purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world."¹ The temporal universe is said to be a wider concept than God. God is sometimes said to be "only the ideal tendency in things."² Or he is called, "in the strictest sense not a creator but a creature."³ Theism says that God created the world; Pragmatism says that the world created God.

Thus a metaphysical difference of the first magnitude separates the two. The Pragmatist thinks it quite possible to ask: "Who made God?" Back of God lies mere possibility. Possibility is a wider concept than actuality. God and man both dwell on the island called Reality. This island is surrounded by a shoreless and bottomless ocean of possibility and the rationality that God and we enjoy is born of chance. The Theist thinks it impossible to ask: "Who made God?" God is for him the source of possibility: actuality is a wider concept than possibility. The little island on which we dwell rests upon the ocean of the reality of God; our rationality rests upon the rationality of God. Pragmatism maintains a thorough metaphysical relativism, while Theism will not compromise on the conception of God as a self-conscious absolute personality.

A radical empiricism in epistemology corresponds to the metaphysical relativism of the Pragmatist. No initial

¹ Wm. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 31.

² Wm. James, *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 124.

³ Alexander, *Space Time and Deity*, vol. 2, p. 399.

assumptions of any kind are to be allowed. The "scientific method" is to be applied to metaphysics. We must be open minded and follow the facts whithersoever they lead us. In searching for the laws of phenomenal life we can never hope to see our efforts crowned with success unless we are strictly neutral. Who knows but God may be a law of phenomenal life. If one holds to metaphysical relativism one must be "neutral."

This insistence on "neutrality" is highly significant. "Neutrality" in method is not a mere matter of course, a hallmark of ordinary intelligence. It is imposed upon the metaphysical relativist. He cannot choose to be "prejudiced" or "biassed"; he must be "neutral." Therefore he too is "biassed" and "prejudiced," in favour of "neutrality." "Neutrality" is implied in the supposition of the "open" universe. If the universe is open, facts new to God and man constantly issue from the womb of possibility. These new facts will constantly reinterpret the meaning of the old. Our method then must be basically synthetic; God's method is also synthetic. He too must wait to see what the new facts may bring. God can do no more than man. He cannot interpret the meaning of reality to man since He has not yet interpreted reality for Himself. Therefore man must interpret for himself and must be neutral; his thought is *creatively constructive*.

The Theist, on the other hand, cannot be "neutral." His conception of God makes him "biassed." He holds that for God the facts are in: God knows the end from the beginning. He admits that facts may emerge that are new to man; he knows they are not new to God. History is but the expression of the purpose of God. As far as the space time universe is concerned the category of interpretation precedes that of existence. Man's interpretation must, therefore, to be correct, correspond to the interpretation of God. Man's synthesis and analysis rest upon God's analysis. Strictly speaking, man's method of investigation is that of analysis of God's analysis. We are to think God's thoughts after Him; our thought is *receptively reconstructive*.

Viewed from the side of epistemology the same difference between Pragmatism and Theism appears.

To be "neutral" in method implies metaphysical relativism. This is the simple converse of the statement that metaphysical

relativity implies "neutrality." You cannot be "neutral" unless the universe is "open" to God as well as to you. If the facts are all in for God you must accept God's interpretation. To be "neutral" implies that system is non-existent. To be "neutral" implies that synthesis is prior to analysis for God as well as for man. It implies that God is then within the universe. It is determined beforehand that you cannot come to the acceptance of an absolute God; metaphysical relativity is assumed.

The Theist, on the other hand, because of his "bias" must have an absolute God. If God were not absolute, if for Him analysis does not have significance prior to and apart from synthesis, man would have to interpret the facts for himself. Interpretation of reality cannot be a co-operative enterprise between God and man. Co-operation presupposes equal ultimacy. Now, since man is temporally conditioned, his equal ultimacy with God would imply that synthesis is just as basic as analysis for God and man alike. This again implies the "open universe"; and this open universe gives priority to synthesis while a God who must synthesize is no God.

Even if man admits or maintains that he *finds* the truth and does not make it he is still the final interpreter if God is not. Principles rest in personality. If the principles of goodness, beauty and truth are not considered to be resting in and issuing from the personality of God, they may hover about for a while, as for instance in the case of the Platonic Ideas or Kant's categorical imperative; but soon they are seen to rest in and issue from finite personality.

Illustrative of the basic difference between Pragmatism and Theism is Pragmatism's conception of religion. It is, we now expect, a religion without God. Religion is defined as "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large."¹ Again, religion is said to be, "man's sense of the disposition of the Universe to himself."² Man is not responsible to God but to the Universe. Since the universe is impersonal, responsibility returns to man; religion is morality and morality is autonomous.

Thus we see the great gulf fixed between Theism and Pragmatism. It is not always realised that there is no possible

¹ McTaggart, J. E., *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 3, 1906.

² Perry, R. B., *The Approach to Philosophy*, p. 66, 1908.

middle ground between them. The Pragmatic Christian and the Christian Pragmatist alike are hybrids fore-doomed to sterility; reversion to type constantly takes place: the theistic veneer of Modernism scarcely conceals its Pragmatic metaphysics. We are either metaphysical relativists or metaphysical absolutists. If the former, then we are "neutral," if the latter, then "biased." Choose ye this day whom ye shall serve! Whom will Idealism serve? Will it stand with Theism or with Pragmatism? Our contention is that it stands with Pragmatism though it tries to hold a midway position.

Before we seek to establish this contention directly we must still further prepare the ground. Thus far we have been looking at Theism and Pragmatism as if they were two figures in repose with the view of comparing a third figure with them. Now we would see the two figures, Theism and Pragmatism, in action with a view to seeing not only which Idealism resembles most in appearance, but also which it resembles most in behaviour. If Pragmatism and Theism are in conflict—they are admitted to be antagonistic—and Idealism does not remain neutral but even sides with Pragmatism, does this not place Idealism in a position of enmity against Theism? Allow us then to watch the combat between Theism and Pragmatism.

God does not now settle the dispute between Theism and Pragmatism. The Theist says He may, nay, He will. Through the ages one increasing purpose runs. God's purpose is realised in history and man must be God's willing instrument. This is Christianity: true, but Christianity is Theism in a world of sin. The Theist calls upon all men to conform to God's plan. He therefore also calls on the Pragmatist to do so. "I'll wait and see," is the answer of the Pragmatist. "Where do you obtain such knowledge as you say you have? I'll be honestly agnostic, humbly scientific."

Again the Theist urges his case and again the Pragmatist replies: "All speculations about an Absolute are but miasmatic exhalations of a false intellectualism which has misconstrued its own nature and powers."¹ Present axioms once were postulates. All that human thought is for is to find our way efficiently from a known fact to an unknown one. No one knows how many are

¹ Schiller, F. C., "Axioms as Postulates," in *Personal Idealism*, p. 54, edited by Sturt.

yet to be discovered. No one can tell us that history will terminate in a judgment day. You, my friend, dare not be open-minded."

