

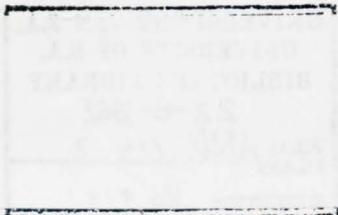
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1. THE CONCEPTION OF GOD AS EXPOUNDED BY OR AS IT EMERGES FROM THE WRITINGS OF GREAT PHILOSOPHERS - FROM DESCARTES TO THE PRESENT DAY.



(Being a Dissertation for M.A., Philosophy)



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P R E F A C E.

In the title of this dissertation we find the words: "Great Philosophers". I must, in connection therewith, state - not as an apology for my little intellect and ability to distinguish a great, from a little philosopher - that it is extremely difficult to say dogmatically, who is a great philosopher and who is not. There are, of course, philosophers who are generally and universally recognised as great, such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and others.

Several philosophers are acknowledged as great by some people only. To the Communists, for instance, Karl Marx is a great philosopher; to the Americans, William James. What I wish to clarify is this, that by "great" in this dissertation I merely mean "prominent".

Again I must explain that although our title speaks of "Great Philosophers from Descartes to the present day", this must be understood to be referring to European philosophers (including Americans) and not to the philosophers of the mentioned period in general. I consider this explanation desirable because the East has also produced its own great philosophers and religious teachers from Buddha, Confucius, Mahomed, Christ, to the present day. In like manner, other countries too, have their own philosophers.

On no account should I fail to make a mention of the difficulties I have encountered in the study of my philosophers, many of whom were master minds of scientific knowledge - mathematics, physical science, biology, astronomy, economics, and so forth. So that to be able to understand their ideas thoroughly, presupposes, at least, some knowledge of these sciences - which knowledge some of us have neither means nor ability to acquire.

Again some ideas of these philosophers are so analytically deep and profound, so penetrating, that the ordinary man cannot easily grasp them; there are some subtle and intricate ideas which require enormous mental concentration and energy in order to be comprehended. The ideas of some philosophers are so vague, self-contradictory and self-discrepant that my mind simply fails to make head or tail out of them. It is sometimes necessary to read the writings of a philosopher three or four times before one gets an inkling as to what the philosopher really means.

There is, in addition, the difficulty of procuring original works or of understanding the language in which these were originally written. In the study of foreign philosophers, therefore, I have depended mostly on English translations. I have, of course, taken only so much from the ideas of our philosophers as would, to my mind, illustrate or illuminate my point - the conception of God. In this dissertation - I must not omit to mention - I take Ultimate Reality as synonymous with God.

My only consolation is that in this dissertation I have sincerely and zealously devoted myself to the study of one of the deepest and most important problems of human nature and the universe.

Anton Muziwakhe Lembede.

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1st June, 1945.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SOME PRE-CARTESIAN CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

"The main interest of philosophy is God, since the object of philosophy is reality, and God is the highest reality".

--- Martinus Versfeld.

"The criticism of Religion is the beginning of all criticism".

--- Karl Marx.

The conception of God is of supreme importance in philosophy. Every true system of philosophy, directly or indirectly, starts from, or leads to, God. While in the writings of some philosophers the idea of God is vaguely expressed or merely suggested or only apprehended by inference; in the writings of others, the idea of God occupies the central position.

It seems to me advisable and proper that, by way of introduction, I should make a few observations concerning some views about the Divine Being, prevalent before and during the time of Descartes.

The Greek conception of God as stated in, or as can be gleaned from, the teachings of Greek philosophers, from Thales to the Epicureans and the Stoics, can be viewed as a reaction against, or as a higher development above the God-idea of Greek mythology. Likewise the God-idea as enunciated or expounded by modern philosophers from Descartes to the present day can be regarded as a reaction against, or a higher development above the God-idea of Christianity and other allied or cognate religions.

The gods of Greek mythology were considered by the Greeks to be superior to, and more mighty or powerful, than ordinary mortals, but these gods were endowed with some human qualities such as love, hate, joy, anger. This conception of God was anthropomorphic, that is, it conceived the nature of God in terms of human nature. Furthermore, according to the views and the beliefs of these early Greeks, there was a hierarchy or galaxy of the gods; and the God Zeus was, as it were, the President of them all. These gods, divine though they were, made love, entered into treaties and agreements, engaged in fights, were sometimes involved in quarrels and brawls; they committed thefts, adulteries and deceptions.

Plato, outlining the new education for youth, denounces this low, disrespectful and disgraceful conception of God. "We shall not praise anyone", he says, "who says that Zeus and Athene were responsible for Pandarus' violation of the oaths and treaties, or that Themis and Zeus caused strife and division among the gods".⁽¹⁾

(1) Republic, Book 11. p.61 (Everyman's Library, Lindsay's Translation).

The Greek thinkers, in their revolt against this low idea of God, rejected the conception of a personal god and identified God with ultimate Reality or Cause of all things.

To summarise briefly the different conceptions of ultimate Reality or Cause, as expounded by early Greek philosophers,⁽¹⁾ we can tabulate them as follows:-

Name of Philosopher.	His conception of Ultimate Reality or Cause.
1. Thales (600 B.C.)	Water.
2. Anaximander	Boundless Something.
3. Anaximenes	Air or Vapour.
4. Pythagoras (494 B.C.)	Measure or Number.
5. Heraclitus	Fire and Perpetual Change.
6. Xenophanes	One God - devoid of all human qualities.
7. Parmenides	One Being - eternal, immutable, immovable, indivisible.
8. Empedocles (444 B.C.)	Love and Hate.
9. Anaxagoras	Mind.
10. Leucippus (420 B.C.)	Matter (atoms) and Motion.
11. Democritus	

This intensive scientific and philosophic speculation of Greek thinkers led to the scepticism of the Sophists under their great leader Protagoras, whose motto was: "Man is the measure of all things".

When we come to the Greek philosophers of the later period, we experience great difficulty in distinguishing between Socrates' and Plato's conceptions of God, because Plato makes Socrates the leading speaker in the dialogues.

In his "Republic", Plato says (of course, Socrates is speaking): "Nor can God, since he is good, cause all things as most people think. He is responsible for a few things that happen to men, but for many he is not, for the good things we enjoy are much fewer than the evil. The former we must attribute to none else, but God, but for evil we must find some other causes, not God".⁽²⁾ At another place in the same book, he says: "God is simple and true in word and deed, he does not change himself, nor delude others, either in phantasies or words or by sending signs, whether in waking moments or in dreams".⁽³⁾

Plato teaches further that "since God is wholly good, he cannot be responsible for bad, disorderly motions in the lower world though God is good, he is not the Good which has its own being as the source of the pattern which God follows in his creation of the world".⁽⁴⁾

Aristotle's idea of God cannot be stated better than in the words of Rogers: "God is absolute mind with no touch of the corporeal. His is the life of pure thought that has no foreign content - thought that thinks itself. Unmoved himself, he is

(1) Rogers: Students History of Philosophy, pp. 9-42, Chap. 1.
 Burnet: Greek Philosophy : Thales to Plato, pp.17-201.
 (2) Republic: Book 11: p.60.
 (3) Republic: Book 11: p.64.
 (4) Rogers: Students History of Philosophy, p.102.

the mover of the universe, not as an active agent, but as the final end of all, the ideal towards which the whole creation moves by an inner necessity God is spirit without body, mind without sense, pure activity without action or desire". (1)

It is thus plain that, in the opinion of Aristotle, God leads a secluded, self-centred life away and remote from the cosmos whose evolution is due to its longing for God - the far-off perfect divine being. This doctrine resembles what is known in philosophy as Deism.

The stoic school of thought identified God with Nature or the universe. Their view about God was pantheistic. They maintained that God is immanent in the universe and that "reality is an organic whole and intimate combination of form and matter, soul and body, through which one universal life pulsates. This connected whole is called indifferently God or Nature". (2)

The Hebrews held that Jehova was their own tribal God who jealously demanded full and undivided devotion from them. This God, while favouring the Hebrews and stretching his protecting and blessing hand over them, was, at the same time, hostile to other tribes who were the foes and enemies of the Hebrews, and He thus assisted the Hebrews to triumph and achieve victory over those hostile tribes. This is the famous "God of Israel" or "God of Abraham, Isak and Jacob".

Christ extended and broadened the Hebraistic conception of God. He taught that God is the loving Father of all individuals, peoples, and nations. He commanded his disciples to preach the Kingdom of God even to the uttermost ends of the earth; anyone who repents will be saved. He taught his disciples to pray and say: "Our Father which art in heaven". (3) God is love and creator of the universe. He cares for all creatures even the smallest. The human beings who disobey His commandments are punished severely in hell. Christ defines God thus: "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". (4) God exists in three persons: Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.

From the above it is clear that the Christian idea of God is mainly anthropomorphic. God is conceived as a person. Leon (5) points out that Christian theology was greatly influenced by the teaching of Plato.

Mohammed rejects the doctrine of the holy trinity. He emphasises that God is one and that God is "compassionate, merciful". "Praise be to God, Maker of heaven and of the earth, who employeth the Angels as envoys, with pairs of wings, two, three, and four. He addeth to his creatures what He will; truly God hath power for all things He is the Mighty, the Wise". (6)

This abridged, cursory survey, will, I hope, serve as a background to our main study which is the subject of this thesis and which we shall now tackle in our next chapter as well as in the subsequent ones.

(1) Rogers: Students' History of Philosophy, p.109.
 (2) Rogers: Students' History of Philosophy, p.139.
 (3) St. Matthew 6 : 9.
 (4) St. John 4 : 24.
 (5) Plato: pp. 117 & 140.
 (6) Koran: Sura XXXV. p.289 (Rodwell's Translation).

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- KORAN: (Everyman's Library : Rodwell's Translation).
- PHILIP LEON: Plato (Discussion Books, No. 38).
- PLATO: Republic (Everyman's Library, Lindsay's Translation).
- ROGERS: Students' History of Philosophy. (pp.9 - 155).

CHAPTER 11

GOD AS A PERFECT SPIRITUAL BEING

"I conceive God as actually infinite; so that nothing can be added to His perfection".

--- Descartes.

"Supreme over all the finite or limited spirits, he (Descartes) teaches, and over all the bodies, is an infinite and perfect spirit, God".

--- Calkins.

Rene Descartes (1596 - 1650) is considered to be the founder or pioneer of modern philosophy.

William Temple, then Archbishop of York, referring to Descartes, expresses himself as follows: "If I were asked what was the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe, I should be strongly tempted to answer that it was that period of leisure when Rene Descartes, having no claims to meet, remained for a whole day 'shut up alone in a stove'". (1)

Hegel, paying tribute to Descartes, says: "In philosophy Descartes struck out on a quite original line; with him the new epoch in philosophy begins". (2)

In discussing Descartes' conception of God, we should keep in mind the fact that Descartes was born and brought up in Christian Europe, so that the Christian idea of God, as briefly summarised in the last Chapter, directly or indirectly influenced his idea of God.

Descartes was a proficient student of Mathematics. He held, consequently, that all true knowledge in science and philosophy must be based on indisputably clear and distinct axioms or truisms, as it is, for instance, the case in Geometry. He adopted "clearness and distinctness" as his criterion for truth; in his own words his rule was "never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such". (3) He then attempted to apply this criterion to knowledge derived from the senses and discovered that this type of knowledge could not be perceived clearly and distinctly according to the criterion. This knowledge was always more or less open to doubt. Descartes, at this juncture, started doubting the existence of material objects and the validity of perceptual knowledge.

If then, the existence and nature of the material world is enveloped in a nebulous mist of doubt, if the material objects cannot be clearly and distinctly perceived and conceived, what is it then (in the universe) which is beyond doubt, which can be perceived and conceived, clearly and distinctly? Descartes answers this question in this manner: The only thing sure is *actu*

(1) Nature, Man and God. (Gifford Lectures 1934) Lecture IV.p.57.

(2) History of Philosophy, Vol. III. p.223.

