UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

GOD, MAN AND THE ABSOLUTE

GOD, MAN AND THE ABSOLUTE

by

F. H. CLEOBURY, PH.D.

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers), LTD.
LONDON : NEW YORK : MELBOURNE : SYDNEY

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE FLEET STREET PRESS
EAST HARDING STREET, E.C.4

CONTENTS

PREFACE

FOR some forty years there has been a reaction in this country against that type of philosophical thought which we associate with the names of Green, Caird, Bradley and Bosanquet, and which is sometimes referred to as British neo-Hegelianism. For a shorter period there has also been a reaction against what is usually called Liberal Christianity. The connexion between the two reactions is seen from the use of "immanentism" as almost a term of reproach by conservative theologians.

This book is the result of a conviction that the time is now ripe for a reconsideration and defence of the out-moded Oxford Idealism. In particular it endeavours to show that a number of doctrines which are usually associated in men's minds with this Absolutist philosophy are not organically connected with it, are not really implied by it. This is of special interest in connexion with that theological reaction to which I have just referred. The writer's special province, however, is metaphysics, and he makes no claim to be a theologian.

The main argument of the book reproduces the substance of a thesis which was accepted by the University of London for the Doctorate of Philosophy. This has, however, received certain additions, notably a section in the chapter on Moral Philosophy, certain reflections arising from Father Mascall's recently published book *He Who is*, and the final chapter.

F. H. C.

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ABSOLUTISM

A MAN'S views as to the nature of the process by which men can acquire metaphysical truth must inevitably affect his method of exposition, and as it seems to me that such truth, if it can be reached at all, will be reached neither by deduction nor by induction, as these terms are usually understood, I therefore wish to set forth my views in a way which is neither deductive nor inductive.

It is generally agreed to-day that we must give up any such idea as that of Descartes that metaphysics can begin with self-evident truths and proceed by rigid deduction. It is not, however, so generally agreed that the method of induction is equally inappropriate to our subject. The view that induction is inadequate is based on the following consideration. Induction, as usually understood, and as used in the special sciences, makes a rigid division between "facts" on the one hand and theories, hypotheses and laws on the other. The former it treats as given, the latter as constructions to account for the given. But in the final analysis, that is for metaphysics, this separation of fact from theory, of "given" from "construction," is not something which can be assumed; it is, indeed, an important part of the study itself. There are implicit *a priori* elements at the very dawn of the infant consciousness, and in the simplest statement of "fact." From start to finish the process of understanding the world and the self is a process of construction. To grasp reality is actively to think it, not passively to receive it. In this connexion it is relevant to quote a paragraph from a book by the late Archbishop of Canterbury:[1]

> "I remember on one occasion reading an essay to my old master at Balliol, Edward Caird, in which I objected to some recent hypothesis which had been put forward, saying that it was necessary first to be sure of the facts and then to build our theory upon them. To which the great philosopher replied, 'Stop a moment,' as though he had never heard such a suggestion previously, and after profound meditation of some minutes said, 'But it is only to reach the facts that you build the theories'."

So far from there being any agreed "facts" or data from which all metaphysics must start, it seems to me that a great deal of metaphysical controversy is at bottom a controversy over this very question, "What *is* given?" It cannot be assumed, for instance, that by conceiving of a

[1] Wm. Temple: *Christianity in Thought and Practice*, p. 16.

"series of feelings" or a "field of sense-data" or "neutral stuff" we are starting from the simplest facts. These series or fields or what not can only be known to us by ideal construction, a construction no less ideal than that of a self or a soul or a substance. And the test of such a construction, and of the metaphysic based thereon, will be its final coherence.

It is not my purpose to discuss the Coherence Theory of truth. I am only concerned to indicate the distinction between the metaphysical method of coherent construction and the inductive method, as the latter is usually understood. The Coherence Theory does not, as I understand it, necessitate the view that reference to the "given" can be dispensed with. C. R. Morris, it is true, seems at first sight to interpret the theory in this radical way in the following passage :[1]

> "The Coherence view . . . maintains . . . that our acceptance of facts as facts depends upon our systematic theory, and not *vice versa*. For this reason a capacity to comprehend "facts" cannot ultimately be accepted as a test of the truth of a systematic theory."

But in a later passage he makes it clear that by "fact" he means something which is expressed in a judgment or proposition. He does not deny that "there are final, incorrigible, immediate apprehensions which are not and cannot be stated, and that the scientific thinker can be shown to take account of these."[2] He only means, I think, that once we attempt to express in a proposition what we take to be "given," we have made a construction which can be challenged. He does not deny that something *is* given. The truth seems to be that although for God there is no element of "sheer" or "brute" fact which just has to be accepted, yet for finite thinkers their very finitude requires that there shall be an element which is just "given." For them, coherence is not just coherence of construction ; it is coherence of datum and construction. But this is not induction as usually understood. For the datum element and the construction element are in such vital unity that it is difficult to say, "Just here is datum and just there is construction." Indeed, our knowledge that experience consists of datum and construction is itself a construction, and to decide just what is datum and what is construction is a further piece of construction.