"Quite true," answers the Theist. "I dare not be open-minded because I cannot be. Have you been open-minded? You have spoken about what *cannot* be. But to the 'open-minded' all things should be possible. 'Openmindedness' requires an 'open' universe; and 'open' universe requires an 'open' mind; your mind is closed against the Absolute. Or was it inconsistency merely? Do you really wish the open universe? Open for the fact of the judgment, that is, for the Absolute? If so then your universe is really a one. To be a genuine relativist you must be a brave absolutist; to be really 'openminded' you must be 'closed' minded. You were after all quite logical in seeking by one *a priori* 'cannot' to strike God out of your universe. It cannot be done any other way. Only you have failed to observe that an 'openminded' man must never use 'cannot' as a weapon. An 'open' mind should be 'unstable in all his ways.'"

"Moreover, 'neutrality' seems to be an unreasonable position for a finite, time conditioned man to take. It implies, as we have seen, the open universe, where a new fact may appear at any time. Suppose the 'judgment' should prove to be a fact. Could you meet it 'neutrally'? You could not; since the judgment implies that the facts are now in for God so that you ought to be 'prejudiced.' On the other hand, if it be said that the very meaning of the 'open universe' is that the judgment is not to be a fact, this must be established by *a priori* argument. To be 'neutral' implies the 'open universe'; but no human being can establish the openness of the universe by a neutral method. The assumption of a metaphysical relativism and 'neutrality' would seem to be unreasonable except for one who is absolute, which by admission you are not."

"To be 'neutral' is therefore, to try to be something no human being can be. I see this most clearly when I notice how readily the advocates of Pragmatism turn from a radical empiricism to an extreme form of *a priori* reasoning. They constantly tell me what can and cannot be. They tell me, for example, that the very terms 'relative' and 'absolute' are correlatives so that it is impossible for us to think of God otherwise than as a correlative to man. This is but one example

of the commonest form in which the assumptions that all categories of thinking are the same for God and man is stated. The assumption underlying this is once more that of metaphysical relativism. Only upon the basis of this assumption can you maintain that all categories of thinking are the same for God and man and therefore conclude that the correlativity for us of such terms as 'absolute' and 'relative,' necessarily implies the correlativity of these terms for God. Now metaphysical relativity is just the question at issue; least of all then have your friends who boast 'neutrality' a right to assume it. 'Neutrality' must beg the question."

"These considerations have often made me more 'biased' than ever. I feel that it is better to be 'biased' in favour of the Absolute and admit my bias than to be 'biased' against Him and deny my bias. I do not close my eyes to difficulties as they centre about God's relation to His temporally created world, but I have yet to find a solution of these difficulties that does not begin by dissolving one of the terms to be related, that does not begin by assuming metaphysical relativism. Is it hard to believe in God? It is far harder not to believe in Him."

Much more might have been said by the Theist. The Pragmatist however, already admitted the main point, that is, that he has been led to the pragmatic "will to believe" or the will to disbelieve God by the sound of such words as "neutrality," "openmindedness" and such phrases as "follow the facts where-soever they lead." These words and phrases he had often heard in university lecture rooms and has actually been led to believe that they have an unlimited application in the field of metaphysics as well as a limited application in the field of science. He now saw that one must either presuppose God or presuppose the open universe.

THEISM AND IDEALISM

Theism presupposes God and Pragmatism does not. That, we saw, in the last analysis is the difference between them. This difference we considered from two points of view. In metaphysics Theism has an absolute God and a temporal creation, while Pragmatism has no absolute God and no temporal creation, but a space-time Universe in which God and man are correlatives. In epistemology Theism avows that man's thought is receptively

reconstructive of God's interpretation, while Pragmatism says man is "neutral" and therefore creatively productive in the matter of interpretation.

Where now does Idealism stand? The one question to be asked is: Does Idealism presuppose God? If it does it is theistic; if it does not it is pragmatic. The question may be conveniently studied by regarding it in turn from the point of view of metaphysics and that of epistemology. We shall ask whether Idealism (*a*) assumes a relativistic metaphysics and (*b*) whether Idealism wants to be "neutral" in its epistemology. If we find that such is the case we are driven to the conclusion that Idealism will take sides with Pragmatism in its combat with Theism as described above.

A simple dichotomous division will be all we need. The differences between Idealism and Pragmatism may still be many and great even though we must conclude that neither is theistic. We have no desire to remove these differences.

The necessity of a simple alternative is nowhere greater than in cases of doubt. If such an alternative is available we should use it. Idealism is the case of doubt. It might be hard to determine whether or not it is theistic. Pragmatism has, however, simplified the matter for us. If Pragmatism were not with us it would have behooved us to invent it.

Even with the aid of the simple alternative now at hand the question is not easily settled. If you have watched the face of the Idealist when he beheld the struggle between the Theist and the Pragmatist you will have noted what seemed to be hesitation or even sudden reversals of purpose on the part of the Idealist. Sometimes it seemed as though the Idealist would unequivocally take sides with the Theist. Then again the Theist drew such merciless conclusions on the matter of "neutrality" that the Idealist seemed to think he ought to change his allegiance in order to save Pragmatism at least as a buffer state.

On the whole the Idealist when asked in court: "Have you or have you not presupposed God?" he answers: "I have." But that does not exclude cross-questioning. Perhaps the Idealist thus readily avows his alliance with the Theist because of an undiscovered ambiguity in his thinking. Perhaps the Idealist thinks it possible to presuppose God with the Theist and be "neutral" with the Pragmatist. Or perchance, though seeing that such would be impossible, the Idealist may be "neutral" in

spite of himself ; as without one's knowledge cancer may be doing its certain work from within.

Of an organism it need not be shown that all its parts are affected with a fatal disease. Especially in case of the intricate spiritual organism of knowledge the finding of one pathological area warrants sanatorium treatment of the patient.

Again, in the debate about God the Theist takes the affirmative and the Pragmatist the negative. To win the debate Pragmatism need find but one weak spot in the argument of the affirmative. The main point of the Theist may be attacked in any of the corollaries that issue from it. On the other hand if any of the corollaries of the Theistic conception of God are attacked the conception of God is also attacked. If we find then that Idealism sides with Pragmatism on any one point the Theist can no longer consider the Idealist his ally.

The Idealist has not presupposed his Absolute and therefore his Absolute is or tends to become the God of the Pragmatist. Such is our main contention. The Idealist has recognised the necessity of presupposing the Absolute but has not been able to do so because of the "neutrality" involved in his logic. As in the case of the Pragmatist "neutrality" leads the Idealist to and is itself an evidence of his metaphysical relativism.

First, then we would note that the Idealist definitely sides with the Theist against the Pragmatist according to his own statements. The Idealist has been very insistent against the Pragmatist on the necessity of presupposing an Absolute. Many mediating theologians were led to believe that Christianity must look to Idealism for a genuine metaphysical defence for its position. The Idealist would not come one whit behind the chiefest apostle of Theism in his protestation that God is absolute.