(3) Discourse on Method (Veitch's Translation) p.15.

that I am; even if I am doubting everything yet it is "I" who is doubting. But what is this "I"? The "I" is a thinking substance. The essence of my "I" is that I think, for even when I am doubting, I am thinking. In other words, the "I" is self-consciousness. "I am - I exist, this is certain" he says ".....I am conscious that I exist But what then am I? A thinking thing, it has been said. But what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands (conceives), (1) affirms, denies, wills, refuses, that imagines also and perceives". This line of thought finally brought Descartes to his world-famous conclusion: "Cogito ergo sum". The existence of the mind is beyond doubt and the mind is the starting point of all speculation and it is the only safe, certain and reliable guide for penetrating the mysterious universe around us.

In scrutinising and analysing the mind more deeply, Descartes found that it possessed certain innate ideas - inborn ideas, which could not have been acquired empirically, that is, through experience. One of these innate ideas is that of a being who is eternal, infinite, immutable, independent, omniscient, omnipotent, and all-wise and all-good. In other words we possess an innate idea of God. Where did we get this idea of God? Surely an idea of a perfect and infinite being is too great to have originated from our own nature, seeing that our nature is imperfect and finite. "How could I know" Descartes asks, "That I doubt, desire, or that some thing is wanting in me, and that I am wholly perfect. If I possessed no idea of a being more perfect than myself in comparison of which I knew the deficiency of my nature; I am a thinking being and possess in myself an idea of God".(2) Descartes then argues that God Himself must have implanted this idea of Himself in our minds. "God at my creation implanted this idea in me that it might serve, as it were, for the mark of the workman impressed on his work".(3)

Contrasting his imperfect self with the perfect God, Descartes says: "When I make myself the object of reflection, I not only find that I am an incomplete (imperfect) and dependent being, and one who unceasingly aspires after something better and greater than he is, but at the same time I am assured that He upon whom I am dependent, possesses in himself all the goods after which I aspire (and the idea of which I find in my mind) and that not only infinitely and potentially, but infinitely and actually and that He is thus God".(4)

In this way Descartes attempts to prove and establish the existence of God from the innate idea which he has of God as a perfect being.

To strengthen his arguments, Descartes resorts to the well-known ontological argument for God's existence. God is perfect; but a being who is alleged to be perfect and yet does not exist, is not perfect at all; because existence is a sine qua non of perfection; so to be perfect a being must have existence amongst his other qualities of perfection. Hence God as a perfect being must exist.

Descartes argues further - this time employing the causal argument - that God is the cause of everything in the universe. He is the first cause. But He (God) Himself was not caused as He is a self-existent cause. Calkins gives the gist of this argument in these words: "I know that I exist and that I am a

(1) Meditations (Veitch's Translation) Meditation 11..pp. 88-89.
 (2) Meditation 111. p. 105.
 (3) Meditation 111. p. 109.
 (4) Meditation 111. p. 110.

finite, incorporeal being, possessed of the idea of God an infinite and perfect being. But both I myself and my idea of God must have been caused by a being capable of creating and preserving me, and the idea of God within me. And only an infinite and perfect being can be the real or ultimate cause of me and of this idea of God. Therefore such an infinite being, God, exists".(1)

The point which Descartes emphasises in this argument is that the cause of every finite being, is an infinite being and at the same time this cause is a conserving cause, that is to say, it continues while its effect continues. As long as we finite beings continue to exist, God also, who is our cause, continues to exist. The cause must have at least as much reality as its effect, but it may have more as, for instance, in the case of God. But God Himself is a substance which stands in need of no other thing in order to exist. "By the name, God, I understand a substance infinite (eternal, immutable) independent, all-knowing, all-powerful and by which I myself and every other thing that exists were created".(2) "There must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect; for whence can the effect draw its reality, if not from its cause? And how could the cause communicate to it this reality unless it possessed it in itself? The more perfect in other words, that which contains in itself more reality cannot be the effect of the less perfect". (3) "What is, cannot be produced by what is not." (4)

Descartes believes that his demonstration of the nature and the existence of God gives us a clear and distinct conception of God - in accordance with his criterion for truth, namely clearness and distinctness.

The God of Descartes, however, is not a personal god or anthropomorphic god - as we find, for instance in Christian theology. "God is not corporeal and does not perceive by means of the senses as we do or will evil or sin".(5) "The Nature of God is immense, incomprehensible, infinite". (6)

We may now summarise Descartes' conception of God. God is an existing, creative, spiritual being, who possesses all perfections - infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, omniscient, omnipotent, all-good and all-wise.

Descartes' arguments for establishing the existence of God are not unassailable. One may ask: Does the mere presence of an idea in our minds necessarily signify that a being to whom the idea as a quality refers, actually exists?

The causal argument is a serious breach of logic, for a self-existent cause or self-causing cause is logically inconceivable. Logic demands that even God Himself must have a cause.(1) Who is the cause of God? Kant later showed that the idea of causation leads to an antinomy of reason as we shall see in Chapter VII; Bradley and Taylor have also recently pointed out that causation leads to the puzzle of indefinite regress.

Descartes maintains that we are able to conceive God clearly and distinctly but history or religion and God-idea shows that we are not able to do so. Moreover, how does Descartes think

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- (1) Persistent Problems of Philosophy, p.27.
 - (2) Meditation III. p.104.
 - (3) Meditation III. p.100.
 - (4) Meditation III. p.100.
 - (5) Principles of Philosophy (Veitch's translation) p. 174. Principle XXIII.
 - (6) Meditation IV. p. 113.

that we, finite and imperfect as we are, can apprehend or comprehend that which is infinite and perfect?

If God alone is perfect and we are imperfect; and if He is infinite and we, finite, does that mean that we are doomed to perpetual imperfection and finitude? If so, what is then the value and meaning of our aspiring to, and yearning for, perfection? Is human progress in science, art, and morals, meaningless and valueless?

Descartes' reasoning is not free from self-contradictions. In one passage he tells us that God is "incomprehensible" and yet in another he enumerates the qualities of God, for instance that God is "not corporeal", is creative, and does not perceive by means of the senses, and so on.

Pascal, a contemporary of Descartes, teaches that God is incomprehensible and cannot be known by us. "If there is a God, he is infinitely incomprehensible, since having neither parts nor limits, he has no relation to us. We are therefore incapable of knowing what he is or even that he is."(1)

(1) Webb: Pascal's Philosophy of Religion. Chap.V. p.51.

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- HEGEL:** History of Philosophy, Vol.111. pp.220 - 252. (Translated by Haldane & Simson, Published by Kegan Paul).
- HÖFFDING:** Brief History of Modern Philosophy. (Translated by Saunders) pp. 44-54.
- TEMPLE:** Nature, Man and God. (Gifford Lectures 1934).
- WEBB:** Pascal's Philosophy of Religion.
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GOD AS AN ALL-INCLUSIVE SUBSTANCE AND AS ONE WITH NATURE OR THE UNIVERSE

"Per substantiam intelligo id quod in se est et per se concipitur."

--- Spinoza.

"Gott is die Natur."

--- Gebhardt.

Descartes, as we have seen, left the universe divided into three loosely related entities - Mind, God, matter; and in the words of William Temple: "Spinoza could not be satisfied with the three distinct and very loosely related entities which constituted the foci of Descartes' thought. He took that which was always the bond of unity - God - and treated the others as modes of its being." (1)

Hegel regards Spinoza as a disciple or successor of Descartes: "Benedict Spinoza a direct successor to this philosopher (Descartes) and one who carried the Cartesian principle to its logical conclusion." (2) Spinoza was born in 1632 and he died in 1677.

Descartes had described God as a substance - infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, omniscient and omnipotent. Spinoza starts from, and develops, this idea of substance.

God is the first and only cause of all that there is. "God is the effecting cause of all things which can be perceived by infinite intellect." (3) But God himself is not an effect of a prior cause. He is a self-causing cause. "God is the cause through himself (4) and is absolutely the first cause." (5)

God is an infinite substance. "By substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived by means of itself." (6) God I understand to be a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence." (7)

Spinoza then goes on to point out that God is one with nature or the universe, and He includes all reality or all that there is. "Whatever is, is in God and nothing can exist or be conceived without God." (8)

The one substance - God - has two infinite and eternal attributes, namely, thought and extension, or in other words, mind and matter. "Thus the one substance - God - whose

(1) Nature, Man and God. Lecture 111. pp.68 - 69
(2) History of Philosophy. Vol. 111. p.252.
(3) Spinoza : Ethics. p. 15. Corollary 1.
(4) Spinoza : Ethics. p. 15. Corollary 11.
(5) Spinoza : Ethics. p. 15. Corollary 111.
(6) Spinoza : Ethics. p. 1. Definition 111.
(7) Ibid. Defin. 1V. p.1.
(8) Ibid. Prop. XV. p.11.

attributes are infinite" says Temple, commenting on Spinoza, is known to us under two attributes, thought and extension." (1)

But what should we understand by attribute? "By attribute I understand that which the mind perceives as constituting the essence of substance." (2) The two attributes of God - mind and matter - are not in conflict with each other but each expresses the whole nature of God. By focussing our attention on mind alone, or on matter alone, we must necessarily be led to the same end, namely, substance or God.

The individual objects and things such as myself, a tree, a horse, a stone, a dog, my particular thought at this moment, are all modes or the modifications of the substance. "By mode I understand the modifications of a substance that which is in something else through which it may be conceived." (3) "Particular things are nothing else than modifications of attributes of God or modes by which attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determined manner." (4) The substance is not a mere sum of the modes but the latter are the manifestations of the substance and receive their reality from it.

God is absolutely free, in that He is not moved to action by any external force, or law but acts wholly and entirely out of the necessity of His own nature. "God acts merely according to his own laws and is compelled by none." (5)

Spinoza categorically rejects the idea of an anthropomorphic God. God is not a person and is devoid of all human qualities. He cannot will, think, or feel. "We cannot ascribe to God will or intellect at all in the human meaning of the word. There are some who think God to be like man in mind and body, and liable to all passions by body we understand a certain quantity in length, breadth and depth with a certain shape, and what could be more absurd than to say this of God, a being absolutely infinite?" (6) Spinoza's God cannot feel pleasure and delight at our prayers and worship, nor can He feel angry and full of wrath at our sins and transgressions.

Spinoza teaches that God is immanent in the cosmos or in nature. This view of God differs from that of Aristotle who considered God to be transcendent, outside and beyond the universe, and who explained teleology in nature as due to the longing of the world for God, whose perfection, remote though it be, attracts the world towards Him. Spinoza, says that there is no purpose in nature, and no free will among human beings. Everything is contingent; only God is free and absolutely independent. Everything is or occurs according to the necessity of the divine nature. "All things are determined by the necessity of divine nature for existing and working in a certain way." (7) "God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things." (8) Spinoza was a pantheist and necessitarian.

Spinoza's conception of God can be concisely and succinctly stated in his own words: "In these propositions I have explained the nature and properties of God: that he necessarily exists: that he is one alone: that he exists and acts merely from the necessity of his own nature: that he is free cause of all things

- (1) Nature, Man and God. p. 69.
- (2) Spinoza: Ethics. Definition IV. p.1.
- (3) Ibid. Definition V. p.1.
- (4) Ibid. Corollary. P.21.
- (5) Spinoza: Ethics. Prop. XVII. p.15.
- (6) Spinoza: Ethics. Prop. XV. p.11.
- (7) Ibid. Prop. XXIX. p.23.
- (8) Ibid. Prop. XVIIII. p.18.

and in what manner: that all things are in God and depend upon him; that without him they could neither exist nor be conceived: and finally, that all things were predetermined by God, not through his free, or good will but through his absolute nature or infinite power." (1) "God is a being of whom all or infinite attributes are predicated of which attributes everyone is infinitely perfect in its kind." (2)

There are numerous difficulties in Spinoza's conception of God. If everything is in God and God manifests himself in everything, then even evil, pain and filth are in God; but how can such a God be said to be perfect?