The method of metaphysics, then, would appear to be the method of analysis and coherent construction. If the formal objection be made that by such a method one might arrive at a number of world-views, all equally coherent, all-inclusive, systematic and generally satisfactory, and that there would therefore be no reason for choosing one rather than another, we can surely, in the present state of metaphysics, plead forgiveness if, with a shrug of our shoulders, we promise to consider that difficulty if and when it arises. Meanwhile most of us would be

[1] C. R. Morris: *The Idealistic Theory of Knowledge*, p. 185.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

willing, at least we hope so, to go to the stake for *one* metaphysic which solved all our puzzles and called forth our love and our worship.

To say that coherence is, in the final analysis, the test of metaphysical truth, is not to deny that when working in this or in that portion of the field we may employ deductive reasoning or proceed in a way which is scarcely distinguishable from scientific induction. The metaphysician has just as much right as the mathematician to say that if *this* is true then *that* must inevitably follow, or that if we take "a" and "b" and "c" to be facts, then a certain general proposition would, if true, account for them. Coherence as a method need not be sharply separated from deduction or induction. All that we need hold is that it, rather than either of them, must be regarded as the general method of metaphysics.

To return to my starting-point, it will now be clear that it would be self-contradictory for me to try to proceed deductively, to try to start, that is, from agreed truths and to proceed by rigid inference to a triumphant demonstration of conclusions. Equally impossible would be an attempt to point to certain agreed "facts" as a basis for induction. We are left, then, with the method of coherent construction, and if the coherence view is correct one ought, broadly speaking, to be able to begin the construction equally well from different points; all that matters is that it shall be completed. But since in one book one cannot hope to deal with more than a small part of the construction, and since the essence of the method is that the parts are not convincing, nor, indeed, intelligible, apart from the whole, one must of necessity give an outline of that portion which it will not be possible to construct in detail. The difficulty of metaphysics lies very largely in this, that two people often do not really mean the same thing by a certain concept, even if they agree on a verbal definition. It is never, therefore, a waste of time, it is never irrelevant, for an exposition in any part of the field to be preceded by a brief indication of the writer's conception of the nature of the whole. I propose, therefore, now to state the background against which the special problems which will follow will be considered.

I will begin by explaining my attitude towards the views of those Theistic writers who deny that they are metaphysical Idealists, and describe themselves as Realists. I will try to state the issue as I see it by making a statement which may provoke disagreement but which I shall try to justify. It is that the essence of the controversy between metaphysical Idealism and Realism is brought out by the question "Would anything exist or be real if there were no consciousness, human or Divine?" This statement of the issue would probably not be challenged by Idealists, or by Realists who were not Theists. But Theistic Realists would probably demur. Let us consider each in turn. To Idealists it would seem clear that the concepts "existence" and "reality" must be explained in terms of the concept "consciousness" or the concept "experience" in such a way that it would follow that if there were no conscious beings of any kind, human or Divine, there would be nothing at all. I am bound to confess, in spite of all the refutations of

Idealism which I have read, that I am completely incapable of attaching any meaning to the notion of an existent or a subsistent or a real which no one, God or man, is conscious of. As I see it, Reality must be concrete, and a conscious whole—subject together with object—is the most concrete and therefore the most adequate basis for the beginning of metaphysical speculation. Whether even this, if it is a *finite* subject-with-object, is an abstraction from concrete Reality, is a subject for metaphysical inquiry, but to regard any part of, any abstraction from, the subject-object whole, such as a material object or a universal, as having being in complete separation from the whole, to regard a sensum as having being apart from a sensing or a thought apart from a thinking, seems to me to be the hypostatisation of an abstraction.

Many Realists, too, would accept my statement of the issue, for they are prepared either to regard "existence" and "reality" as ultimate indefinable concepts or else to define them without reference to consciousness. They would answer my question with a simple "yes." But a Theist who regarded himself as a Realist, however, might deny that my question represented the real issue between Idealist and Realist. He might say "I claim to be a Realist and yet I would answer your question in the negative. For since the Universe depends upon God for its existence, nothing could exist or be real if He did not exist. If, therefore, to use the phrase in your question, there were no Divine consciousness (which hypothesis, since God is conscious, would be the hypothesis that there is no God) then clearly nothing could exist. But I am a Realist, not an Idealist, because I hold that God's creating and sustaining of the Universe is not merely a matter of His knowing it or thinking it. 'To be' cannot be *defined* as 'To be known by God'."

One question immediately presents itself. Does the Theist who calls himself a Realist believe all existent and subsistent being to be an object of the Divine consciousness or not? If he says "not," then his God is sustaining or creating the Universe with some degree of absence of mind, presumably because He, like us, is incapable of attending to too many things at one time. The crude anthropomorphism of such a view must surely be rejected by any philosophical Theist, or for that matter by any Christian who believes that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowing it. The Realist-Theist must surely therefore be in agreement with the Idealist to the extent that he regards everything that exists, subsists or belongs to Reality as *in fact* an object of the Divine consciousness.

But can he stop there? Surely he cannot seriously regard the fact that God completely knows His Universe as a brute fact, a mere "accident" as the logicians say. Surely he cannot say "It is of the very essence of the Real Universe that God should create and sustain it, but it is only an accident that He is completely aware of what He is doing." The real being of the Universe, and of all that therein is, may not consist *merely* in its being an object to the consciousness of God, but it must be *at least* that. The meaning of the concept "To be" may not be exhausted by "To be known by God," but it must include it.