The Idealist even uses interchangeably the terms "Absolute" and "God." The Idealist says not only that he presupposes the Absolute, but that the Absolute is God. Thus the Idealist's claim that his Absolute is the God of Theism looks very plausible. It is this plausibility, we believe, that led many to a hasty identification of the Absolute with God.¹ This plausibility we must account for. We shall do so by examining the thought of recent representatives of Idealistic philosophy.

¹ By "God" we signify the God of Theism unless otherwise stated.

"Appearance and Reality" is the title of F. H. Bradley's masterpiece of metaphysics. The title indicated that which the contents of the book seeks to substantiate, namely, that "Appearance" is riddled with contradictions while in "Reality" these contradictions are "somehow" to be neutralised or harmonised. "Reality" is accordingly thought of as "beyond" appearance.

The supposition of Bradley's philosophy is that the real is the rational. Lack of rationality in Appearance reduces its reality to a minimum. Comprehensive rationality makes Reality real. Rationality, that is, complete, comprehensive rationality must "somehow" be the everlasting arms underneath Appearance or Appearance would not even appear. Appearance would be reduced to a minimum not only but to zero unless complete rationality were underneath.

The similarity of Bradley's position to that of Theism is striking. Both demand complete rationality somewhere. Bradley seeks it in the Absolute; Theism seeks it in God. Together they maintain that on the Pragmatic basis our experience would be meaningless. Bradley seems to be even more insistent on the common demand of complete rationality than is Theism. He claims that *any* reality to be real must be completely rational, that is, perspicuous to itself. Theism demands no more than that God shall be completely comprehensible to Himself. Bradley has exactly the same demand for Appearance that he has for Reality; Theism has a higher demand for God than for man. For Bradley Appearance is unreal because not comprehensible; for Theism Appearance is real not because comprehensible or incomprehensible to us, but because it is the expression of a comprehension of God. The soul of the difference is that Bradley speaks of comprehensibility *per se* while Theism distinguishes between comprehensibility for God and comprehensibility for man. Bradley has assumed that all thought must be measured by one standard, that all thought human and divine is of one type.

The *fons et origo* of the difference between Idealism and Theism is therewith discovered. From the Theistic standpoint this assumption of the unity of type of all thought is the cancer working its deadly work in the idealistic organism. It is the sin of Eve: she thought that she might be as God; so she became "neutral" between God and the devil. From the idealistic standpoint the rejection on the part of Theism of this assumption

leads it inevitably to, or is itself an expression of, a metaphysical dualism. Idealism insists that the assumption must be made in order that the necessary unity within which all diversities are to play may be at hand. Such unity must be presupposed or it cannot be found at all.

Waiving now the question, who is in the right, we call attention to the impassable gulf between these two types of epistemology. No harmony between the two is possible. One must choose between them. This will appear more definitely as we advance.

The difference in metaphysics corresponds to the difference in epistemology. From the idealistic assumption that all thought is of one type it follows that the Universe is a wider concept than "God." It is the Universe in the case of Bradley as in the case of other Idealists, that is really the Absolute. "God" and man operate within this Universe. They are aspects of this Universe, correlatives one of the other. They are really *equally ultimate* aspects, or they could not be aspects of one Reality at all.

It may not immediately appear that this metaphysics of Bradley leads one toward the relativism of Pragmatism. However, let us at this stage keep in mind two things. In the first place that in Bradley's metaphysics man is a charter member of the Universe. This implies not only that plurality is for Bradley as basic as unity—to which, if applied to the Trinity, the Theist will agree—but that the conditions to which man is subject will influence Reality as a whole. Reality becomes the one subject to which all predicates must apply in the same way. Secondly, a corollary derived from the first point is that time must be real for God in the same sense that it is real for man. If time is unreal for God it must be proved that the Absolute or Universe as a whole is non or supra-temporal. On the other hand if it should not be possible to prove the unreality of time for man; it will be equally impossible to maintain the supra-temporal nature of God. A basic metaphysical pluralism is involved in Bradley's epistemology which, we believe, can never furnish the unity that he thinks it furnishes. And this basic pluralism, because it has man as a charter member, must become a pluralism in flux.

Add to this the observation that the idealistic assumption in epistemology that man's thought is on the par with God's is the

“neutrality” of Pragmatism since it seeks to make the interpretation of reality a co-operative enterprise between God and man which implies that man ultimately interprets reality for himself,¹ and we already see “neutrality” chasing “relativity” as a dog chases its tail.

Bradley seems to have felt something of the difficulties involved in his position. He ends up one argument after another with an appeal to mystery. “Somehow” Reality will absorb all the difficulties of Appearance. His Reality becomes much of a Moloch, requiring the sacrifices of the Appearance. There is in Bradley an acosmic strain. But the Theist fears this acosmic strain; to him it is an evidence of a false a priorism that says man cannot be man unless he is a god. A Moloch demanding human sacrifice is an idol; by that token can one know it. Moreover Idealism has no right to appeal to mystery. One who assumes that the Real is the Rational and at the same time makes man a charter member with “God” in the Universe cannot without destroying his basic principle appeal to mystery. There may be, on idealistic basis, a sphere of the unknown to man, but never one of the unknowable. By this token too is Idealism distinguished from Theism. Theism says there is nothing unknown or unknowable for God, but there is for man one territory unknown but knowable and another unknown and also unknowable. If it were not so man would be one with God. Thus if Theism appeals to mystery it appeals to the ultimate rationality as it is in God. Theism does not, as Idealism, by its appeal to mystery neutralise its basic demand that there must be an ultimate rationality back of our experience.

We may now distinguish between Absolute Number One called “God” as “Beyond,” and Absolute Number Two as the Universe or the Whole. Both concepts are used by Bradley and by Idealists in general with much ambiguity. Absolute Number Two, we believe, fits into the scheme of Idealistic logic, while Absolute Number One is the product of an acosmic strain unnatural to and subversive of the demand that reality must be essentially perspicuous to man as well as to God.

More clearly will this be seen in the philosophy of Bernard Bosanquet. We meet first of all with the same demand for complete rationality lest there be no reality at all. We meet also with the same appeal to Absolute Number One in which this

¹ *Vide* discussion in previous pages on the differences between Pragmatism and Theism.

rationality may be found because if we ask the deep of our personality the reply comes back; Rationality, comprehensive rationality is not found with me. The same disappointment also, but a disappointment now expected, meets us when we find that it is Absolute Number Two, the Universe that really has the love of his heart. The reason for this process is also the same as it was in Bradley's case, namely the "neutrality" involved in the assumption that God's thought is subject to the same limitations as ours.