Spinoza teaches that mind and matter are eternal and infinite attributes of God. But the Biological Science (Darwin's Evolution Theory) has shown that the mind is the latest arrival in Nature, and has evolved from the inorganic world.

Like Descartes, Spinoza fails to account for the intense striving of the finites towards higher and higher forms of perfection, more specifically, for human progress.

Spinoza's ethical teaching is to the effect that every event is predetermined, or follows necessarily from the nature of God. We cannot prevent or forestall what must happen. Our task is merely to know the truth and to accept it. But this is obviously inadequate. We do not in fact only want to know the truth and accept it, but in addition we want to change it, to modify it, to utilise it and make it serve our purposes. Life is dynamic.

As far as religion is concerned, Spinoza teaches that true worship to God must be intellectual and not emotional. The intellectual love by which we love God is the same love by which God loves Himself. But this cannot satisfy the majority of people whose approach to the Supreme Being is preponderately emotional. Can the emotion be eradicated in human nature?

Hegel is of opinion that Spinoza's greatest contribution to philosophy is that he (Spinoza) conceived the cosmos as a unity in diversity or identity in differences. "To be a follower of Spinoza" Hegel concludes, "is the essential commencement of all philosophy". (3) Spinoza's system of philosophy is reminiscent of that of the Stoics.

Spinoza's philosophy exercised great influence on many subsequent thinkers and poets. Lessing is convinced that "es gibt kein andere philosophie als die philosophie des Spinoza". "In der Ethik Spinozas" says Goethe, "fund ich eine Beruhigung meiner Leidenschaften."

The doctrine of the immanence of God in Nature (pantheism) has a very fascinating appeal to some minds, like for instance, Wordsworth, who says:

"I have learned
To look on Nature not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth : but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor hush, nor grating though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

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- (1) Spinoza : Ethics
 - (2) Spinoza: Treatise on God. (Wolf's Trans.) p.21.
 - (3) History of Philosophy. Vol. 111. p.257.

"Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

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CHAPTER IV

GOD AS THE SUPREME MONAD AND THE SOURCE OF UNITY OF ALL MONADS

"It is evident that even by supposing the world to be eternal, we cannot escape the ultimate extra-mundane Reason of things."

--- Leibniz.

"The unity of monads has its source in God."

--- Rogers.

One of the most difficult problems in philosophy is how to explain the relation of mind (thought) and matter (extension). Descartes' attempt to work out this explanation was not satisfactory or convincing.

In the opinion of Spinoza, the only solution of this problem, was to hold that mind and matter are not intrinsically opposed to each other, for they are attributes of the same substance.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646 - 1716) suggested another solution of this challenging and defying problem. He thought that by doing away with matter as extension, and replacing it by matter as force, and as thus fundamentally spiritual, the problem would be solved.

The philosophy of Leibniz centres round his theory of monads, according to which the whole universe can be resolved or broken down to simple substances called monads, and these can combine in various ways to form compounds or bodies. What we call matter is merely a group of monads. Mind or spirit is also a monad. All monads are characterised by their ability to offer resistance and by internal force and not by extension and passivity. "What we call matter" says Rogers, "is a host of unextended centres of force whose activity is at the bottom spiritual or perceptual activity." (1) From his theory of monads Leibniz is able to establish the existence of God and to enunciate his conception of the Divine Being.

What are monads? "The monad", Leibniz states, "..... is nothing but a simple substance which enters into compounds, simple, that is to say, without parts." (2)

A monad, having no parts cannot begin and perish gradually or bit by bit, but begins and ends suddenly. "Thus it may be said that monads can only begin and end all at once, that is to say, they can only begin by creation and end by annihilation whereas what is compound begins or ends by parts." (3)

Monads cannot influence each other or in any way communicate with one another for they are windowless. "Monads have no windows by which anything can come in or go out." (4)

(1) Rogers: Students' History of Philosophy. p. 250.
(2) Leibniz: Monadology in "The Philosophical Writings of Leibniz." (Everyman's Library). p. 3. Par. 1.
(3) Ibid. p. 3. Par. 6.
(4) Leibniz: Monadology. p. 3. Par. 7.

The activity of, or the change in the monad is not brought about by any external cause but originates from the inner life of the monad itself. "..... the natural changes of monads come from an inner principle, since an external cause would be unable to influence their inner being." (1)

But among monads there operates the principle of pre-established harmony, so that although each monad acts purely from the inner principle of its own life, and is not influenced by other monads, yet all monads act in concert and harmony together as if they actually influence one another. Pre-established harmony determines that, if one monad performs a particular action, another monad must perform a corresponding action. This is what happens between mind and body and between two or more individuals, animals or things. "These principles provide me with a way of explaining naturally the union or rather the conformity of the soul and the organic body. The soul follows its own laws and the body likewise, and they accord by virtue of the harmony pre-established among all substances" (2) Again, "..... bodies act as though, per impossible, there were no souls: and souls act as if there were no bodies, and both act as if each influenced the other." (3)

Further a monad represents or mirrors the whole universe from its (monad's) particular point of view. So that if we were able, and had sufficient knowledge, we could analyse a grain of sand and find the whole universe there! "Now this connection or adaptation of all created things with each and of each with the rest, means that each simple substance has relations which express all the others and that consequently it is a perpetual living mirror of the universe." (4)

Now monads differ in that some of them represent and mirror the universe more clearly than others. The difference, for instance, between my mind and a stone, is that my mind mirrors the universe more clearly, whereas a stone does so more vaguely, faintly, and confusedly; but both my mind and the stone are spiritual, soul-like, substances, or as Hegel puts it, "The conscious monad distinguishes itself from the naked (material) monads, by the distinctness of its representation." (5) On this basis, monads rank in ascending order, up to the Supreme Monad - God.

Calkins (6) tabulates the order of Leibniz's monads as follows:-

- (a) Simple Monads: These are insentient but perceptive, i.e. able to represent or mirror the universe, e.g. monads that make up matter - stone, iron, tree, etc.
- (b) Spirits or sentient souls: These fall into two categories:-
(1) Those that are sentient only, e.g. animal mind; (11) Those which, in addition, are rational and free, e.g. the human mind.
- (c) The Perfect or Supreme Monad, that is to say, God.

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- (1) Leibniz: Monadology. p.4. Par.11.
 - (2) Ibid. p. 17. Par. 78.
 - (3) Ibid. p. 18. Par. 81.
 - (4) Ibid. p. 13. Par. 56.
 - (5) History of Philosophy. Vol. 111. p. 338.
 - (6) Persistent Problems of Philosophy. p. 98.

The main point then is that God is the Creator of all the other monads and the Maker of the pre-established harmony among them. "Thus God alone is the primary unity or original simple substance, from which all monads are produced and are born so to speak by continual fulgurations of the divinity from moment to moment." (1)

And in the words of Hegel: "God or the Monad of monads, is therefore that which pre-establishes harmony in the changes of the monads." (2) The concerted and corresponding action of monads is often illustrated by an example of two or more clocks, set simultaneously, in such a way, as to indicate the same time.

Leibniz tries further to demonstrate the existence of God by basing his argument on the logical principle of sufficient reason. Every event must have a sufficient cause or explanation - why it is and why it is as it is. God is positively the sufficient cause of the whole cosmos; for all finite things must have one ultimate external cause. "That is why the ultimate reason of things must lie in a necessary substance and this is what we call God." (3) "Now since this substance is a sufficient reason of all, there is only one God and this God is enough." (4) But God himself has no prior cause for He is perfect. "..... the Supreme Substance who is unique, universal and necessary has nothing beside Himself independent of himself He must be incapable of being limited ... " (5) "Whence it follows", Leibniz continues, "that God is absolutely perfect since perfection is nothing but magnitude of positive reality, in the strict sense setting aside the limits or bounds in things which are limited. And there where there are no bounds, that is to say in God, perfection is absolutely infinite." (6)

Another principle of logic which Leibniz employs to establish the existence of God is that of non-contradiction. What is self-contradictory is not real. Self-contradiction is undeniably a characteristic of finite, imperfect, beings. But as for God, a perfect being, "No contradiction is involved in the idea of a perfect being" (7) as Calkins expresses it.

In order to elucidate the following point, we shall have to revert or refer back to the theory of monads. All monads mirror the universe. One difference between the material monads and the spiritual monads or minds is that the latter in addition to common qualities, "Are also images of the Divinity Himself, or the author of Nature, capable of knowing the system of the universe and of imitating something of it by architectonic patterns, each mind being as it were, a little divinity in its own department This, it is, which renders minds capable of entering into a kind of society with God the assemblage of all minds must make up the City of God." (8)

God then, Leibniz concludes, is the "Monarch of the divine City of Minds." (9)

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- (1) Leibniz: Monadology. p. 11. Par. 47.
 - (2) History of Philosophy. Vol. 111. p. 344.
 - (3) Leibniz: Monadology. p. 10. Par. 38.
 - (4) Ibid. Par. 39.
 - (5) Ibid. Par. 40.
 - (6) Ibid. p. 10. Par. 41.
 - (7) Persistent Problems of Philosophy. p. 101.
 - (8) Leibniz: Monadology. pp. 18 - 19.
 - (9) Ibid. p. 19. Par. 87.

Before God created the universe He had a wide option as to different types of worlds He could create, but He preferred to create the present world, for it is the best of all others. God works teleologically. "It is also evident how God acts not only physically but also freely; and how there lies in Him not only the efficient cause but also the final cause." (1)

In a nutshell: God is a spiritual being - perfect, infinite, immutable, omnipotent, omniscient. He is the creator of all other monads, in that they emanate from Him - the Supreme Monad. He pre-established the harmony in accordance with which all monads express their inner nature in action, and which regulates the interaction between monads. God, as a perfect being, is free from self-contradictory or discrepant elements within Himself. He is the sufficient reason or cause of the whole universe. Last but not least, He is the Monarch of the City of Souls.

This is an august and sublime conception of God indeed. But it may be pointed out that Leibniz's God is a "deus ex machina", since it is obvious that He is invented in order to explain and account for the existence, activity, and interaction of monads.

Moreover if the world as we know and experience it, is the best that God chose to create - the world full of suffering, misery, sorrow, sin, cruelty, oppression, and exploitation of man by man - how can we regard Him as perfect, all-good and all-wise?

The conception of God as a monarch reveals some vestiges of anthropomorphism in the mind of Leibniz.

Also the doctrine of pre-established harmony is not highly convincing and does not seem to be amply confirmed by practical and actual observation, and experience, in the world of things, men and events.

(1) Leibniz: *Origination of Things*. p. 37.

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CHAPTER V

GOD AS A CREATIVE SPIRIT OR MIND

"All the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind."

— Berkeley.

"The world of sensible signs shows, above all, the constant activity of pervading omnipotent spirit".

— Fraser.

In this Chapter we shall examine the ideas of George Berkeley (1695 - 1753) and try to ascertain his conception of the Supreme Being. Before we deal with relevant aspects of Berkeley's system of philosophy, it appears necessary or desirable and proper to point out that Berkeley's philosophy was an attempt to refute materialism and to establish the proposition that ultimate reality is fundamentally spiritual.

Thomas Hobbes (during the early part of the 17th century) had, like his ancient Greek predecessors, Leucippus and Democritus, expounded the theory of the materialistic explanation of the world. He taught that the cause of all events whatsoever, can be reduced to motion and matter, even the mind itself, is caused by motion of brain particles. So that the ultimate reality is matter and motion; no place for the spirit or spiritual God, as understood, for instance, by theologians.