Now if this be conceded, if, that is, all Theists must surely hold that all that is must be present to the Divine Mind, it seems to make for clearer thinking if the term "Idealism" is explained as I have explained it, so that all Theists can be classed as Idealists. In suggesting this, I am not merely concerned with the affixing of labels; that is a matter of small importance. But it is my deep conviction that the most important line of demarcation between modern thinkers is that drawn between those who would answer in the negative and those who would answer in the affirmative the question with which I opened this discussion—between, that is, those who do and those who do not believe that Reality is, and must be, known in its absolute completeness by an actually existing Supreme Mind. From the metaphysical standpoint the differences between Theists are so unimportant, relatively to their agreements, that the placing of all Theists in one metaphysical class seems to me desirable, even though this may mean giving the term "Idealism" a somewhat wider meaning than has been customary.

The whole basis, indeed, of the controversy between Realist and Idealist has been somewhat altered since the days of Berkeley and Reid. Many Absolutists or "Objective Idealists" do not find it necessary to challenge the Realist's analysis of the knowledge of finite beings. They can readily concede that the existence of material objects and the subsistence of universals do not depend on their being known by finite beings. It is necessary to emphasise this, as one still comes across passages which reveal the writer's assumption that all Idealism is Subjective Idealism. For instance, G. H. Hardy, in *A Mathematician's Apology*, tells us that "Pure mathematics . . . seems to me a rock on which all Idealism founders: 317 is a prime, not because we think so, or because our minds are shaped in one way rather than another, but *because it is so*, because mathematical reality is built that way." A modern Idealist can readily agree with what Professor Hardy says about 317. The only difference that I can see here between Professor Hardy's view and mine is that he presumably regards the phrase "because it is so, because mathematical reality is built that way" as an ultimate indefinable, whereas I would interpret it in terms of the Divine awareness. My interpretation secures the objectivity of the facts about prime numbers as surely as his.

I mention this matter of the objectivity of modern Idealism because it is important to my argument to remove any impression that I wish to class Theists with Subjective Idealists. I now propose to indicate the line of approach which distinguishes Absolute Idealism from ordinary Theism. Idealism has been described by one of its most distinguished modern exponents as the doctrine that:

> "All the materials or data of reality consist of *experience*, experience being provisionally taken to mean psychical matter of fact, what is given in immediate feeling. In other words, whatever forms part of presentation, will or emotion must in some sense and to some degree possess reality and be part of the material of which reality, as a

systematic whole, is composed; whatever does not include, as part of its nature, this indissoluble relation to immediate feeling, and therefore does not enter into the presentation, will and emotion of which psychical life is composed, is not real."[1]

The second or negative part of this passage might be taken to mean, although I should not think that Professor Taylor did mean this, that there are certain things which, since they do not stand in the indissoluble relation mentioned, are not "real." They have, that is, some kind of being, but not real being. Subsequent discussion will, I think, show that such a view would be contrary to Absolutism, which teaches that "everything that is is real so long as you do not take it for more than it is."[2] Ordinary language, however, does suggest that there are two sorts of things, real things and unreal things, or again that there are existent things and non-existent things. Napoleon was existent, for instance, while Mrs. Gamp's friend Mrs. Harris was non-existent. I think, however, that those logicians are right who insist on recasting the form of sentences of this type in a way which avoids the suggestion that existence and reality are attributes.[3] I should myself prefer, therefore, to restate the second or negative part of Professor Taylor's description of Idealism and to say that the Idealist, when he is, as a metaphysician, weighing his words carefully, and when he uses such terms as "the non-existent," "the unreal," "nothing at all," means "not a part of presentation, will or emotion, not an element in the experience of, or an object of cognition to, anyone whatever whether animal, man, angel or God."[4]

The description of Idealism which I have just quoted carefully avoids the suggestion that it is only objects of cognition which are "the data of reality." It admits that whatever "forms part of" emotion or will must also be part of the data. But questions immediately arise when we consider this description. If we are going to include in the Real something which is not "before the mind" but only "in the mind" to use Bradley's terms, it would seem that we cannot limit our concession to emotion and will. The Idealists of the Berkeley school tended to identify the data of reality with what was "before" a mind, what was presented to, or cognised as an object by, a mind; at least, that is the plain meaning of "*esse est percipi.*" Such a view has at least the merit of being clearly defined. But once we begin arguing that there are feelings and conative tendencies "in" my mind of which I have not been explicitly aware but which have been "there" all the time and which must therefore be admitted to be part of the "data of reality," it is very doubtful whether we have a right to stop there. For can we reasonably

[1] A. E. Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, 1st edition, p. 23.

[2] B. Bosanquet: *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 240.

[3] *See* Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica*, Vol. 1, first edition, p. 69, and Russell's *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, chapter xvi.

[4] I have not here distinguished between the real and the existent, as the point under discussion does not require this distinction.

refuse to call real anything which is implied by, or must be postulated to account for, the course of the actual cognitions of living beings? There is that realm to which modern psychology has called attention, that of unconscious mental processes. There is that in our experience, again, which, if Kant was right, must be present as the very condition of there being any experience, namely a certain categorical structure and a formal ego. We are certainly not attending to these at every moment of our existence and yet the Kantian view requires that they are "there" all the time. Again, if we cannot adequately describe, or at any rate explain, our experience without speaking of universals and values, have we a right to deny that these too are real?