Bosanquet abhors the open universe of Pragmatism. He feels certain that if one begins with a plurality of independently existing atoms you will never have coherence in experience at all. The very nature of the judgment as we employ it in scientific investigation implies that unity underlies all difference.¹ Take, for example any object of empirical research: "Why do some animals change colour?" You at once ask a biologist for possible alternative solutions. You recognise that there is a biological world into which the incident must fit. The biological world in turn is related to other worlds, such as those of logic, aesthetics and ethics. We find then that in beginning with a given complex of experience whose consequences we desire to consider the character of the whole of reality has to be respected and maintained. "Thus it follows from the nature of implication that every inference involves a judgment based upon the whole of reality, though referring only to a partial system which need not even be actual."¹ "Judgment is the reference of a significant idea to a subject in Reality by means of an identity of content between them."²

Moreover we cannot disregard this nature of the judgment without denying ourselves. You are nobody but for the universe that forms your atmosphere. Without the universe you operate in a vacuum in which no organism can long endure. Without the Universe you would disintegrate upward and downward, forward and backward, to the left and to the right. Without this universe the law of contradiction, not as an abstract principle, but in the sense that things cannot exist in an infinity of ways, at once would have to go, "and so the conception of determinate experience would have to be, though it cannot be, abandoned."³

¹ *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 4.

² *Essentials of Logic*, p. 70.

³ *Implication*, p. 159.

Pluralism destroys the possibility of knowledge. Such is Bosanquet's contention. Such is also Theism's contention. Both maintain that unity must be basic to difference.

Naturally, if Bosanquet opposes a pluralistic universe in general, he will also oppose Pluralism in flux. Pragmatism contends or assumes that time is a constituent ingredient of the universe. The Space-Time continuum is the matrix from which all things human and divine proceed. This, we have contended, is the contradictory opposite of Theism. Either the Space-Time continuum "creates" God or God creates the Space-Time continuum. Between these two Bosanquet has seemingly chosen to stand with Theism.

Bosanquet recognises the fact that if the Space-Time is to be the matrix of all experience the unity which knowledge needs cannot be obtained. "If the basis of the universe were changeable the basis of our argument whatever it might be, would vanish with the stability of the whole."¹

There, as elsewhere, Bosanquet clearly demands that actuality must be prior to potentiality. Most incisive and completely comprehensive is this alternative. If the Universe, including gods and men, is basically temporal then bare potentiality is raised to the highest possible metaphysical status. Our thinking will then be compelled to rest in an infinite regress or a complete void. Our little island of rationality would then rest upon an ocean of irrationality and would therewith itself be irrational. The least bit of our rational experience presupposes the rationality of "the basis of the universe," and this rationality is gone if the "basis of the universe" is subject to change. On this point Bosanquet and Theism agree.

We have said that our experience "presupposes" God. Even here the agreement between Bosanquet and Theism seems to continue. Both would employ the transcendental method. It is very easy to find difficulties for thought if the method of formal logic be applied to any position in metaphysics; witness the "Appearance," of Bradley. So it is quite easy to point to what seem to be outrages to our reason in the conception of a God creating a temporal universe. But if it be found that any alternative to this position leads us to an annihilation of rationality itself it may still be reasonable to presuppose God's existence.

¹ *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 191.

Thus the Theist holds. Similarly Bosanquet reasons for the necessity of a timeless Absolute.

The "basis of the universe" must be timeless; that basis we may call the Absolute or God. Thus we may speak of God as beyond or above the changing world. A God beyond the changing world, Bosanquet feels, we need lest our rationality disappear entirely. He criticises Italian Idealism by saying that it has substituted for the true insight: "If God is not then I am nothing," the other statement — "If God is then I am not."¹ "The reason," he continues, "as I have explained elsewhere, I believe to lie in the equation of thought with thinking and of thinking with reality, which is another aspect of the rejection of all transcendence."¹ Without the Absolute as a Beyond our experience would be meaningless. At this point the similarity between Bosanquet and Theism would seem to intensify into identity; The Samaritans avowed allegiance to the God of Jerusalem.

Moreover Bosanquet's zeal for the Beyond far outruns that of Theism for God. At least so it seems. As Bradley, Bosanquet demands human sacrifices for the Absolute. He tells us that no categories from our temporal experience, such as teleology or purpose can have meaning for the Absolute. In the case of the Absolute we can speak of value but not of purpose.² More pointedly this same thought appeared in the symposium held before the Aristotelian Society on the subject whether individuals have substantive or adjectival existence. Pringle-Pattison charged Bosanquet with making of men "in ultimate analysis *connections of content* within the real individual to which they belong." There is a determination in Bosanquet, says Pringle-Pattison, "to reach a formal identity by abstracting from differences on which the very character of the universe as a spiritual cosmos depends."³

I have omitted nothing of value to anyone interested in establishing the identity between God and the Absolute of Bosanquet. We have allowed the defence to exhaust itself. All the evidence is in. We feel relieved now, not because we shall have to maintain that the Absolute is not God, but because if we do so justly in this instance we so do justly everywhere.

¹ *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 70.

² *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, Lect. 4, pp. 122ff, London.

³ *Proceedings Aristotelian Society*, N.S., 1917-1918, p. 522ff.

We may begin our criticism of Bosanquet by saying that the defence has proved too much. There may be too great a zeal for the Absolute. The God of Theism demands no human sacrifice ; if the Absolute does, he is not God. The " Appearance " of Bradley was sacrificed to his " Reality " because he applied to them the same test of comprehensive consistency. And this similarity of test was simply assumed ; all thought was assumed to be of one type. Similarly with Bosanquet. The acosmic tendency in his thinking which demands that human beings be considered " connections of content " or " foci " of the Absolute is pantheistic, not theistic. And more important still the reason for Bosanquet's acosmism is the assumption of the identity of the nature of human and divine thought. The Absolute cannot think in terms of purpose since purpose is a temporally conditioned category. This sounds theistic. But when it is added that our thought, to be genuine, must be like God's thought, beyond time, the Pantheism is apparent. It seems as though we are exalting " God " very highly when we say that His thoughts are not temporally conditioned, but when we add that our thoughts also are not temporally conditioned the exaltation of " God " is neutralised. Not only that, we meet here with the same contradiction that we noted in Bradley's thought. The appeal to the Absolute is an appeal to " mystery," the existence of which is denied by the idealistic demand that Reality be perspicuous to thought *per se*, human as well as divine. Absolute Number One, the fruit of Idealism's acosmic strain is unnatural to and would, if taken seriously, be subversive of idealistic logic itself. Moloch was an idol because of his demand of human sacrifice ; even Absolute Number One, is not the God of Theism.

There where Bosanquet most closely resembled Theism, his position is nevertheless the exact opposite of Theism. Thus ran our argument. Even the Absolute as Beyond is not the God of Theism. What then shall we say if we further observe that Bosanquet actually served Absolute Number Two more faithfully than Absolute Number One ? That such must be the case we saw to be already involved in the fact that Absolute Number One is an unnatural growth, in the organism of Idealism. That such must be the case we also expect since Absolute Number One contradicts the basic demand of Idealism that reality be essentially perspicuous to man.