Berkeley sets out to show that all material objects are nothing but ideas in our minds, and cannot exist unless as perceived by a mind. "For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percipi, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them."⁽¹⁾

The ideas are intrinsically and naturally passive. But we observe the ideas coming into being, following one another, assuming diverse forms and shapes, and vanishing away. There must therefore be some agent that creates and changes the ideas. This agent is spirit or mind. "We perceive a continued succession of ideas, some are anew excited, others are changed or totally disappear. There is therefore some cause of these ideas whereon they depend and which produces and changes them. This cannot be any quality or idea or combination of ideas It must therefore be a substance; but it has been shown that there is no corporeal or material substance; it remains therefore that the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance or spirit."⁽²⁾

Consequently, the whole universe can be divided into ideas (material objects or phenomena) and spirits (minds). "In the last analysis possible of all our knowledge we find ourselves reduced to two elements only - phenomena and spirits."⁽³⁾

(1) Berkeley: Principles of Human Knowledge. (The New Universal Library). p. 13. Par. 3. 3
(2) Berkeley: Principles of Human Knowledge. p.71 Par. 26. 6
(3) Ibid. p. 71. Par. 26.

The blue hill, the green forest, the flock of sheep I am staring at just now, exist because I perceive them and they are thus ideas in my mind. But what about the material objects I do not perceive at this moment? Do these exist since in order to exist a material object must be perceived by a mind? Yes, these do exist, for they are being perceived by other human minds or by the all-encompassing mind of God, who is the creator of ideas or sensible things. "Sensible things do really exist and if they really exist, they are necessarily perceived by an Infinite Mind; therefore there is an infinite mind, or God." (1)

The ideas are thus the products, or creatures, of the mind or spirit. We human beings are partly spirits or minds. But we do not create or produce the ideas for we often find that ideas are forced on us, or exist independently of our will. It is therefore God who creates the ideas or matter. "When in broad daylight I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or not, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses, the ideas imprinted on them are not the creatures of my will. There is therefore some other will or spirit that produces them," (2) and imprints them on my mind.

From the unquestionable existence of matter, sensible objects or ideas, Berkeley is inevitably led or coerced to postulate the existence of God, as the source, and fons et origo of ideas. "The things by me perceived are known by the understanding and produced by the will of an infinite spirit." (3) "There is a Mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive. And from the variety and order and manner of these, I conclude the author of them to be wise, powerful, and good beyond comprehension." (4) This is the argument from design; charmed and fascinated by the order and the beauty of Nature; we come to the conclusion that behind all this there is an Architect or Artist - God. "The ideas of sense have a steadiness, order and coherence and are not excited at random but in a regular train or series the admirable connection whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its Author." (5)

Berkeley's arguments for the existence of God and his conception of Deity can be further illustrated by the following passage: "To me it is evident that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude not that they have no real existence but that seeing they depend not on my thought and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, there must be some other Mind wherein they exist. As sure therefore as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite omnipresent Spirit who contains and supports it." (6)

God is the creator, not only of the material world, but also of the lesser spirits or other created spirits including human beings.

Berkeley's conception of God can now be succinctly epitomised. God is a Spirit or Mind, the Creator of all that there is, namely the ideas (material world) and lesser spirits; He is all-wise, omnipotent, benevolent and perfect. The whole universe exists in and through Him. In Him "we live and move and have our being".

Berkeley's idea of God was disproved or overthrown by Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin convincingly showed that mind or spirit has evolved from lower nature and ultimately, from matter. So that it is not the spirit that created matter, but the converse is true.

- (1) Berkeley: A new Proof For the Existence of God. (From Anthology of Modern Philosophy by Robinson p.363
- (2) Berkeley: The Principles of Human Knowledge. p. 75. Par. 29.
- (3) Berkeley: A new Proof of the Existence of God. Loc. cit.p.366
- (4) Ibid. p. 366.
- (5) Berkeley: Principles of Human Knowledge. p. 81. Par.30.
- (6) Berkeley: A New Proof of the Existence of God. Loc.cit.p.7

Again to convey God as an Artist or Architect is to picture Him in the image of a human being and this is to degrade Him.

Hegel is of opinion that Berkeley's philosophy was a development of John Locke's ideas, namely, that the source of truth is experience or being as perceived. "The idealism in which all external reality disappears", he says, "has before it, the standpoint of Locke and it proceeds from him". (1)

Berkeley rejects materialism, but concurs with Leibniz that the cosmos is essentially and fundamentally spiritual.

The argument from design is very popular among theologians. Pope Pius XII, addressing scientists in the Pontifical Academy of Science in the Vatican, in 1942, said, inter alia: "The wonder of the infinitely big and the infinitely small, and the order which one finds, reveals in the universe, the hand of God." (2)

Many distinguished poets teach us, through their immortal works, that God speaks to all men through the data of their senses, as one man to another, through spoken words; in other words, God manifests Himself to us through the grandeur and splendour that we observe in Nature around us; as witness the great Flemish Poet, Guido Gezelle:-

"Als de ziele luistert
Spreekt 'et al een taal dat leeft
't lijzigste gefluister
Ook een taal en teeken heeft,
Blaren van de boomen
Kouten met malkeer gezwind,
Baren in de stroomen
Klappen luide en welgezind,
Wind en wee en wolken
Wegelen van Gods heiligen voet,
Talen en vertolken
't disp gedoken woord zoo zoet
Als de ziele luistert."

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- (1) History of Phil. Vol. III. p. 364.
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CHAPTER VI

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD DOUBTED

"Hume extended his scepticism to the conception and doctrines of freedom and necessity, and to the proofs of the existence of God."

— Hegel.

"There is no place in his Philosophy for God."

— Calkins.

David Hume (1711 - 1776) employed his penetrating intellect to make a destructively critical survey of some fundamental philosophic ideas.

According to his doctrine, the whole universe is reducible, into impressions and ideas - both being the perceptions of the mind. "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds which I call impressions and ideas." (1)

The difference between an impression and an idea is that the former is more vivid and forceful in the mind of the perceiver. "The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions which enter with most force and violence we may name impressions By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning." (2) So that ideas originate from impressions and the latter are, or are equivalent to, what we usually call matter or material objects. We acquire impressions through the senses. The source of all knowledge is thus sensual. We cannot assert that we know a thing or that a thing exists unless we perceive it or we can perceive it by means of our senses. Now we never possess an impression of God, that is, we never perceive Him by our senses; we never see Him, hear Him, or touch Him. How can we therefore be certain that He exists? Obviously He does not exist.

We shall recollect that Descartes found the key for the apprehension of God and the material universe through his discovering that there is a "self" or "ego" which thinks and doubts. Hume flatly denies that there is such a thing. He maintains, on the contrary, that there is no self or spirit or soul. There is no unifying agent or something that remains identical and permanent behind the impressions and ideas and which we may call a self or soul.

The human mind is just like a lighted stage on which the impressions and ideas, like actors and players, appear, act or play and disappear. The mind is a kind of a theatre where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass,

(1) Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature (Everyman's Library).
Vol. 1. p. 11.
(2) Hume: Ibid. p. 11.

re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." (1)

What we call a mind, soul, or self, is merely "a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." (2)

I never experience my "self" behind the kaleidoscopic perceptions. "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat or cold or light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but a perception." (3) God is generally conceived as a spirit. Our own human spirits, it is maintained, emanated from God or have their source in Him. Now the denial of the existence of the human soul or spirit is fatal to the existence of a spiritual God from whom our own spirits emanated.

Spinoza conceived God as a substance with two attributes - spirit and matter - and numerous modes. Hume dismisses this idea as laughable. "I would fain ask those philosophers, who found so much of their reasonings on the distinction of substance and accident and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of substance be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection? If it be conveyed to us by our senses, I ask, which of them and after what manner? If it be perceived by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste; and so of the other senses. But I believe none will assert that substance is either a colour or a sound or a taste. The idea of substance must therefore be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exists. But the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into our passions and emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it." (4)

Before and up to the time of Hume, the patent and unassailable validity of the principle of causation in nature, had been assumed without question by scientists and philosophers and these believed that the causal relation is a necessary and inexorable law of Nature.

Hume rejects the causal relation as chimerical and fantastic. It is a dream to imagine one thing or event can be an effect or a cause of another thing or event. We never perceive that power or force which is alleged to be able to bring about an effect from a cause. We often observe one event invariably followed by another and then by this constant conjunction the relation acquires the force of custom or habit or determination of the mind, to pass from one object or event to its usual attendant. As a result of the fact that we have often observed certain things happening one after the other, we jump to the conclusion, through custom merely, that one thing is the cause or effect of the other. In things themselves, however, there is no causal necessity. "Necessity, then, is the effect of this observation, and is nothing but an internal impression of the mind or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another The necessary connection betwixt causes and effects is the

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- (1) Hume: in "Anthology of Modern Philosophy" by Robinson. p. 399.
 - (2) Hume: Ibid. p. 399.
 - (3) Hume: Ibid. p. 398.
 - (4) Hume: Treatise of Human Nature. Vol. 1. p. 24.

foundation of our inference from one to the other. The foundation of our inference is the transition arising from the accustomed union necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects" (1) so the causal relation goes.

From causal relation, philosophers, like Descartes had deduced the existence of God as the first cause of the Cosmos. So if the principle of causation is shattered then the God of Descartes (who is the cause of Spirits and Matter) and the God of Leibniz (who is the cause of monads and their pre-established harmony) and the God of Berkeley (who is the cause of ideas) must fall tumbling to the ground or disappear like a ghost.".....The necessity of power which unites causes and effects lies in the determination of the mind to pass from the one to the other. The efficacy or energy of causes is neither placed in the causes themselves, nor in the Deity, nor in the occurrence of these two principles; but belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances. It is here that the real power of causes is placed along with their connection and necessity" (2) It is crystal clear that in Hume's philosophy, there is no place for God, but a conception of God he has, for, if a person doubts or denies the nature or the existence of God, that very doubt or denial implies or presupposes, in fact, his conception of God.

Hume, by his destructive and disruptive ideas, made himself the centre of a cyclone of criticism. Supposing our "theatre" was illuminated with a green light surely all players and actors on it would appear green. The impressions and ideas of which Hume speaks are, as they are, owing to the type of the mind that mirrors them. What guarantee and assurance have we to assert that impressions and ideas are in truth and in fact as they appear to our type of minds?

Moreover there must be a possessor of these ideas and impressions and there must be unifying and relating agent behind them. Otherwise, if they are disconnected, how could they ever be related? Hence there must be something identical, continual, and permanent behind the kaleidoscopic flux of perceptions. Otherwise how could I be the same person yesterday, today, and tomorrow?

Science works on the principle of cause and effect. Without determinism there can be no science, as one great scientist has stated it. So, Hume's attack on the causal relation and his discrediting of the validity thereof roughly shook the foundations of the scientific world. A dark cloud of doubt was cast, not only over the existence of a divine being, but also over the substantiality and reality of the sweet fruits and glaring achievements of science.

If Hume does away with God, ourselves, and science, then what are we? Where are we? We are left with nothing to rest or hold on. This position is untenable. Immanuel Kant, awakened from his dogmatic slumbers by Hume, accepted Hume's challenge. As a matter of fact, to criticise Hume is to anticipate Kant. So we had better halt our further criticism of Hume and march on to our next Chapter on Kant.

(1) Hume: in "Anthology of Modern Philosophy" by Robinson. p.387.
(2) Hume: Ibid. p. 388.

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- ROGERS: Students' History of Philosophy. pp. 330 - 350.

CHAPTER VII

GOD AS BEING BEYOND THE FRONTIERS OR
LIMITS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

"I have, therefore, found it necessary to deny knowledge of God, Freedom and Immortality in order to find a place for faith."

--- Kant.

"Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui. Quod non capis quod non vides, animosa firmat fides, praeter rerum ordinem."

--- (Old Latin Hymn).

"We have but faith we cannot know
For knowledge is of things we see."

--- Tennyson.

Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) is rightly and universally recognised as one of the most profound thinkers of modern European philosophy. His influence on later philosophers was deep and far-reaching.

As we have already observed, Kant was alarmed by the teachings of Hume which annihilated the ideas of self, causation, and the deity.

Moreover Kant lived during the time when science was making great forward strides in all spheres. Kant became a keen and zealous student of science, especially physics and astronomy. He was highly interested in the laws of gravitation which had been discovered and formulated by Newton.