It would almost seem at first sight that the modern Idealist, in his desire to do justice to these considerations, must give the word "experience" such a wide meaning that in equating reality to experience he will not be saying anything very important. If by "experience" we mean not only conscious experience but also all that is implied by what anyone has ever been or ever will be conscious of, it begins to look as though the controversy has become a mere matter of words. Such a use of "experience" might well satisfy a realist; it would even allow of the independent reality of "matter" if such a conception were needed to account for human cognitions.

The Idealist cannot, in fact, afford to depart from the original standpoint. If Idealism is to maintain itself as a doctrine sharply opposed to Realism, it must in the last resort equate reality to the *explicitly* cognised. In other words, it must hold that all that is merely *implicit* in finite experience must be *explicit* to an "Infinite" or "Absolute" experience.

There are, of course, grave difficulties to be faced here. For if the Real is the Whole—if, as Idealists like Bradley and Bosanquet insisted, everything that belongs to appearance belongs to reality, if "everything that is is real so long as you do not take it for more than it is"—then in insisting that the Real is the explicitly cognised we are insisting that the Whole is explicitly cognised. But there can clearly be nothing *outside* or distinct from the Whole which can provide a subject which will cognise the Real as object, and the Absolutist therefore seems shut up to the view that the Whole, since he holds this to be a systematic unity, cognises itself both as a Whole and in every detail, that it is completely and explicitly aware of itself. This conception of being-*for*-self, as distinct from mere being-*in*-itself or from being-for-someone-else, is of course characteristic of Hegelian Idealism, and would seem to be an inevitable development of the Berkeleian view if the Real is thought of as a systematic unity. But the notion of an awareness which is just an awareness of itself is a very difficult one. Professor Taylor himself declares roundly that no "cognitive state" ever has itself for its object, and that if *such* a self-awareness is what is meant by self-consciousness then there is no such thing as self-consciousness.[1] And if we reply that this only applies to *finite* "cognitive states," the Realist can retort that we have no right to

[1] A. E. Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 79.

conceive, for the purpose of describing the Real, the Whole, of a type of cognition which differs from human cognition in what seems an essential feature of the latter, namely a reference to an object other than itself.

But however grave this difficulty may appear,[1] some thinkers will still feel attracted to this conception of the Real as a Whole which is a Mind knowing itself completely, a Mind in which the distinction between what is in it and what is before it has been "overcome." There will always, I think, be those who will hold that "to be" means to be an object of some mind's cognition, and that since the Whole *is* a systematic unity it must be *known* as a systematic unity and therefore be known by itself—it must be conceived as self-conscious Mind.[2] To thinkers of this type the difficulty of conceiving of a Whole which is explicitly and completely aware of itself will always seem less than the difficulty of seeing how there can "really be" that which is not present to any mind whatsoever. When we try to conceive of such a complete self-awareness we must, I think, ask ourselves whether this reflexive relation, this relation to itself, in which the Whole stands, i.e., that of being "for itself," completely aware of itself, is the *only* reflexive relation in which it stands. Clearly the Whole can stand in no relation to anything outside or other than itself, for there *is* nothing beyond itself; but does it stand in any other relation to itself, any other reflexive relation, than that of self-awareness? Before we answer this, we must repeat the point which we have already made that it is one thing to say that to be is to be the object of some cognitive state, but quite another to say that to be is *only* to be the object of some cognitive state. To say that a material object would not be a material object unless it were perceived by God is not to say that its being *is* just this being perceived by God. Does the One Mind for which all things *are* merely *think* them into being? I do not think that the Idealist view really requires us to reply in the affirmative. God's relation to the world and to Himself must be cognitive, but it is not for us to assert that it is *merely* cognitive.

We have already found it necessary in our exposition of Idealism to refer to Infinite or Absolute Mind. The belief in One Mind, whether we call it God or the Absolute, seems to be the result of accepting Idealism (in the broad sense in which I have used the term so as not to exclude any Theist) and of holding in conjunction with it certain views as to the unity, consistency and coherence of all that is. We must briefly touch on these concepts.

The concept of unity is closely related to those of consistency and coherence. Let us look for a moment at the concept of consistency. The Absolutist, it seems to me, assumes that we are capable of making

[1] We shall return to this difficulty later. *See* p. 18.

[2] It is clear, I think, that anyone holding the view that to be is to be *for* someone, that someone must actually be aware of it, must hold that any true statement about possibilities, capability or potentiality, and any hypothetical statement, must in the final analysis be interpreted as a statement about what is actually present to some mind whether finite or infinite.

a true synthetic *a priori* judgment, to use Kant's phrase, to the effect that the real is consistent with itself, or "harmonious." Nothing that can be truly said about what really is can contradict anything else that can be truly said about it. Is this a statement about our experience of the real rather than about the real itself? Clearly not, for our experience is not free from contradiction. It is not impossible for men to believe what is self-contradictory; it is not impossible for the real to *appear* contradictory. What is impossible is for men who have become aware of the inconsistency in what has hitherto appeared to be real to hold any longer that those appearances *are* "true of the real." The moment I am conscious of a contradiction in my beliefs, I see that in some particulars they are *merely* my beliefs and do not reflect the reality. At the heart of the distinctions of true from false, reality from appearance, there is the conviction that the real is consistent with itself whether it appears to be so or not—whether our experiences are contradictory or not.