That Bosanquet actually does what the logic of his position demands we must now seek to establish. Bosanquet speaks much of the Concrete Universal. The unity that is to underly our experience is not to be independent or exclusive of diversities. Against Pluralism and Pragmatism Bosanquet has contended that unity must be as fundamental as diversity. If one begins with a plurality, and thereupon attempts to get unity into this plurality, the unity will be abstract and functionless. On the other hand Bosanquet asserts that the unity will be equally abstract and functionless if diversity is not as fundamental as unity itself. Would this *per se* make his thought anti-theistic? Not necessarily. Theism may also say that diversity is as basic as unity. Theism may contend that the Trinity is not a burdensome encumbrance to a theology already heavily loaded with irrationalities but the very foundation of rational thought. Formally the Theist and Bosanquet agree but materially they differ. Bosanquet seeks for his diversity not within Absolute Number One, but within Absolute Number Two, the Universe. Man is again a charter member of the Universe and furnishes part of the original diversity. The Concrete Universal is constantly referred to as the final subject of all predication. What is said of man is said of the Universe inclusive of "God."

Again, Bosanquet has constantly affirmed that actuality must be prior to potentiality and therefore analysis to synthesis. For this reason he found it necessary to find a timeless Absolute. But equally insistent is Bosanquet in holding that synthesis is as fundamental as analysis. By his theory of implication he would avoid the false a priori of Rationalism as well as the false aposteriori of Pragmatism, both of which he calls "linear inference." "Implication" seeks to follow an evolving system. With this attempt Bosanquet tried to do the impossible. His was a search for a self-generating a priori; the search seems as hopeful as that for the Holy Grail. We may dislike "either-or" alternatives, but here we must face one: your a priori is either in the timeless self-conscious God with the result that history realises the purpose of God, or your a priori is to develop in a Universe inclusive of God, with the result that history is self-dependent.

We shall soon see this aspect of Idealism run into an open avowal of Pluralism in the case of McTaggart and Pringle Pattison. Suffice it here to have pointed out that a metaphysical Pluralism is embedded in the heart of Bosanquet's logic. There seems to

be no escape from the consequence that "God" must be (a) one of the members of the pluralistic universe in which case He is finite, or (b) the universal nature within the members of the Pluralism in which case this transcendence has disappeared, or (c) the combination of these in which case God is identified with the Universe or Whole, so that there is no more need of speaking of "God" at all. The first road is not open to Bosanquet, since he has constantly opposed the idea of a finite God. The second road is not open to Bosanquet since he has invented the concrete universal for the very purpose of slaying the abstract universal. The third road is that constantly followed; it is the very road of the Concrete Universal. The Absolute is the Universe inclusive of "God" and man. "God" is thus to be an element in this Concrete Universal; the element of unity or universality. Man is also to be an element, the element of diversity. The eye cannot say that it hath no need of hearing; "God" cannot say that He hath no need of man, they are members of one organism.

This basic Pluralism tends to become Pluralism in flux. Bosanquet has constantly affirmed that actuality must be prior to potentiality and therefore analysis prior to synthesis. For this reason he found it necessary to hold to a timeless Absolute. Only for a timeless Absolute would all the facts be in. Here his thought seemed to be thoroughly theistic. Yet we saw that when Bosanquet was inclined to take this idea of a timeless Absolute seriously he demanded that all thought be supratemporal. Even on this basis then it was the Universe inclusive of God and man that was thought of as timeless. The Universe is the ultimate subject of all predication; it is either wholly timeless or wholly temporal. Now, however, this same Universe tends to become wholly temporal instead of wholly timeless. Insistent as Bosanquet was that analysis be as fundamental as synthesis he was equally insistent that synthesis be as fundamental as analysis. By "implication" Bosanquet would seek to avoid the "linear inference" of deductive as well as of inductive reasoning. Seven plus five is an *eternal* novelty. It is also an *eternal novelty*. "Implication" would follow an *evolving* system. Bosanquet sought for a genuine a priori, for a self-generating one. The possible must be as fundamental as the actual.

What becomes of "God" in this self-developing system? He is one of three things: (a) a developing member within the

Whole, or (b) the generating a priori within the Whole, or (c) the Whole itself. "God cannot" be (a) because Bosanquet has constantly opposed the idea of a finite developing deity. "God" cannot be (b) since he would again be but an abstract principle within a developing whole. "God" must be the self-developing Whole. Only it may well be questioned whether "God" can be a self-developing Whole. Does not this controvert the basic demand of Idealism that the actual precede the potential? Bosanquet's great desire for inclusiveness has led him to compromise his principle. One cannot have his cake and eat it. The unity for which he seeks, which he says we must even presuppose, turns out to be merely a member of the plurality, or an abstract principle within it, or thirdly the Whole plurality itself and all of these in flux. By his attempt to make the possible as fundamental as the actual and synthesis as fundamental as analysis for "all possible experience" Bosanquet has embraced the Pragmatic principle and is wedded to the apotheosis of the possible.

Thus the Absolute is defined as "the high-water mark of fluctuations in experience of which, in general, we are daily and normally aware,"¹ and Reality is said to be "essentially synthetic."

Our conclusion is that Bosanquet has tried to serve two masters. As a great logician he saw that a temporal plurality, or the open universe cannot account for our knowledge; the "neutrality" that is the invariable concomitant of metaphysical relativism is but an apotheosis of negation operating in a vacuum. But when he assumed without question the identity of the nature of "all possible experience," when he made synthesis as fundamental as analysis, and the possible as fundamental as the actual, he took the "ultimacy," the underived character of time for granted and with it the Universe as a wider concept than God. He tried to be "neutral," after all. Reality is that which thought, that is, our thought operating on experience finds it to be. After this assumption of the Universe as the subject of all predication *God could not be presupposed*. Bosanquet desperately seeks for a God within the Universe and therefore could not presuppose Him beyond the Universe.

We may state our conclusion differently by regarding it from the point of view of interpretation. We saw in our discussion of

¹ *Phil., Rev.*, 5, 32, 1923, p. 587.

Pragmatism that interpretation must originate with God if God is genuinely presupposed. Human thought is then receptively reconstructive. Deny this receptivity of human thought and you cannot presuppose God. Bosanquet has denied the receptively constructive character of human thought and therefore is wedded to a metaphysical relativism.

That Bosanquet has denied the receptively reconstructive nature of human thought is implied in his assumption that "all possible experience" is subject to the laws of thought in the same way. God and man are then to interpret the Universe together so that God does not have the initiative. Further, since Reality is sometimes said to be "essentially synthetic" the whole system grows. The end is not known to the Absolute from the beginning since the Absolute Himself has to wait for the facts to come in. In such a case there is no complete actuality at the basis of possibility.

Moreover, Bosanquet's logic may be said to be one of the finest expressions of the Coherence theory of truth. We can only touch on this important point. Let it suffice to recall that the Coherence theory of truth as maintained by the Hegelian tradition implies the essential perspicuity of the Universe to the mind of man, as well as to the mind of God, since the statement that the real is the rational and the rational is the real is applied to the Universe of God and man. Add to this that the Coherence theory of truth is the logical development of Kant's view of the essential creativeness of human thought and the contrast between the epistemology of Bosanquet and that of Theism is seen to be as great as it could be. All of Kant's objections to the "theistic arguments" have done little damage to Theism in comparison with this conception of the creativity of human thought. Creativity implies autonomy. Kant carried out this idea in the field of morals; Hegel consistently applied it to all of reality. The creativity view of thought in epistemology is the source of "neutrality" and metaphysical relativity. Ruggiero¹ has beautifully shown that the extreme immanentism of Gentile and Croce was but the logical development of Kant's creativity theory. Italian Idealism, moreover, is a twin sister to Pragmatism.