At about the same time also, there was a tidal wave of French enlightenment which was spreading all over Europe and which was sponsored by the encyclopedists - Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alambert, Holback, Montesquieu, Rousseau and others.

One characteristic feature of the teachings of the encyclopedists was their fierce attack on religion which they denounced and decried as a superstition and as an instrument by which the bourgeois, or privileged well-to-do class, wielded to oppress and exploit the poor toiling lower classes.

The general outlook of the encyclopedists was materialistic. They interpreted the cosmos in terms of matter and motion as Hobbes had done before them. The following passage from Holback's "Systeme de la Nature" is typical. Holbach contrasts Nature and Religion as follows: "Nature invites man to love himself incessantly, to augment the sum of his happiness; religion orders him to love only a formidable God who is worthy of hatred, to detest and despise himself and to sacrifice to his terrible idol the sweetest and most lawful pleasures. Nature bids man consult his reason and take it for his guide; religion teaches him that this reason is corrupted, that it is faithless, truthless guide implanted by a treacherous god to mislead his creatures. Nature tells man to seek light, to search for truth; religion enjoins upon him to examine nothing, to remain in ignorance. Nature

says to man, 'Cherish glory, labour to win esteem, be active, courageous, industrious'; religion says to him, 'Be humble, abject, pusillanimous, live in retreat, busy thyself in prayer, meditation, devout rites, be useless to thyself and do nothing for others'. In addition nature teaches man to avoid doing wrong or evil, but religion encourages or induces to do wrong, because after committing the wrong man can go to his temple and humble himself at the feet of his ministers and expiate his misdeeds by sacrifices, offerings, and prayers."⁽¹⁾ This was indeed a devastating attack on religion and indirectly, on God, around whom religion centres.

Rousseau later differed from the other encyclopedists by teaching that the essential nature of man is not intellect but feeling. The unity of the self, or the unifying force in the self is not analytical understanding but sentiment or emotion. Feeling supplies the motive power which is needed for setting man at work, to realise himself and to remedy things instead of simply criticising them. Rousseau's writings exercised great influence on Kant.

Kant was aware of the imposing achievements of science which were patent to everyone; he was also aware of those ideas which are deep-rooted and deep-seated in the human soul, namely, the ideas of God, Freedom and Immortality. In short, he was aware of both science and religion as essential parts of the fundamental nature of man. He thus came to the conclusion that to reject one or other was a fatal error. The existence of both must be vindicated - each in its own sphere.

Kant discovered that some of his predecessors had confused religion and science. He wondered how the error which they committed could be avoided. This error was that - "Human reason, in one sphere of cognition, is called upon to consider questions, which it cannot decline as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer as they transcend every faculty of the mind."⁽²⁾

The prerequisite of philosophy, therefore, must consist in a preliminary examination of the faculties of the mind itself and in trying to ascertain its capabilities and potentialities, how far it can go, what it can know, what is within and what is beyond its reach; in short, the limits of cognition. This is what the "Critique of Pure Reason" sets out to accomplish.

Before Kant could ascertain the faculties of the mind, he had to demonstrate that the mind or self does exist, and thus dismiss Hume's doctrine. To do this, he draws attention to the fact that impressions do not appear in the mind in a disorderly or haphazard manner, but appear as linked, associated, and related to one another. What is then the unifying or relating agent behind impressions and ideas? In other words, how are synthetic judgements a priori possible? There is a self which unites or relates impressions and ideas. The necessary and universal judgements are due to the synthetic activity of the mind. The mind or self or soul, is then that synthesising agent behind the impressions and ideas.

It follows, Kant holds, that the mind, in the act of knowing, is not passive, like Hume's theatre, but active. Moreover, in the act of knowing, the mind does not merely copy the objects of the external world, but it also contributes something of its own nature, in the process. The mind has its own inborn

(1) Rogers: Students' History of Philosophy. p. 364.

(2) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. (Everyman's Library, Meikeljohn's Translation). p. 1.

or innate framework into which the external objects must fit in order to become knowledge. "But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself." (1)

Consequently we can never know external nature as it is, because we only know nature as fitted into the framework of our minds, that is, as knowledge. To a man wearing blue spectacles the world would appear blue. If we had a sixth sense, we would perceive what we cannot perceive now with our five senses. If we had no sense of hearing, for instance we would never be aware of the presence of sound in Nature. The reason for our failure to perceive sound, would not be that there is no sound in nature, but that our minds are not fitted to receive and perceive it. Again our minds may be likened to a sieve. Only particles of not more than a certain size can pass through the holes or mesh of a sieve. The particles that pass through may be likened to external objects which pass through our senses and become our knowledge. Just as there may be larger particles which cannot pass through the holes of the sieve, in the same way there may be objects which are, as it were, too large for our cognitive faculties.

Kant calls the objects which are capable of becoming our knowledge, phenomena, that is, appearances of something more real or things in themselves which, though lying at the basis of phenomena, we cannot apprehend with our minds and of which we must remain intellectually, at any rate, in complete ignorance.

Our minds prescribe laws to nature. Space and time, for instance, are forms of our own minds, or, as Kant calls them, forms of sensibility or intuition. The phenomena must conform to the spatial and temporal structure of our minds in order to be perceived by us. Objects themselves outside our minds, are timeless and spaceless. They only become spatial or temporal when they are perceived by our minds. They must conform to the structure of the mind whose nature it is to cast everything into spatial and temporal relationships before they can become active objects of our knowledge. "By means of the external sense (a property of the mind), we represent to ourselves objects as without us, and these all in space Space is not a conception which has been derived from outward experiences." (2) "Time is nothing else than the form of the internal sense, that is, of the intuitions of self and of our internal state. For time cannot be any determination of outward phenomena." (3)

Above the intuition there is the understanding where the percepts of the intuition are transformed into pure conceptions of the understanding by the "categorising" process. Kant makes the following table of the categories:

"Of Quantity

Unity
plurality
totality

Of Quality

Reality
negation
limitation

(1) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. p. 25.
(2) Kant: Ibid. p. 43.
(3) Kant: Ibid. p. 49.

• Of Relation

- Of inherence and substance (substantia et occidens)
- Of Causality and dependence (cause and effect)
- Of community (reciprocity between the agent and patient)

Of Modality

- Possibility - impossibility
- Existence - non-existence
- Necessity - contingency

This then, is a catalogue of all the originally pure conceptions, of the synthesis which the understanding contains a priori." (1) The categories are here stated, in order to illustrate clearly, and emphasise strongly one relevant point, namely, that anything which cannot be categorised can never be known by us. In other words, any object which cannot be expressed in terms of time and space and in terms of the categories, can never form part of our knowledge. The world as apprehended through space and time and through categories, is the world of phenomena and of science. "It follows incontestably, that the pure conceptions of the understanding are incapable of transcendental, and must always be of empirical use alone." (2)

If then we can only know those objects which can assume the forms of space and time and of the categories, is it not possible that some objects exist which cannot assume such form, or which cannot pass through the holes of the sieve, as it were? What authority have we to say that such objects do not exist, merely because we cannot perceive and conceive them? Is it not possible that beyond or behind the phenomena, there are such objects which we cannot perceive or conceive? Kant maintains that there is a world of such objects, the world of noumena or things-in-themselves, the world which is spaceless and timeless. Is this; perhaps, not the world where God is? "The conception of a noumenon, that is, of a thing which must be cogitated not as an object of sense but as a thing in itself is not self-contradictory, for we are not entitled to maintain that sensibility is the only possible mode of intuition." (3)

Our minds, - and it must be repeated - are only fitted and competent to know phenomena. When we attempt some knowledge of the noumena, we become hopelessly entangled in a net-work of barbed wire entanglements in the form of paralogisms or false arguments and antinomies or contradictions; this occurs because when we try to picture the noumenal world we must necessarily do so in terms of space and time and categories. That is why when we try to think of God, for instance, we picture Him in anthropomorphic terms, as a human being - as an old man of about seventy years of age, with a long beard and moustache, sitting on a throne, able to travel from place to place, and to speak, movable to anger, jealousy, or joy, by our actions; an owner of a beautiful city - Heaven - alias Jerusalem, surrounded by angels and saints who sing for Him royal praises and beautiful songs. God, properly speaking, however, belongs and is a part of the noumenal world. So we can never know Him. Hence His existence can neither be proved nor disproved by speculative reason or logic. "He (Kant) asserts", says Hegel, "That our finite thought can set forth finite determinations only." (4)

(1) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. p. 79.
 (2) Kant: Ibid. p. 184.
 (3) Kant: Ibid. p. 183,
 (4) Hegel: History of Philosophy. Vol. 111. p. 429.

Kant then proceeds to demolish or refute the three famous arguments that had, from time immemorial, been advanced to prove the existence of God:

(a) The ontological argument. In my mind I have an idea of God, a perfect being. Existence is part of perfection. God must therefore exist. He is also the cause of the idea of a perfect being in me. He must then also exist as the cause of that idea. Kant disposes of this argument by showing that merely to have an idea in the mind is not an indubitable assurance that the object to which the idea purports to refer does actually and in reality exist, outside the mind.

(b) The cosmological argument. God must exist as the first and sufficient cause of all finite things; for every event must have a cause and there must be an ultimate cause of all things. Kant points out that the law of causation is a category of our mind and is only applicable to phenomena. Hence if we apply the law of causation to God, then God himself must have a prior cause of Himself. He himself must be an effect of some cause. So this argument breaks down when we try to apply it to God. "The following fallacies, for example, are discoverable in this mode of proof: 1. The transcendental principle - Everything that is contingent must have a cause, a principle without significance except in the sensuous world." (1)

(c) The physico-theological argument. By this argument we infer the attributes and the existence of an author of the world from the constitution of the order and unity observable in the world. Kant regarded this argument with great respect because, as he said, it was the most plausible and popular argument for God's existence in theological and some scientific circles. The beauty, order, and the unbending laws of Nature, point to the supreme Artist, Author, Creator, and Lawgiver. Nevertheless, Kant maintains that even this argument does not hold water and must consequently go. We attribute to God the mind of an Artist after the analogy of our own human artists. It is anthropomorphic - conceiving God in the image of a person or human being. Moreover this argument is the causal argument in disguise for by it we argue from the work to the worker, from the product to its author, from the effect to its cause. "This proof can at most, therefore, demonstrate the existence of an architect of the world whose efforts are limited by the capabilities of the material with which he works, but not of a creator of the world to whom all things are subject. Thus this argument is utterly insufficient for the task before us - a demonstration of the existence of an all-sufficient being." (2)

Kant thus banished God from the province of logic, the world of phenomena, the realm of science. But then he became confronted with an avalanche of fierce questions. Is there no God? Where is He? How can we account for the ideas of God, Freedom and Immortality which lie embedded in our reason? What of our inner and innate longing and yearning for God? Are we then to be left miserably stranded and marooned - without God, without heaven, without any hope for the immortality of our souls? Kant thought that God could be found somewhere. So he decided to leave the world of logic in which God was a mirage and embark on a hazardous voyage to seek for God in far-off unseen regions. In short, saying farewell to the world of logic, Kant set out to seek for God in the world of conscience and morals.

(1) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. p. 355.
(2) Kant: Ibid. p. 365.