We can therefore claim to know that the real is self-consistent; at any rate, we know it in the sense that if we do *not* know it it seems futile to profess to know anything. It may be added that if the Real is harmonious and self-consistent and if it is conceived as an Absolute which is entirely "for itself" or explicitly aware of itself, it would seem to follow that this harmony or consistency must be an object for the Absolute contemplation.

The brief outline of Absolutism so far given has assumed that if the Whole is to be conceived on Idealist lines it must be conceived as one Mind rather than many minds. The conception of unity can be approached from various angles, but the Absolutist is perhaps on his strongest ground when he points to the fact that all advance in a special science is an advance in the discovery of the systematic unity of its subject-matter. To enunciate a few fundamental principles and "explain" what would otherwise be brute facts by deducing them from these principles is the aim of pure science in every department, and in so far as this is not done and we are still confronted by masses of facts which have to be merely accepted and which are not seen to be implied by basic principles, we feel that work has still to be done. But this spirit which demands, and which has to a great extent discovered, systematic unity cannot be satisfied with such a unity *within* each of a number of isolated departments of knowledge; it demands a system which unites them all. Nor can it be satisfied with having discovered a few fundamental principles so long as these are unconnected. Even if all facts could be explained by deduction from two principles, we should still demand that the two should be seen to imply each other or both be derived from *one* more fundamental principle still. I am far from suggesting that the demand for unity stated just in this way is a demand which could be satisfied just in this way; for that would be to imply that the Real can be adequately described in terms of "principles" and their implications. But I think that the Absolutist is essentially right in his conception of the nature of the task of metaphysics, whether or not his own performance of the task is satisfactory.

He is right, that is, in trying to conceive of the Whole as a systematic unity, and to interpret the "parts" in their relation to the unity as conceived.

To say that the Real is a systematic unity is to say that it is coherent. I should use "coherence" for the mutual implication, or at least the mutual relevance, between part and part and between parts and Whole. Consistency, as we have seen, is that positive state of a Whole which is negatively described by the phrase "not self-contradictory."

It would seem, then, that Absolutism can be regarded as a synthesis of two conceptions, that of the Real as "for" a mind or minds, and that of the systematic unity of the Whole. It is not merely that the conception of systematic unity makes us drop the alternative "or minds" from the first of these two conceptions; it is not, I mean, that we take our conceptions of the Real as mental and as systematic unity, and by blending them argue for one rather for many minds. It is rather that by conceiving of the Real as One Mind we get a more thoroughgoing unity of differences than by conceiving of it as any other type of concrete unity which we have experienced. An aggregate has a certain unity, a machine a higher type of unity, a living organism a higher type still and a "mind," especially when with the Idealist we mean by "mind" the subject-object whole, the highest that we know. That is the Absolutist's justification for asserting that the Real is to be conceived by analogy to Mind; an aggregate of minds would clearly not meet the demand, not merely because it would be an aggregate, but because it would not have the systematic unity of one Mind.

It is this demand that the Real must be a systematic unity and that it must be "mental" which provides the Absolutist's justification for holding that the difficulty mentioned on p. 13, the difficulty of conceiving of a mind or a cognitive state which has itself for its object, is not an insuperable objection to his system. It may be true that *we* cannot conceive of a cognitive state without thinking of something which is other than that state and which is *given* to it as its object of cognition. And indeed Absolutists agree that the objects of the knowledge of finite intelligences do not depend for their existence on their being known to these intelligences. The Absolutist is an epistemological realist where finite knowledge is concerned. But the demand that the Real shall be a systematic unity seems to rule out the possibility that the object which the One Mind knows is a sheer "other" to it, since both Mind and Object belong to this real unity. The Absolutist is bound to think of the dualism of subject and object as ultimately "overcome." The Absolute is an absolute because the relativity of knowledge—the relation of subject to object—is somehow transcended in it. It seems necessary to postulate that in the case of a Divine Mind there is no object confronting it as something given, something with which it enters into external relations.

A similar conclusion is reached from a different consideration. Just as the Absolutist claims to know that the Real is consistent, so he claims

to know that it has an adequate explanation, reason or ground. To say that it is consistent is to say that it is logically possible. To say that it has an adequate ground is to say that it is ontologically possible. In both cases he argues that what *is* must be at least possible. In the first case we are concerned with *what* it is; its attributes must be consistent with each other. In the second we are concerned with the fact *that* it is; this too must be at least possible, and it follows that if we could know the real completely we should know *how* this is possible. But as there is clearly nothing *outside* the Whole, the Real, to explain it—to account for it or to be its ground—we seem shut up to the conclusion that a complete knowledge of the Real would include the knowledge of the ground or sufficient reason for its being; any suggestion that it might not have been would be seen to be absurd. In other words, a complete insight would see not merely the ontological possibility of the Universe but its ontological necessity. The existence of the Whole, the Real, the Absolute, would be seen to be no accidental accompaniment of its essence, as *appears* to be the case with the existence of finite beings (I do not, of course, imply that it really *is* the case even with finite beings). In the case of the Absolute, essence must involve existence, or, to use Bradley's terms, the "what" must involve the "that."