¹ *Modern Philosophy*, G. de Ruggiero. Tr. by A. H. Hannay and R. C. Collingwood. London, 1921.

Our interpretation of Bosanquet on this point and on the whole matter is corroborated by J. Watson. It is Watson's contention that inasmuch as Bosanquet has never openly denied and all the while positively implied that our knowledge is absolute, not in the sense of comprehensive but in principle, he has no right to an Absolute as a Beyond in any sense. Watson holds very definitely that the idealistic theory of judgment implies the essential perspicuity of Reality to the mind of man. Thus Absolute Number One would be a false growth on the basis of idealistic logic. More than that, the Beyond would be entirely destructive of idealistic logic since the Beyond sets a limit to the perspicuity to human thought.¹

A similar criticism is made by M. C. Carrol. He says that Bosanquet "failed to disclaim that there is any real sense in which we can speak of an absolute subject."² The point of Mr. Carroll is that since we are "adjectives," "foci," or aspects of the Whole the Absolute can be no more. Together we form the convex and the concave sides of the same disc.

Bosanquet represents the high-water mark of recent idealistic thought. He has worked out the implications of idealistic logic more fully than anyone else. In his *Logic* he has clearly shown that the unrelated pluralistic universe of Pragmatism as it corresponds to and is the necessary correlative of the so-called "scientific," "open-minded," "neutral" method of research is destructive of knowledge itself. God is a fact that must be presupposed or He cannot be harmonised with other facts. Accordingly Neutrality is impossible. But if "neutrality" be still adhered to, God is denied and with Him the rationality which we need as much as breath. "Neutrality" we saw to be inherent in the heart of Bosanquet's essential creativity theory of thought by virtue of which he constantly speaks of laws that hold for "all possible experience." The result has been that Bosanquet has forsaken the transcendental method, returned to the false a priorism imbedded in every "scientific method," when it determines what is possible and impossible. What was actually proved impossible on this assumption of the essential unity of human and divine thought is the presupposition of God.

¹ *Phil. Rev.*, v. 4, 1895, pp. 353ff; pp. 486ff, and *Phil. Rev.*, v. 34, p. 440.

² *Phil. Rev.*, v. 31, 1921. Article, "The Nature of the Absolute in the Metaphysics of B. Bosanquet," p. 178.

We are not directly interested now in defending Theism against Bosanquet's position. Incidentally it appears that if Bosanquet's logic is sound it tells against himself and in favour of Theism. The burden of his argument is that our knowledge or experience in general needs to presuppose system and this can be presupposed in the Absolute only. Now we found that the Absolute of Bosanquet is not absolute but is after all an aspect of a self-developing whole. Our main purpose was to prove that the "Absolute" is not God. We could do this no more effectively than by indicating the formal similarity of arguments employed against Pragmatism by both Bosanquet and Theism and at the same time their radical difference; Bosanquet and Dewey are allies; their motto is: Theism must be destroyed.

In our criticism of Bosanquet we saw that as the result of his view of the inherent creativity of thought the Absolute which he feels he needs will have to respect (*a*) an ultimate plurality, (*b*) a plurality in flux, that is, a self-developing Universe, and therefore (*c*) the final interpretation of experience by man. Has subsequent history justified our criticism?

In seeking to answer this question we limit ourselves to a discussion of a few representative Idealists. Our contention is that recent exponents of Idealism have themselves felt the ambiguity in Bosanquet's position. They are frankly denying transcendence and embracing immanence.

We may begin with the philosophy of McTaggart. McTaggart has keenly felt that Idealism must do either of two things: it must admit a temporalism in metaphysics or it must deny the reality of time. For, and this is highly significant, McTaggart simply assumes that the Absolute of Idealism is Absolute Number Two, that is, the Universe inclusive of God and Man.

The demand of Bosanquet's logic that the Universe is the subject of all predication is rigidly carried through by McTaggart. Hence he no longer seeks for a timeless basis of the universe. That would involve the application of two contradictory predicates to the same subject. For him the Universe is either wholly temporal or wholly non-temporal.

The Universe is non-temporal. Time is an illusion. Such is McTaggart's position.¹ Only a timeless reality is complete

¹ McTaggart, J. E., *Mind*, N.S. 524, p. 326, in articles on "Time and the Hegelian Dialectic."

and therefore furnishes the system necessary to thought. Now we might develop a criticism here that to prove the unreality of time, be it objective, subjective or merely as an illusion is highly artificial. We might add that McTaggart has not proved the unreality of time and is therefore seeking to interpret one ultimate in terms of another ultimate. We pass these criticisms by to observe that granted McTaggart has proved his case even so the Absolute is in no sense Beyond. The reason for this is that McTaggart has insisted on the metaphysical ultimacy of plurality. To be sure he still maintains that unity is as fundamental as plurality, but the only unity that can be maintained consistent with an equally fundamental plurality is that of a universal, expressing itself in particulars. As human nature reveals itself in various human persons and may be said with respect to any one person to be largely beyond him so the Absolute is the universal manifesting itself in particulars though largely beyond any one particular. If anywhere, it is in this rarefied a cosmic atmosphere that the Absolute as Beyond is seen to be entirely inconsistent with idealistic logic. The principle of Bosanquet that diversity must be as fundamental as unity while this diversity is assumed to be expressed in humanity, has been consistently carried out by McTaggart. Thereupon the Beyond is seen no more.

Pringle-Pattison tells us the same story. In his book, "Hegelianism and Personality," he sounded the bugle call for opposition against the aggressiveness of the Absolute. He spoke of the "imperviousness" of the finite individual. And though he later modified this phrase in his argument with Bosanquet on the subject whether individuals have substantive or adjectival existence he still maintains that the individual seems "the only conceivable goal of divine endeavour." When Bosanquet criticises his view of individuals as being "members" within the Absolute Pringle-Pattison replies that Bosanquet in turn should recognise "the significance of numerical identity as the basal characteristic of concrete existence."¹ In themselves these individuals are no doubt abstractions, but so is the Absolute by itself an abstraction. Pringle-Pattison was quite right in appealing to Bosanquet's basic position that diversity in the Universe is as basic as unity to oppose Bosanquet's inconsistent insistence upon the Absolute's priority in any sense.

¹ *Proceedings, Aristotelian Society*, 1917, 1918, p. 512.