To make this clear, we shall have to look back and cast a fleeting glance at Kant's teaching about the phenomena and noumena. The phenomena, as we have already observed, are appearances of noumena or things-in-themselves. As a phenomenon, an object is subject to the principle of determinism or causation; but as a noumenon, the same object is free and can act spontaneously without being determined or influenced by any other object. "..... every sensuous object would possess an empirical character which guaranteed that its actions, as phenomena, stand in complete and harmonious connection, conformably to unvarying natural laws with all other phenomena, and can be deduced from these, as conditions, and that they do thus, in connection with these constitute a series in the order of nature. This sensuous object must in the second place, possess an intelligible character, which guarantees it to be the cause of those actions, as phenomena, although it is not itself a phenomenon, nor subordinate to the conditions of the world of sense." (1)

We, human beings, are also partly phenomenal (body) and partly noumenal (soul). The difference between us and other phenomena is that we are conscious of our freedom of the will, and of our membership of the noumenal world. "Man", says E. E. England, "is partly a phenomenon, and as such he forms a part of the system of nature. But man also knows himself by pure apperception, and knows himself to possess the faculties of the understanding and reason. The latter faculty is distinct from all empirically conditioned faculties and as the "ought" of the moral imperative possess a causality of its own." (2)

The moral obligation of the "ought" Kant calls the categorical imperative; by this he means that soft voice of conscience which tells us what is right and what is wrong, at all times and under all circumstances. This voice does not say: Do this because you will derive pleasure from doing it, or because it is useful and will be to your benefit or advantage. But it simply says: Do this because it is right, whatever the consequences may be to yourself. It orders us to do what is right purely out of respect of law qua law. "The categorical imperative would be that which represents an action as necessary of itself without reference to another end." (3) "The words 'I ought' express a species of necessity and imply a connection with grounds which nature does not and cannot present to the mind of man. Understanding knows nothing in nature but that which is, or has been, or will be. It would be absurd to say that anything in nature ought to be other than it is in the relations of time in which it stands; indeed, the ought, when we consider merely the course of nature, has neither application nor meaning." (4) "..... there is an imperative which commands a certain conduct immediately without having as its condition any other purpose to be attained by it. This imperative is categorical. It concerns not the matter of the action or its intended result but its form and the principle of which it is itself a result, and what is essentially good in it consists in the mental disposition, let the consequence be what it may. This imperative may be called that of Morality. There is but one categorical imperative, namely, this: Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law." (5)

It should be remembered, however, that 'the ought' has no meaning unless what I ought to do I can do. The categorical

(1) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. p. 320.

(2) England, E. E.: Kant's Conception of God. pp. 170-171.

(3) Kant: in "Anthology of Modern Philosophy" by Robinson, p. 490.

(4) Kant: Critique of Pure Reason. p. 324.

(5) Kant: in "Anthology of Modern Philosophy". by Robinson, p. 491.

imperative, therefore, implies freedom of action - action in accordance with the dictates of pure moral law; seeing, however, that we are partly phenomenal, we cannot in this life realise this complete freedom of acting strictly in conformity with the categorical imperative. Virtue consists in our moral struggle to live according to the moral law. Living perfectly according to moral law is holiness. But, human as we are - frail, finite, imperfect - we can never achieve holiness. Hence, the soul must be immortal in order that it may realise its true end - holiness - even after it has vacated this mortal frame, the body. Holiness is the summum bonum - the end or goal of our moral striving.

"The realisation of the summum bonum in the world, is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. But in this will the perfect accordance of the mind with the moral law is the supreme condition of the summum bonum. This then must be possible as well as its object, since it is contained in the command to promote the latter. Now the perfect accordance of the will with the moral law, is holiness, a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment of his existence. Since, nevertheless, it is required as practically necessary, it can only be found in a progress in infinitum towards that perfect accordance, and on the principle of pure practical reason it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will. Now this endless progress is only possible on the supposition of an endless duration of the existence and personality of the same rational being (which is called the immortality of the soul). The summum bonum then practically is only possible on the supposition of the immortality of the soul. Consequently this immortality being inseparably connected with the moral law is a postulate of pure practical reason⁽¹⁾;

The ultimate goal of our moral striving is the summum bonum and this is happiness. We should lead a virtuous life in order ultimately, to achieve the summum bonum. Virtue must lead to happiness. But is virtue always proportional to happiness? Do we not often see virtuous people toiling and suffering while corrupt and wicked people have it nice? It is just for that reason, Kant argues, that God must necessarily exist in order to allocate or distribute happiness to each individual according and proportional to his virtue, if not in this world, then in the next. "Happiness proportioned to morality must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to its effect, in other words, it must postulate the existence of God as the necessary condition of the possibility of the summum bonum." (2) "The supreme cause of Nature which must be presupposed as a condition of the summum bonum, is a being which is the cause of nature by intelligence and will, consequently its author, that is, God. It follows that the postulate of the possibility of the highest derived good (the best world) is likewise the postulate of the reality of a highest original good, that is to say, of the existence of God." (3)

"The postulates of pure practical reason are those of immortality, freedom and the existence of God. The first results from the practically necessary condition of a duration adequate to the complete fulfilment of the moral law; the second from the necessary supposition of independence of the sensible world and of the faculty of determining one's will according to the law of an intelligible world, that is, freedom; the third from the necessary condition of the existence of the summum bonum

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- (1) Kant: in Anthology of Modern Philosophy. p. 495.
 - (2) Kant: Ibid. p. 496.
 - (3) Kant: Ibid. p. 497.

in such an intelligible world by the supposition of the supreme independent good, that is, the existence of God." (1) So Kant stated and explained his conception of God.

But Kant, as an agnostic, argued so convincingly and cogently against the knowability of God in the Critique of Pure Reason, that when he attempted to describe the deity in his later writings, his arguments were weak and not very convincing. His critics have concentrated their criticism on showing the untenability of the theory of things-in-themselves of the world of noumena. They urge that we should seek for God, if any, in the phenomenal world which is the only world known to us. Moreover, a god who must exist in order to distribute happiness according to virtue, does not appear to be a perfect god. He seems to be a deus ex machina.

Kant as an agnostic, is strongly supported by Herbert Spencer in the latter's book entitled "First Principles" (published 1900) in which Spencer says, *inter alia*, that the power which the universe manifests to us is inscrutable. As an object of consciousness everything is necessarily relative; what a thing may be out of consciousness, no mode of consciousness can tell. Ultimate scientific ideas then, are all representative of realities that cannot be comprehended. After no matter how great a progress in the colligation of facts, and establishment of generalisations, ever wider and wider, truth remains as much beyond reach as ever. The reality existing behind all appearances (God) is and must ever be unknown.

Thompson says: "Reason is man's great characteristic and it is a priceless treasure; let no one abuse the gift nor undervalue the possession. It is not, however, his final appeal in matters pertaining to his spiritual nature; it is concerned chiefly with evidence, interpretation and theories; but the doctrines of Christianity and the great facts upon which they rest, are supernatural and as such, outside of its domain." (2)

Perhaps Kant may agree with the poet:

"O world invisible, we view thee
O world intangible, we touch thee
O world unknowable, we know thee
Inapprehensible we clutch thee."

— Francis Thompson.

(1) Kant: in Anthology of Modern Philosophy. p. 498.

(2) Theology Old and New: Chap. 1. pp. 16-17.

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CHAPTER VIII

GOD AS A SPIRITUAL ABSOLUTE

"Das Wahre ist das Ganze."

--- Hegel

"All material determination is only spiritual determination in disguise."

--- McTaggart.

"The cosmos and all it contains is the creation of God, the materialisation of his thought unrolling in time and space."

--- The Abbe Breull.

According to Kant's epoch-making speculation, the world is sharply divisible into: (a) The world of phenomena, the world of our senses and understanding, the world of science; (b) the world of noumena, of things-in-themselves, which is the cause of the phenomenal world but is for ever beyond our knowledge; the city of God is situated in this world of things-in-themselves. This dualism of Kant became a target of attack and criticism by later philosophers.

Fichte denied the existence of the noumenal world and maintained that ultimate reality or God is a self or ego which is an absolute, manifesting itself in lesser selves - man, animals, and material objects. All these are parts of a whole which is an absolute "I". Schelling, found himself led to postulate a common root for nature and intelligence alike, in which the differences of the two lose themselves in an abstract identity - a position, to a certain extent, suggesting that of Spinoza. Both Fichte and Schelling reject the theory of things-in-themselves and they both suggest a god who is an absolute, manifesting himself in all things.

The idea of the Absolute found its clearest and most authoritative exposition in the philosophy of George Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831) who asserted that the ultimate reality of the universe must be sought in the world of our knowledge - in the world as we perceive and conceive it. Das absolute Gute volbringt sich ewig in der Welt. God is to be found not in imaginary or unimaginable world of things-in-themselves but in the world of concrete reality. "The unity of thought and being is the fundamental idea of philosophy." (1)

Hegel teaches that what is real is rational; and that is rational in which our minds find harmony and no self-contradiction. The more inconsistent or self-discrepant a thing or event, the less rational and real it is. Now everything has its opposite. Every affirmative implies a negative. Anything coming into existence sooner or later develops within itself its opposite or passes into a state in which it reveals the existence of its opposite. From the thesis develops the antithesis, but in some higher reality, the synthesis, the two contradictories or opposites, are rearranged in such a way that they do not collide or

(1) Hegel: History of Philosophy. Vol. III. p. 409.

clash but constitute essential harmonious moments of one whole. In this way contradiction, self-discrepancy or inconsistency vanishes away.

"Being", for instance, is inconceivable without "Not-being" which is also meaningless without "Being". Both these ideas of "Being" and "Not-being" are contradictories and thus mutually exclusive. The solution is that both are harmonised in "Becoming" as their synthesis. "Pure Being and pure Nothing are then the same; the truth is not either Being or Nothing, but that Being-not passes - but has passed over into Nothing and Nothing into Being. But equally the truth is not their lack of distinction but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct and yet unseparated and inseparable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite. Their truth is therefore the movement, this immediate disappearance of the one into the other, in one word, Becoming - a movement wherein both are distinct but in virtue of a distinction which has equally dissolved itself." (1) This is the famous doctrine of the Hegelian dialectics.

When a synthesis has been achieved or consummated, it becomes a new thesis which again reveals its antithesis and these two again combine into a new, higher synthesis. The process goes on until the ultimate triad is reached, namely, Logic (thesis), Nature (antithesis), and Spirit (synthesis). The Spirit or Reason is thus the ultimate reality which harmoniously combines and includes both Nature and Logic or Mind and Matter. In other words, the spirit is the Absolute which manifests itself in everything in the universe and outside of which there is nothing and which unfolds itself in history. The Absolute is God.

"Reason is the substance of the universe, viz. that by which and in which all reality has its being and subsistence." (2)
"It is only an inference from the History of the World that its development has been a rational process; that the history in question has constituted the rational necessary course of the World-Spirit - that spirit which is always one and the same but which unfolds this, its one Nature, in the phenomena of the world's existence." (3) "..... it may be said of universal History that it is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially." (4)

As the spiritual God is the reality which underlies all finite things, it stands to reason that the universe is essentially and fundamentally spiritual. Matter is merely a manifestation of spirit. On this point, Karl Marx disagreed with Hegel and maintained that the universe is, in essence, material, and that spirit is simply the product or manifestation of matter.

The gist of Hegel's conception of God can be briefly restated. God is an all-inclusive Absolute. There is nothing outside Him. In Him there is no discord, discrepancy, or contradiction as these are characteristic features of finite imperfect beings which include only a small portion of reality. God manifests Himself in matter, in mind, in history. Such human institutions as family, tribe, nation, state, are progressive or historical manifestations of God or the Absolute. "The final aim is God's purpose with the world; but God is the Absolutely perfect Being and can therefore will nothing other than Himself." (5)
"But all these manifold forms of human relations, activities, and pleasures, all the ways in which these are intertwined, all that has worth and dignity for man, all wherein he seeks his happiness, his glory, and his pride, finds its ultimate centre in religion, in the thought, the consciousness and the feeling of God. Thus God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. Here spirit, represented as an object has the significance for itself of being universal spirit which contains within itself all that is ultimate and essential and all that is concrete and

(1) Hegel: in "Anthology of Modern Philosophy" by Robinson. p. 581
(2) Hegel: Ibid. p. 598
(3) Hegel: Ibid. p. 588
(4) Hegel: Ibid. p. 601.
(5) Hegel: Ibid. p. 603.

actual." (1)

The theory of God as a spiritual Absolute is open to some serious criticism. It does not satisfy the religious sentiment which requires a personal god who is our loving father, to whom we pray and ask for favours, and who chastises us when we transgress or contravene his laws and regulations. The ordinary man wants a God who will help him in the daily vicissitudes of life; the absolute does not seem to be capable of so helping.