This argument is quite different from Anselm's Ontological Argument. It is one thing to say that God sees the necessity of His own being, but quite another to say that *we* can see that a being possessing Divine attributes must necessarily exist. As Mr. Mascall has rightly insisted,[1] St. Thomas Aquinas's argument that God's essence necessarily includes existence is quite different from Anselm's invalid attempt to pass from abstract quality to concrete being by discursive reasoning. St. Thomas's argument is in fact a perfectly valid inference from contingent being to necessary being. The Idealist Logic as expounded by Bradley and Bosanquet is in its own way the rejection of any such attempt as that of Anselm or Hegel[2] to get flesh and blood out of an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories." For by insisting that the real subject, as distinct from the grammatical subject, of every sentence without exception is concrete Reality, it never *has* to get back to flesh and blood from abstractions for it never leaves the concrete reality. It begins and ends with concrete being, and as with St. Thomas's argument, it proceeds from contingent being to necessary being.

Since, then, the Real is necessary being, it follows that if we could know everything that is to be known about being as a whole, we should not be confronted by any brute fact which just *happened* to be and which might, for all we could see, *not* have been. Any philosophy which thinks of the Real in terms of Mind or which thinks of the ground of all things as of the nature of Mind, must hold that the object contemplated by that Mind is not, even in the smallest detail, brute fact or merely "given." Our consideration of the concept of ground has therefore led us by a

[1] E. L. Mascall: *He Who is*, pp. 36-37.

[2] I refer to Hegel's famous attempt to pass by reasoning from Logic to Nature.

different road to the same conclusion as that which we reached when considering the concept of unity, namely that the relation of the One Mind to its object is not such as to admit of that dualism which obtains between finite subject and object. Our difficulty, it will be remembered, was that the Idealist conception of being as being-for-mind led to the apparently absurd conception of a cognitive state which thought itself and nothing but itself—absurd because the essence of cognition is awareness of an object other than the awareness itself. But our discussion of unity and ground has now led us to question this otherness so far as the Whole is concerned. If the Whole is Mind, there is nothing outside the Whole or Mind for it to know. And if an ultimate dualism is to be rejected the world known by God cannot be merely "given," cannot be a second fact, a sheer other. And if the Whole contains its own ground the same conclusion must be drawn—a complete insight will be confronted by no objects which are just "there" to be accepted willy-nilly. Wholeness, unity, ground—all point the same way. If the Universe can be grasped by Mind at all then that Mind will experience no sheer dualism which denies unity and no sheer contingency which denies rationality.

The Realist, of course, can argue that these considerations only drive more nails into the Idealist coffin. If the identification of being with being-for-mind, combined with a belief in the systematic unity and self-groundedness of the Real, leads to the absurd position that a mind can just know itself, then it is time that we gave up one at least of these premises, and preferably the belief that all that is is explicitly present to some mind. The Absolutist's answer is that we must distinguish between the subject-object relation with which Epistemology is concerned on the one hand, and the self-notself relation with which Psychology and Metaphysics are concerned on the other. Even in the Absolute we have to think of a distinction between subject and object, between knower and thing known, for in the Absolute, as Bradley insisted, distinctions are not "lost." It is sound doctrine that every distinction in Appearance is present in Reality. The Absolute is not an abstract unity, an abstract identity; it is a concrete unity of differences, the differences being held together in such a way that their plurality does not contradict their unity. It is one thing to say that for the Idealist subject and object are as necessary to each other as are the shape and the stuff of a piece of matter, and that just as there can be no shape without something that is shaped and no stuff without *some* shape, so for Idealism there can be no subject without an object and no object without a subject. It would be quite another thing, and false, to say that for Idealism there is no distinction between subject and object.

But if subject and object are distinct, how can the Absolutist conceive of a Mind which is "aware of itself and nothing but itself?" His answer is this. We must try to conceive of an epistemological object which is *not* a metaphysical notself, to think, that is, of an object which contains not a single element which is just "given" or presented as a brute fact. It contains nothing which limits or thwarts, nothing of which the Divine purpose (to speak anthropomorphically) is *forced* to take account and to

which it must adapt itself. The Absolutist view of the Divine Mind conceives of God as having that complete knowledge of the ground of all being which makes the object known the *expression* of will rather than, as in the case of finite beings, an obstacle or potential obstacle to the expression of will. In the Absolute, knowledge and power are not ultimately distinguishable. *We* sometimes say "I know how to do it but I have not the power"; but even in our case it is doubtful whether this way of putting it is quite accurate. If we have not the power we *must* be ignorant at some point or other. Increased knowledge brings us increased control over nature, and it would seem that perfect knowledge would mean perfect control. The Absolute experience must be conceived as an energy which creates, wills or controls—to put it in human terms—its objects-of-knowledge, in contrast with *our* experiences, for which the test for the reality of a thing is that it shall confront us from without and makes us take account of it. But in willing or creating its objects the Absolute distinguishes object from subject, and it is not therefore true to say that the Absolute is like a "cognitive state which has itself for its object."