In his splendid book on "The Idea of God in Modern Philosophy," Pringle-Pattison tells us that in his first series of lectures he seeks to establish the existence of so-called "appearance." In this first series he has little or no need of the category of the Absolute. He tells us this in answer to a criticism on his views by Rashdall. This confession corresponds exactly with our criticism; the Absolute is for Pringle-Pattison a late arrival. History has justified our criticism of Bosanquet; pluralism has come forth out of the best idealistic logic.

Pluralism soon becomes Pluralism in flux or avowed temporalism. The acosmism of McTaggart was unnatural. His argument for the unreality of time is unconvincing. But more than that, the pressure of idealistic logic opposes it. If synthesis is to be as fundamental as analysis and the a posteriori is to be wedded to the a priori for God and man alike, time is real. It is, whatever else, it is underived, an inherent ingredient in the Universe, even the source of plurality or diversity. Seven plus five are twelve is to be *eternal* novelty, but also an eternal *novelty*. The individuals to whom in the case of McTaggart and Pringle-Pattison membership is accorded in Ultimate Reality are temporally conditioned.

In the philosophy of Pringle-Pattison this temporalism begins to show itself. In his thinking the Absolute has arisen in the East and died in the West; from being the presupposition of possible experience the Absolute has become the logical universal of many particulars, and is then submerged as a vague stability within a developing whole from which He finally comes forth—though not altogether comely because of the disfiguring detritus of the Space-Time continuum—as the Ideal of humanity. "The presence of the Ideal is the reality of God within us."¹

J. Watson, more outspokenly than Pringle-Pattison, rejects Bosanquet's non-temporal Beyond as inconsistent with Idealistic logic. He thinks it is the natural outcome of the principle of idealistic logic that there be no Beyond at all. He thinks that the very nature of all thought must be temporal. Reality, says he, in its completeness must be a thinkable reality; the real is the

¹ *Idea of God*, p. 246; also *Mind*, 1919, the note in which he replies to a criticism of this statement by H. Rashdall. He says: "The Ideal is precisely the most real thing in the world," and therewith thinks he maintains "transfinite reality." But this does not effect the course of our argument.

rational. Reality must be essentially perspicuous to the mind of man. Hence it will not do to separate the "what" from the "that" too sharply as Bradley has done. There can be no Absolute that is incomprehensible for us; the Absolute must be within the Universe. And since we are temporally conditioned beings reality in its broadest sense "is not for us stationary, but grows in content as thought, which is the faculty of unifying the distinguishable elements of reality, develops in the process by which those elements are more fully distinguished and unified."¹ The self-generating a priori inherent in the creativity view of idealistic logic is here boldly leaving the timeless basis of the Universe with the purpose never to return.

A frank acceptance of temporalism in metaphysics, Watson tells us, is not only the logical outcome of idealistic logic, but is also the only safeguard against agnosticism. Hegel and some of his followers still asked the question why the Absolute should reveal Himself, assuming that he was beyond. Watson, on the other hand, tells us that: "If it is asked *why* the Absolute reveals itself gradually in the finite, I should answer that the question is absurd: we cannot go behind reality in order to explain why it is what it is; we can only state what its nature, as known to us, involves."² What the Theist asserts of God, that is, that it cannot be asked who made Him, Watson asserts of temporal reality. In other words, the Space-Time continuum is frankly accepted as the matrix of God. Metaphysically we are coming very close to the position maintained by S. Alexandér in "Space, Time and Deity." All reality "implies succession, and hence we must say that there is no conceivable reality which does not present the aspect of succession or process."³

Now it is this emphasis on time and succession as an inseparable aspect of the whole of reality that leads Idealism far away from Theism and very close to Pragmatism. To be sure there remains a difference which we have not the least interest to obliterate. The chief difference seems to be that in spite of the metaphysical relativism which Idealism has in common with Pragmatism, Idealism continues to maintain that Reality or Actuality must be the source of possibility. A. E. Taylor puts the alternative clearly: "either accept the priority of the actual to the potential

¹ *Phil. Rev.*, v. 4, 1895, p. 360.

² *Phil. Rev.*, v. 4, 1895, p. 367.

³ *Phil. Rev.*, v. 4, 1895, p. 497.

or be ready to assert that you can conceive of the possible non-existence of any reality whatsoever."¹

Watson himself asserts that the least bit of experience presupposes complete rationality. We would, says he, not be able to ask any question about the Absolute or about anything else if the Absolute were not the source of our ability. On the contrary Pragmatism frankly accepts the position that it is possible to ask whence Reality came. Idealism continues to demand an Absolute. Our only point is that Idealism cannot satisfy its own demand. Its logic involves temporalism or metaphysical relativism and temporalism is the apotheosis of bare possibility. Pragmatism is on this point consistent and Idealism inconsistent and consistency wins out; Idealism is fraternising with Pragmatism. History has justified our criticism of Bosanquet; Pluralism has become Pluralism in flux.

In distinguishing between Pragmatism and Theism we maintained that the difference when viewed from the standpoint of interpretation is that according to Theism God has made the facts and therefore interprets them while according to Pragmatism the facts are not made by God and therefore not interpreted by him. We saw further, when criticising Bosanquet's view on this matter, that he sides with the Pragmatist in this issue because his creativity view of thought could lead to nothing else.

Has history also justified this criticism? We believe it has very definitely done so. In test case Idealist writers very frankly decide for man against God. On questions of morality this is especially apparent. To whom is man responsible? "To God who is the source and standard of good," says the Theist; "to man who is the source and standard of good," says the Pragmatist. What answer does the Idealist give?

The Idealist answers that man is responsible to the law of goodness. If we put the alternative whether the good is good in itself and therefore God wants it or whether the good is good because God wants it, that is, that the good is expressive of His nature, Idealism chooses unequivocally for the former, while Theism chooses unequivocally for the latter. Idealism follows Plato while Theism follows St. Augustine. The distinction is basic. The former position implies that the universe is a wider concept than God. And in this Universe God and man are

¹ Hastings, E. R. E., "Theism," p. 278.

correlatives; they have equal interpretative powers. Each is finally to determine for himself whether the other is engaged in offensive warfare.

Such we see to be the case even for such men as J. Lindsay¹ and H. Rashdall.² To these men it seems impossible to come to anything but a Pantheism on the basis of Bosanquet's thinking. Lindsay wants a free and non-necessary relation of God to the world. Rashdall insists that God has created the world by the power of His will. Once insert the term will into your conception of God's relation to the world, thinks Rashdall, and you have freed yourself from pantheistic thought.

If these conceptions were carried through we should expect that God would definitely be exalted as the final interpretative category of our experience. However, with all of Lindsay's insistence on a free relation of God to the world he tells us definitely that he does not want a God who is "cosmically independent." The Universe is still a wider concept than God and therewith man is relieved of responsibility to God. Similarly for Rashdall the will of God is strictly conditioned throughout by law which is above God and operates in a cosmos without which God could not exist. God wills for the best in an independent situation; possibility is greater than God. When the critical juncture arrives so that Rashdall must tell to whom or what he thinks we are responsible it is not to God that he directs us but to the bureau of laws and regulations of the sovereign republic of the Universe.³

The finite moral consciousness thus becomes the arbiter on every question of morality. It could not well be otherwise. Autonomy is the very definite implication of the creativity view of thought. If human thought is essentially creative it can allow for no heteronomy of any sort. Even though law be conceived of as absolute, this absoluteness is not really absolute. Laws are ideals and as such subject to transformation. The developing moral consciousness transforms them. Man is on this basis responsible to self, not to God.