Moreover, if the Absolute exists and is already complete and perfect, how can we account for the fact that it contains some imperfections such as finite beings, evil, and sin? And how must we explain human progress which seems to be the result of that yearning and longing of the human soul for perfection? Again, modern science, under the influence of the theory of evolution regards mind or spirit as a product of matter, and as having evolved out of matter. Finally, there is much to support the argument that the Absolute does not actually exist but is merely the necessity of logic, especially of the principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason.

The influence of Hegel's philosophy has been, and is still, tremendously great. In modern times the Hegelian theory of the Absolute has been expounded and defended by some of Hegel's disciples, styled Neo-Hegelians, men like Bradley, Green, Bosanquet, Taylor, and others.

Bradley states that the Absolute is essentially sentience or experience; so that there is but one reality and its being consists in experience. Green conceives the Absolute as a universal consciousness implicit in the act of knowledge. Our consciousness is a fragment or moment of this universal consciousness. In the act of knowing we participate in divine nature. "You complain that you cannot find out God; no eye can see or ear hear Him; the assertion that He exists can not be verified like any other matters of fact; but what if that be not because He is so far but because He is so near?" (2) "God is our ideal self the possibility of which realisation is the end of our moral life." (3)

Some thinkers who later fundamentally differed from or disagreed with Hegel, commenced their philosophic careers as keen and interested students and enthusiastic admirers of Hegel, for instance, Karl Marx, Benedetto Croce and others. So that one can indeed say that to be a follower of Hegel is the essential commencement of all philosophy.

(1) Hegel: Phenomenology of Mind. (Baillie's Translation). Vol. 11. p. 688.

(2) Green, T.H.: in Neo-Hegelians by Haldar. p. 72.

(3) Green, T.H.: Ibid. p. 70.

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CHAPTER IX

SCIENCE ON THE OFFENSIVE

"We thus arrive at the paradoxical conception of God as a gaseous vertebrate."

--- Haeckel.

"Religion is the opium of the people."

--- Karl Marx.

At this stage it appears proper and fitting that we make a short pause and cast our glance aside and cursorily and briefly examine the influence of Science on the conception of God, especially because scientific ideas and outlook permeate, to a very great extent, the speculation of modern philosophers.

Science tends to create or encourage a materialistic "weltanschauung". We observe this phenomenon, for instance, in ancient Greece during the time of Democritus and other Greek scientists. We notice the same also with Hobbes in the 16th Century and with the Encyclopedists in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is also the case with modern scientists. Hence science is often interpreted as being anti-religious or atheistic. The devastating attack of science on religion is directed on or aimed at a personal God or anthropomorphic deity. It dismisses religion based on such a god, as a superstition, a myth, a relic or vestige of our primitive and barbaric past. It may be stated also that an attack on the human spirit or soul; or a materialistic interpretation thereof, has far-reaching repercussions in religion and the conception of God. Let us support our proposition by reference to some specific sciences.

(a) The Influence of Biology.

Charles Darwin (1817 - 1882) is generally regarded as the founder of modern evolutionist Biology. In his study of plants and animals, Darwin was struck by the fact that in the whole world not two leaves of plants are the same or perfectly similar in structure, no two flowers, no two animals, no two human beings. Again, in nature, we find several species of plants or animals belonging to the same genus. To the genus man, for instance, belong Chinese, Africans, Europeans, and so on; in the same way, there are several species of maize, wheat, birds, cattle and so forth.

Before the time of Darwin it was generally believed that each species had been separately created by God. Darwin set out to disprove this theory of separate creation of species. He pointed out that every individual or species possesses some variations which distinguish that individual or species from every other individual or species; and that these variations are beneficial to the possessor as they enable it to adapt itself to its environment and thus to survive in the struggle for existence against other individuals which do not possess those particular variations. The latter perish or are exterminated. Now these beneficial variations are, according to the principle of heredity, passed from generation to generation and become more accentuated in each generation. This is the theory of natural selection, by which new individuals and new species are evolved. Man himself, has

been evolved from lower animals by the same process. It is here where Darwin's theory becomes diametrically opposed to the biblical story of creation as narrated in the Book of Genesis. Darwin's theory dismisses the idea of God who is a direct creator of plants, animals and man.

Haeckel (1899) basing his arguments on the theory of evolution, traces the gradual historical evolution of the human soul from the animal soul. He then goes on to denounce the anthropomorphic conception of God and points out that the personal anthropism of God has become so natural to the majority of believers that they experience no shock when they find God personified in human form, in picture and statute and in the varied images of the poet in which God takes human form - that is, changed into a vertebrate. Although God is conceived as an immaterial spirit, yet He is not conceived to be incorporeal but merely invisible, gaseous.

(b) The Influence of Chemistry.

Dr. Broad in his book "The Mind and its place in Nature" (published 1937), elaborates an interpretation of the human soul in terms or after the analogy of chemical compounds. If, for instance, one mixes hydrogen and oxygen in a certain proportion a chemical compound called water results. By the knowledge of hydrogen alone or oxygen alone no one could predict the fact that if these two elements are mixed in a certain proportion, the compound would be water. This can only be known or learnt after it has taken place.

As water emerges from a certain mixture of hydrogen and oxygen, in a similar manner the human soul emerges from the chemical mixture of elements in the human body and brain. From the observation of the elements alone, no one could know that their mixture or combination in a certain manner would result in the formation or emergence of the human soul. ".... The characteristic behaviour of the whole could not even in theory be deduced from the most complete knowledge of the behaviour of its components taken separately or in other combinations and of their proportions and arrangements in this whole." (1)

If the soul of man is an emergent from or a compound of chemical elements, then obviously the idea of a God who created a man and breathed the soul into his nostrils - in other words a personal God and Creator - becomes superfluous. There is no place for such a God.

(c) Marxism.

Karl Marx (1818 - 1885) sought to explain the human soul and the economic institutions in materialistic terms. To him, the basic or fundamental reality is matter. Spirit or soul is a product of matter. "The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we belong, is the only reality. Our consciousness and thinking, however, supra-sensuous as they may seem, are the product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter." (2) Lenin says, "The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how matter thinks." (3)

The origin of religion and the belief in the gods is ascribable to two sources. Firstly, "Fear created the gods" - the fear of the mysterious and apparently inscrutable and awe-inspiring forces and phenomena of Nature around us and the fear of death.

(1) Broad: Mind and its place in Nature. p. 59.

(2) Karl Marx: in Stalin's "Dialectical and Historical Materialism."

(3) Lenin: Ibid.

must be melioristic.

Pragmatists do not believe in one particular, perfect, immutable, God and have no clear cut, definite conception of God. What they zealously maintain is that if any particular belief in a god of whatever description, tends to improve or stabilise society, well, we should believe in such a God. "On pragmatistic principles" says William James, "if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true."⁽¹⁾

In his "Varieties of religious experience", James says that our deepest religious experiences such as religious visions, conversions, saintliness, the feeling of our union with the Infinite, are merely the effects of the activity of our sub-conscious mind or the sub-liminal self.

We can summarise the pragmatists' conception of God in their own words. "The truth of the matter can be put in this way: God is not known, He is not understood; He is used - sometimes as a meat-purveyor, sometimes as a moral support, sometimes as a friend, sometimes as an object of love. If He proves himself useful, the religious consciousness asks for no more than that. Does God really exist? How does He exist? What is He? are so many irrelevant questions. Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion. The love of life at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse."⁽²⁾

Under the same category as pragmatists, we may also mention the utilitarians such as Bentham and Mill, whose criterion of goodness is that a good thing or act is that which advances the greatest happiness of the greatest number; so that if God or belief in God brings about or promotes the greatest happiness of the greatest number, we must recognise Him and believe in Him; otherwise He has no place and we must discard Him or any belief in Him.

In conclusion, we may also point out the influence of Astronomy. We have been taught by our religious teachers that heaven, the palace of God, is situated high up, on the other side of the clouds, or the blue firmament. Astronomers, however, state that above and around us there are unimaginably vast stretches of worlds (stars, planets, and moons), - an endlessly and infinitely extended space. No sign of heaven.

(1)William James: Pragmatism. p. 299.

(2)William James: Quoting Leuba in "Varieties of Religious Experience" p. 506-507.

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The first evolutionist...
...the world...
...the universe...
...the world...
...the universe...

CHAPTER X

GOD AS THE ORIGINAL IMPULSE OR SOURCE
OF EVOLUTION

"We cannot account for advance in evolution without assuming a cosmic guiding genius."

— Boodin.

"The present contains nothing more than the past and what is found in the effect was already in the cause."

— Bergson.

The theory of evolution has exercised tremendous influence in the world of science and has had far-reaching repercussions in the world of philosophy. After Darwin, the majority of thinkers tend to revert to the ancient Greek thinker Herakleitus who taught that everything is in a state of flux and nothing abides.

In this chapter we shall examine the ideas of Bergson and try to state his conception of the Deity. But before we do so, we may shortly refer to another earlier philosopher whose ideas, in some respects seem to resemble those of Bergson, namely the philosopher, Schopenhauer, who died in 1860.

Schopenhauer conceives reality as the Will - the eternally striving energising power which is working everywhere in the universe. Behind all phenomena, all things, the whole cosmos, there is a gigantic pushing power - the Will - which manifests itself in all things. "As the magic lantern shows many different pictures which are all made by one and the same light, so in all the multifarious phenomena which fill the world together, or through each other as events, only one will manifests itself of which everything is the visibility the objectivity and which remains unmoved in the midst of change." (1)

Schopenhauer conceives this will as blind and irrational as it is, for instance, manifested in plants and lower animals. It is only in the intellect of man, where the will kindles for itself a light to aid it in the task of dealing with disadvantages that arise from the complexity of life. This will is the source of all movement, all evolution in the universe. It is one and single but manifests itself in diverse ways in the cosmos. It is the ultimate reality or God. Now let us turn to Bergson.

The philosophical ideas of Bergson are enunciated chiefly in his book entitled "Creative Evolution" (published in 1911). He conceives the universe as endlessly moving and changing or as in a state of perpetual flux. "The universe endures. The more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new." (2) "Duration is the continuous progress of the past which grows into the future and which swells as it advances." (3) This duration is Motion or

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- (1) Schopenhauer: in Rogers' "Student's History of Philosophy." p. 427.
(2) Bergson: Creative Evolution. (Mitchell's Translation) p. 11.
(3) Bergson: Ibid. p. 5.

Time. It is evolution.

The cause of evolution may be a final cause, that is, the goal or end of the evolutionary process. Bergson traces the cause of evolution behind the evolutionary process. The former view "... holds in front of us the light with which it claims to guide us, instead of putting it behind. It substitutes the attraction of the future for the impulsion of the past." (1) There is then a vital urge or impulse or original impetus of life, an explosive force which life bears within itself. "The evolution of life really continues an initial impulsion: this impulsion, which has determined the development of the chlorophyllian function in the plant and of the sensori-motor system in the animal brings life to more and more efficient acts by the fabrication and use of more and more powerful explosives." (2)

The intellect of which we boast so much, is not a proper instrument for discovering ultimate reality, but it is merely a tool created by life in order to aid it in its onward surge and to enable it to adapt itself to environment. "Our intellect is intended to secure the perfect fitting of our body to its environment" (3) "The essential function of our intellect, as the evolution of life has fashioned it, is to be a light for our conduct, to make ready for our action on things, to foresee for a given situation, the events favourable or unfavourable which may follow thereupon." (4) "Thought in its purely logical form is incapable of presenting the nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement; created by life in definite circumstances to act on definite things, how can it embrace life of which it is only an emanation or an aspect? Deposited by the evolutionary movement in the course of its way how can it be applied to the evolutionary movement itself?" (5) "Thinking is relative to action. We think in order to act. Life is more than, and transcends, intellect. We can, however, come into contact or communicate with ultimate reality not through intellect but through intuition, that immediate feeling or experience of our union with the ultimate reality or God.