The relation of Idealism to rationalism is so intimate, and throws such light on the nature of both, that I must here discuss it in a little more detail. Let us return to our statement that the Universe, or the whole of being, or Reality, is known to be self-grounded, since it must have a ground and there can be no ground outside the whole. We say "ground" rather than "reason" when we wish to emphasise that we have in mind something objective. This should not, of course, be necessary, as the essence of rationality is objectivity, but there are some to whom the word "reason" may have a subjective flavour, and it is important to avoid ambiguity. The concept of ground includes, of course, teleological conceptions—final causes, ends or values, but is in itself broader. The relation of a ground to that which is grounded in it is the relation of premise to conclusion, but it is an objective relation; it is the relation of the premise-fact to the conclusion-fact, not a relation between things "in our heads."

To doubt that for everything and every event there is a ground is, just as surely as in the case of doubt concerning the consistency of the Real, to open the door to a complete scepticism in which all serious thought about anything whatever is futile. If the tiniest event can happen, if the most trivial fact can *be*, just for no reason at all, then the Universe is irrational, human reasoning being an activity which happens to have, or rather to have had up to now, a certain utility over a limited sphere of experience, but which it is futile to trust outside these limits or even within them. If, for instance, a flash of light could suddenly occur in empty space for no reason knowable by either man or God, or if something could create itself out of nothing, then clearly we should be living in a universe to whose behaviour reasoning could be no safe guide.

It may be said in passing that the truth of the Principle of Sufficient Reason is unaffected by any use made by physicists of the Principle of

Indeterminacy. The most that the physicist can say in this connexion about any physical fact is that he knows of no ground for it, and can deal adequately with very vast numbers of such facts by the mathematics of probability. This does not prove that each individual fact has no ground or reason. You may be able to forecast very accurately the percentage of railway travellers who will leave their umbrellas in trains, but this does not prove that there is no psychological cause for each of such absent-minded actions. Indeed, I am not sure that the theory of probability does not in this instance *need* the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Why may we expect *a priori*, and why is it verified *a posteriori*, that other things being equal an equal percentage of English railway travellers will forget their umbrellas over two equal periods? Surely the answer is that there is no reason why the percentages should differ. But is not this an *appeal* to the Principle of Sufficient Reason?

The bearing of the Principle of Sufficient Reason on the problem of freedom will be discussed later, but it may be said here that the heart of the problem is that you cannot assert freedom at the cost of surrendering the Principle. If you attempt this, you are left not with freedom but with blind chance. If your character is not the ground of your action you are not free. To deny the Principle is to despair of the problem, not to solve it.

A ground is not the same as a cause. A cause of an event precedes it in time, whereas the ground of a whole series of events of which each is the effect of the preceding one and the cause of its successor, is certainly timeless. If one doubted the Principle of Sufficient Reason one would have to doubt whether those sequences which we call cause and effect are anything more than chance sequences. One would have to admit that it may be pure chance that event A, such as the pulling of a switch, is followed by event B, the lighting of the bulb. Event A has always, so far as we know, been followed, *ceteris paribus*, by event B, but this would be no reason for expecting this particular sequence to happen in the future. The whole of inductive inference depends on the assumption that there *are* grounds for all events and facts, and for all sequences in Nature. We clearly have no ground for arguing from the past occurrence of a sequence to its future occurrence unless we believe that the sequence has an objective ground which is timeless. Apart from the Principle of Sufficient Reason, scientific induction and prediction are invalid.

We have insisted that if we are to think seriously at all, we must hold that if only we could arrive at a *complete* knowledge of Reality, a knowledge, that is, of all Being both as a whole and in all its detail, we should know its ground. Every sincere question beginning with "Why?" including the question "Why is there a Universe; why is there any Reality?" would be answered. I do not mean that this last question would be answered just as it stands, for all serious thinkers know that a questioner sometimes has to be shown how to get beyond the point of view from which the question was asked. But this *is* to answer the question. Although, then, we might, if we could reach a higher standpoint,

have to frame the Principle of Sufficient Reason rather differently, we can be quite sure that the intellectual demand upon the Universe which we endeavour to express by the Principle, is a valid demand, and that the human mind's eternal "Why ?" will not be finally rejected by Reality, will not, that is, be met with "For no reason at all." Even now we can perhaps say that the value and truth of the Principle lie in what it denies rather than in what it affirms. It denies that to an Experience capable of grasping the Whole, the Real, there would be sheer data, i.e., things or facts which must just be accepted. To complete Intelligence there is no arbitrariness, no contingency.

The two principles, that Reality is self-consistent and that it is self-grounded, that it is logically possible and that it is ontologically possible, are both rooted in an even more fundamental principle, namely that Reality is not intrinsically or objectively mysterious. There really *is* an answer to all serious questions. To us, life is full of mysteries, i.e., apparent contradictions and apparently ungrounded or brute facts. But this is only because of our limitations ; "we know in part," as St. Paul put it. A complete experience of Reality must necessarily be an Experience which is not confronted by any unanswerable questions, any mysteries. This is the core of that aspect of human faith which we call rationalism. The rational man, whenever he is confronted by mysteries, i.e., by contradictions or arbitrarinesses, looks for an "explanation." The whole assumption behind the belief that explanation is in principle possible, that appearance is appearance *of Reality*, is that mystery is a *subjective* grasp of the Real and that Reality is not objectively mysterious. To be rational is to believe implicitly, and to be a rationalist is to believe explicitly, that although our finite minds are inadequate to the task, Reality does not in principle oppose any final obstacles to rational inquiry.