It is also important to note how completely Idealism has discarded God in its philosophy of religion. Many an

¹ Cf. *Theistic Idealism*, pp. 1, 24, 152, 154, London, 1917.

² "Relig. Phil. of Pringle Pattison," *Mind*, N.S., v. 27, 1918, p. 273. Also *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 34, London, 1902.

³ *Contentio Veritatis*, pp. 38, 39.

idealist would perhaps agree that the validity of our knowledge has its source in the Absolute and would still not hesitate to proclaim with Kant the complete autonomy of the moral consciousness.

In the philosophy of C. C. J. Webb we have a case in point. In his work, "Problems in the Relation of God and Man," Webb clearly pronounces his general agreement with the idealist theory of logic. The usual idealistic argument for the necessity of a system is advanced fully. Still he thinks it quite possible to study the phenomena of the religious consciousness without any metaphysical presuppositions. Webb wants an Absolute and still be "neutral." He tries like Bosanquet to serve two masters. He wishes to assume no metaphysics at the beginning of his investigation, which means that he has assumed the metaphysics of relativity. Webb has as a matter of fact assumed that religion must be worship of the whole.

If the Absolute of Idealism were God He would be determinative of the moral consciousness instead of the moral consciousness determinative of the Absolute. Still the later position is assumed without the least attempt to harmonise this position with the idealistic contention that Idealism presupposes the Absolute. Looking at the terrifying extent and character of evil Webb concludes that God cannot be omnipotent or He would have prevented the entrance of evil or at least long since have destroyed it. The moral consciousness is clearly said to be determinative of the Absolute; therefore Webb has no Absolute.

Surely on this issue Idealism ought to choose which master it will serve. If its demand for a presupposed Absolute be taken seriously then its "neutral" method in the philosophy of religion stands condemned. On the other hand if Idealism wishes to be "scientific" or "neutral" in its investigations of the religious and moral consciousness it must say farewell to the Absolute. The solution is sought by gradually immersing the Absolute. The idealistic philosophy of religion is built upon a metaphysical relativism throughout.

Thus we see that the view of the moral consciousness as determinative of the Absolute is the natural result of the Kantian creative theory of thought which is inherent in idealistic as well as Pragmatic logic. We are not surprised that Idealism approaches Pragmatism on this point. We should be surprised if it were not

so. Both Idealism and Pragmatism attribute to man's moral consciousness the power to modify the Absolute at will or to reject Him altogether, and this cannot be done except on the presupposition that no Absolute exists.

Perhaps one of the keenest attempts of recent years to make the experience of God real to men is found in W. E. Hocking's work, "The Meaning of God in Human Experience." Hocking would make the experience of God so basic that it will control the whole of life. Yes, even further: "Evil becomes a problem only because the consciousness of the Absolute is there: apart from this fact, the colour of evil would be mere contents of experience."¹ Here Hocking maintains with specific reference to evil the general idealistic contention that no temporal experience of any sort could become a problem for thought were it not for the fundamental God-consciousness that underlies all our thinking. Hocking desires earnestly to do justice to this idea. If anywhere we shall expect that here God is presupposed.

The human self, says Hocking, placed within the stream of experience would have no meaning for itself nor would the current of phenomena urge upon us any problem were it not that at the outset the consciousness of the Absolute is given. The human self without the God-consciousness is but an "irrelevant universal." It is not ourselves but God who is the first to be met with in experience. At least if God is not the first to be met with we will never meet Him later. No God is found at the level of ideas that is not already found at the level of sensation.² "The whole tale of Descartes' discovery is not told in the proposition, I exist, knowing. It is rather told in the proposition, I exist knowing the Absolute, or I exist knowing God."² We see how basic Hocking attempts to make the God-concept. To show us the originality of the God-consciousness Hocking even seeks to restate the ontological argument. We do not first have an idea of God in order to deduce from this idea of God His existence but the idea itself is the fruit of a more fundamental intuition. "We are only justified in attributing reality to an idea of reality if reality is already present in the discovery of the idea."³ Such is Hocking's argument. Despite this argument Hocking has not presupposed God. His has been

¹ *Meaning of God*, p. 203.

² *Idem.*, p. 201.

³ *Idem.*, p. 313.

after all an "Emperical development of Absolutism."¹ As to form no Theist could wish for a better argument. But Hocking has not been faithful to his contention that if God has once been seen He remains forever after determinative of our experience. He tells us that early in life we have to face the grim reality that has produced us and yet seems to overwhelm its offspring and devour it. Immediately we sense our rights and: "The God-idea thus appears as a postulate of our moral consciousness: an original object of resolve which tends to make itself good in experience."² The question that must here be pressed is: Whence this original sense of justice of which Hocking speaks. According to Hocking's own mode of reasoning it should begin to function because of a God-consciousness which is fundamental to it. Only then would his splendid statement of the ontological argument be made effective for moral as well as for other ideas. But Hocking does not carry his argument through. Just at the crucial point he becomes unfaithful to it. For Hocking the first functioning of the moral consciousness is independent of God.³ Man meets a universe first and a God afterwards. Thus man is the ultimate interpretative category in matters of morality. God becomes once more, for Hocking, as for Webb, an Ideal that may be and is constantly revised as human thought progresses. Before long Hocking tells us that the problem of the religious consciousness is a "problem of the attributes of reality."⁴

It would seem that the foregoing discussion has explained why it is that so often Theism and Idealism are considered to be close allies while in reality they are enemies. Idealism has constantly avowed its friendship towards Theism. Idealism has maintained the necessity of presupposing (*a*) a unity basic to diversity, (*b*) a timeless unity basic to diversity, and (*c*) one ultimate subject of interpretation. On these points Idealism seems to be on the side of Theism. Yet on these points Idealism only *seems* to stand with Theism for Idealism has *also* maintained that we must have (*a*) a plurality as basic as unity (*b*) a temporal plurality as basic as unity, and (*c*) a plurality of interpreters of Reality. These two conflicting tendencies cannot but seek to destroy one another. Logic demands that Idealism choose

¹ D. C. Macintosh, *Phil. Rev.*, v. 23, 1914, p. 270 ff.

² *Meaning of God*, p. 147.

³ *Idem.*, p. 146.

⁴ *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 143.

between the theistic and the pragmatic motifs. Logic also demands that if the pragmatic motif is entertained seriously at all it will win out altogether in time. History has amply justified the demands of logic. The Absolute of Idealism is today no more than a logical principle and that a changing one. The "obsolescence of the eternal" has taken place. Idealism as well as Pragmatism is a foe of Theism; the "Absolute" is not God.

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