Bergson's conception of God may then be stated thus: God is Duration or that vital urge or impetus which unfolds itself in several forms in the process of evolution. Accordingly, God is not complete or perfect but is still in the process of developing, evolving, manifesting new forms. "God has nothing of the already made; He is unceasing life action, freedom." (6)

This conception of God is at variance and in conflict with the Christian conception of the Deity as well as with that of previous philosophers such as Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, and others, who conceived God as a perfect, immutable being.

But many Christians today realise the inevitability and utility of the theory of evolution in explaining the riddle of the universe, as witness the Abbe Breuil: "The only method of explanation we have which is the only scientific method applicable to all reality unfolding in time, is evolution." (7)

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- (1) Bergson: Creative Evolution (Mitchell's Translation) p. 42.
 - (2) Bergson: Ibid. p. 259.
 - (3) Bergson: Ibid. Introduction p. lx.
 - (4) Bergson: Ibid. p. 31.
 - (5) Bergson: Ibid. Introduction. p. X.
 - (6) Bergson: Ibid. p. 262.
 - (7) "Catholic Times" March, 1945.

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CHAPTER XI

DEITY AS THE CREATURE - AND NOT THE
CREATOR - OF THE UNIVERSE

"Alexander's deity is earth-born."

— Hootin.

"For us, deity is like all other empirical qualities, a birth of time and exists in time."

— Alexander.

Alexander in his book "Space, Time, and Deity", (published 1920, reprinted 1934), expounds and advocates the theory that Space-Time is the original stuff or matrix out of which the cosmos - with all the variety of objects therein - has evolved, or has been created. We can do no better than quote verbatim and literatim Alexander's own summary of his own philosophy.

"Space and Time have no reality apart from each other but are aspects or attributes of one reality, Space-Time or Motion. This is the stuff of which all existents are composed; and it breaks up of itself into these complexes within the one all-embracing stuff. Any portion of it, any space-time, possesses certain fundamental features which therefore belong to every existent generated within the universe of Space-Time. These fundamental pervasive features of things are the categories. Besides these fundamental features, things possess quality which is the empirical feature of things. Qualities form a hierarchy the quality of each level of existence being identical with a certain complexity or collocation of elements on the next lower level. The quality performs to its equivalent lower existence the office which mind performs to its neural basis. Mind and body do but exemplify therefore, a relation which holds universally. Accordingly, Time is the Mind of Space and any quality the mind of its body; or to speak more accurately, mind and any other quality are the different distinctive complexities of Time which exists as qualities. As existents within Space-Time, minds enter into various relations of a perfectly general character with other things and with one another. These account for the familiar feature of mental life: knowing, freedom, values and the like. In the hierarchy of qualities, the next higher quality to the highest attained is deity. God is the whole universe engaged in process towards the emergence of this new quality, and religion is the sentiment in us that we are drawn towards him and caught in the movement of the world to a higher level of existence." (1)

This comprehensive statement of Alexander's philosophy can be briefly analysed as follows: Space-Time or Motion manifests certain qualities at certain stages of its evolution, and these qualities may be arranged in an ascending order: space, time, matter, secondary qualities, life, mind, and deity. "Within the all-embracing stuff of Space-Time, the universe exhibits an emergence in Time of successive levels of finite existences each

(1) Alexander: Space, Time and Deity. Vol. 11. pp. 428-9.

with its characteristic empirical quality. The highest of these empirical qualities known to us is mind or consciousness. Deity is the next higher empirical quality to the highest we know; at any level of existence there is a next higher empirical quality which stands towards the lower quality as deity stands towards mind." (1) The quality of deity then is a product of the evolving universe for the nisus in Space-Time which has borne its creatures forward through matter and life to mind, will bear them forward to some higher level of existence.

Alexander diverges or departs from the traditional conception of deity as a creator and as God. Of course, God "... as being the whole universe is creative, but his distinctive character of deity is not creative but created." (2) God "as embracing the whole universe or Space-Time is creative Even then it is, properly speaking, Space-Time itself which is the Creator and not God." (3) "It is only when we identify God's body with its previous stages and ultimately with Space-Time itself that we can speak of him as a creator. God himself, that is, the universe as tending to deity is creative only of deity God then, like all things in the universe - for Space-Time is not in the universe whereas God since his deity is a part of the universe, is in it - is in the strictest sense not a creator but a creature He is an infinite creature of the universe of Space-Time." (4) "His deity is located in an infinite portion of Space-Time and it is in fact essentially in process and caught in the general movement of Time." (5)

This is indeed, - to borrow a phrase from Kant - a "Copernician revolution". The deity is not a spirit; for the spirit is mind or on the mind's level of existence, whereas deity is a higher existence above mind, just as mind is a higher existence above life, and life above matter. Having failed to apprehend God as a perfect spiritual being, the Creator of heaven and earth, Alexander thinks that God can be better described by inverting the formula.

In brief Alexander teaches that deity is a divine quality located in an infinite part of Space-Time. God is the whole universe as possessing or as in travail with, or in the process of producing, the quality of deity.

Alexander's God is not perfect as He is ever developing and evolving new novel qualities. We can legitimately assume that above deity a new empirical quality will arise and come into existence.

In order to justify and defend morality, Alexander shows that deity is on the side of goodness and that all values are conserved in God's deity. "We help in the creation of deity in so far as through our goodness we are qualified to share in the universal bent towards a higher quality," (6) - namely the quality of deity. "Good and great men seem to us to have in them something divine and the description is just if it is taken to mean that, being better and greater than the rest of us, they point the way to deity and prepare the way as leaders in the human contribution to the world endeavour. Even God himself does not, as actual God, possess deity attained but only the nisus towards it. Men of transcendent gifts of perfection are thus in their degree, exemplars of this nisus." (7)

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- (1) Alexander: Space, Time and Deity. Vol. 11. p. 345.
 - (2) Alexander: Ibid. p. 397.
 - (3) Alexander: Ibid. p. 397.
 - (4) Alexander: Ibid. pp. 397-398.
 - (5) Alexander: Ibid. p. 399.
 - (6) Alexander: Ibid. p. 413.
 - (7) Alexander: Ibid. p. 418.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

"Rock of ages cleft for me."

— (Hymn)

"Per omnia saecula saeculorum."

— (Latin Prayer).

I have now come to the end of my cursory survey of the ideas of great philosophers, from Descartes to the present day. Of course, I have selected only those ideas which to my mind illustrate or elucidate the conception of God, according to the philosophical systems of different philosophers.

It should be mentioned, that several philosophers are omitted - not because they are unimportant or because there is nothing about God expressly stated or implied in their writings - but because there are so many philosophers that, to include them all, would perhaps make this dissertation undesirably long. I have, for instance, omitted Bertrand Russell who seems to find ultimate reality in the laws of pure logic and mathematics - laws which are valid and operate throughout the universe.

No mention also has been made about the philosopher Nietzsche who dismisses Christianity as slave-morality and holds that Power or the will to power is the ultimate reality or God.

Two propositions have been established. Firstly, that the growth and spread of knowledge and science is incompatible with or subversive of, the personal or anthropomorphic conception of God. History repeats itself. What happened in ancient Greece is again taking place in the modern world. It is not necessary to elaborate this point any further as the preceding Chapters have made it clear and plain.

The second proposition is this, that practically all philosophers we have studied do not, in reality and in fact, deny the existence of God. They only differ as to the conception of God. The fierce strife among them is not raging on the existence of God, but on His essence - His qualities and attributes - on who He is; on the "what" of God and not on His "that", to borrow two words from Bradley. To Descartes God is a perfect spiritual being; to Spinoza, an all-inclusive universal substance; to Leibniz, a supreme spiritual monad; to Berkeley, an active creative spirit; to Kant, a guarantee of our happiness, freedom, and immortality; to Hegel, an all-inclusive Absolute; to Karl Marx, material-economic progress; to Alexander, the whole universe in the process of creating deity, and so on.

The conflict between religion and science can be resolved. Religion and Science are not irreconcilably opposed to each other. Religion should remember that as the human mind progresses, and explores uncharted regions of knowledge, human ideas are born, grow, mature and "senesce". So that, to keep up with the times, religion must be constantly brushing aside or discarding its old antiquated ideas, practices and crudities which belonged to the infant stage of the human race. Science, on the other hand, must refrain from its usual wild, dogmatic assertions about those things which we do not as yet clearly and distinctly perceive and conceive.

EPILOGUE

GOD AS THE SELF-REALISATION OF THE
EVOLVING UNIVERSE

"The consciousness of the divine may come to us as the law or direction of our life - the nisus of our historic and individual striving; the nisus towards the highest level which we call God."

— Boodin.

"The more deeply harmonised are a man's faculties of feeling and thought, the finer and more fundamental are his powers of achieving contact with reality."

— Fausset.

"Reality then is truly known to be a connected and self-consistent, or internally coherent system."

— Taylor.

After studying the God-idea as expounded by several great philosophers, I think I should, with modesty, state my own view - with modesty because "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

God may be conceived, not as a person or thing; or as a perfect and already existing being, but as a state towards which the whole universe is gradually moving. This state is an absolute harmony of all the elements of the universe. The progressive movement is a gradual achievement of greater and greater harmony.

We know from our own human nature that things which give us the true and enduring pleasure or happiness are those which display or manifest the characteristic of being harmoniously constituted, as witness the objects of art - a statue, a song, a poem.

The value of a great scientific idea or invention lies in this, that it brings about harmony in things or between things and ourselves, in the place of previously existing discord, disharmony and confusion.

I deeply admire the Christian "hypothesis" which has, for about two thousand years, helped to create harmony between man and his environment - material and human, for, it tells us that there is God who created heaven and earth and all that is therein - the ant, the lion, tree, sun, man, and all other existents. It teaches that God loves us, He forgives us our trespasses; that our souls emanated from Him and are immortal; that after death we shall live in eternal happiness with God in heaven if we have been good here on earth. These ideas give to ordinary men and women rest and satisfaction; they enable us to go on with our daily work and routine without worrying as to what all these things around us mean. I think all religions- primitive and modern - are an attempt to create harmony between man and the world, for in the long run we can only rest and experience satisfaction in harmony.

1/14 - 1924 faith

God is a state of harmony which the world is in process of realising. The highest achievement of this cosmic process is, so far, the evolution of man who is the best specimen we have, of the universal or absolute harmony, still to be achieved. There is harmony between human mind and body. Man's great task is to shape, mould, and render harmonious the elements or parts of the universe.

Science is concerned mainly with knowledge; religion, with feeling. Science and religion can be harmonised by right action. Now the perfect harmony of religion, science, and right action, can only be realised in the Absolute Harmony - God. Today these three entities are still far from being harmonised. We have knowledge, but we misapply it because we do not possess the right feeling. Sometimes we have the right feeling but we cannot act according to it because we do not possess true knowledge. Many a time we have the right feeling and true knowledge, but we lack power to act rightly, we lack will power.

The existence of matter or material objects as opposed to, or apart and separate from, mind, is due to our failure, so far, to create harmony in the world. Hence there arises the discord between mind and matter - the latter being the not yet assimilated part of the universe. The discord also between knowledge, feeling and willing, or between science and religion, is traceable to the same cause, so that the conquest of matter by mind, as, for instance, in the annihilation of distance by trains, aeroplanes, radio, television; and the development and refinement of human feeling by higher and more sublime forms of religion and ethics and the right powerful action to create harmony - this is our highest calling.

A true system of philosophy, to my mind, must account for and explain all aspects of human nature. A philosophy which lays stress on either the cognitive or sentimental or volitional aspect to the neglect or exclusion of other aspects; or a philosophy which regards man as merely and purely cognitive and ignores or overlooks the volitional and affective aspects of human nature or pretends that these aspects are non-existent - such a philosophy in my opinion, is deficient and inadequate. In man there is something of a blind force and the feeling of longing and yearning for something higher and better than ourselves.

Our great values, namely, truth, goodness, and beauty - themselves forms of harmony and ultimately one and single harmony - are, as it were, beacons pointing for us the way to Absolute Harmony - God.

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