We are now in a position to examine the relationship between Realism, Idealism and Rationalism. Let us ask how an Idealist and a Realist, both of whom claim to be Rationalists in the sense just explained, can respectively fit their rationalist creed into their general metaphysical construction. If we define Idealism in the way I indicated at the outset, so as to include all Theists in the class of Idealists, we can say at once that an idealist or theistic approach to metaphysics is perfectly compatible with Rationalism. For the Theist, to say that Reality is self-grounded and consistent means that that is how it is viewed by God who *is* Reality. In other words, when he says that the real Universe is rational, he means that its rationality as a systematic Whole is actually being experienced. The process therefore whereby a man's increasing knowledge, widening experience and deeper insight enable him to reconcile what has hitherto seemed to him to be contradictory and to account for what has hitherto seemed to him arbitrary, by bringing more and more of it under ever wider generalisations and thus seeing farther into the systematic unity of the Real, is a process whereby his mind grows into ever-increasing likeness to, or union with,[1] the actual mind of God. There is in principle

[1] The relation between the concepts "likeness" and "union" will be discussed later.

nothing to set limits to the process. We are of course limited by the limitations of our species, and there may be finite intelligences whose mental processes are as much in advance of ours as ours are in advance of those of the lower animals, but there are no limits to the power of conscious experience *as such* to experience Reality through and through, for there is an actual Experience which *does* so experience it.

The faith of the rationalist, then, which is the driving force of all science and all philosophy and which alone can justify faith in the common reason of humanity, in free discussion and in democratic institutions, is perfectly compatible with Theism. But is it compatible with a non-Theistic Realism which affirms that Reality—the Universe of all Being in its systematic completeness—is not *actually* but is only potentially the object of a complete experience?

Now anyone holding such a belief, it seems to me, has only two alternatives. In the first place he may explain his rationalist creed not as a belief that the Real has certain objective characteristics, namely self-groundedness and self-consistency, but rather in a pragmatic way, as the working hypothesis that there is no limit to the process of finding reconciliations and grounds. Now the objection to this is the objection which must be pressed against any form of Pragmatism which offers itself as a full statement of the *meaning* of truth. If we cannot hold that the Universe has certain qualities objectively and intrinsically, any attempt to forecast the course of our experience of that Universe is futile. If, for instance, I do not hold that the Universe has some objective quality which *guarantees* that as my experience of that Universe grows it will appear ever more and more self-consistent, then any expectation on my part that my growing experience will be an experience of more and more self-consistency is mere optimism.

The only other alternative open to the non-Theistic rationalist is to say that the terms "self-consistency" and "self-groundedness," when applied to Reality, stand for some objective characteristics which Reality actually possesses. Now let us examine this carefully. It is only of the *whole* system that these qualities can be predicated, for all our experience goes to show that any experience of *part* of the Real in ignorance of the rest is an experience containing mysteries. There is, moreover, no *a priori* reason for holding that a partial experience need ever be free from mysteries. This holds equally of the physicist and the philosopher. Newton's laws explain, i.e., supply a ground for, countless laws of less generality and countless facts which would otherwise be brute facts; but they themselves are brute facts of which we do not know the ground. The same is true of Einstein's law of gravitation. And as for contradictions, an obvious instance is the case of light. To explain certain phenomena it must be regarded as corpuscular; to explain others, as wave motion. The philosopher is equally faced with a Universe which he has to accept as a brute fact, and as for contradictions, one need only mention the difficulty of reconciling those facts of life which support an optimistic interpretation with those which tend to induce pessimism.

Now from the point of view of the non-Theistic Realist, Reality consists of two classes of entities, conscious minds and things which are not conscious minds, and he holds that things can be intelligibly said to have certain qualities and relations whether any conscious mind is aware of them or not. Moreover, he does not believe that all the qualities of the non-mental portions of Reality are in fact known by any mind, i.e., actually present to any mind. It seems to follow inevitably from this view that the most powerful intelligence existing in the Universe, whether this is human or some superior intelligence such as an archangel's, is a "term" standing in a knowledge-relation to the rest of the Universe which constitutes a second "term." This knowledge-relation is for the Realist an external one, i.e., the fact that the mind stands in the knowledge-relation to the object is no part of the essence of the object.

Now from this point of view there is clearly no reason for holding that even the most powerful intelligence will ever, or can ever, advance to a *complete* realisation of Reality. For if a certain quality can be real without being an element in any experience, and if in fact it is not an element in any experience, there is no sure ground for holding that in principle it is capable of being, let alone that it must sooner or later become, an element in any experience.

But if it is only *as a whole* that the real Universe is rational, i.e., self-consistent and self-grounded, and if there is no reason for holding that any mind does or will or even *can* know it as a whole—know it completely—then what for us is the difference between a rational Universe and an irrational one? To assert that the Universe is rational but is bound to appear irrational to everyone in it is scarcely a serious contribution to Philosophy.

We must be careful here not to overstate our case. We are not at this point trying to prove that the Universe is rational or that there is a God. We are merely pointing out that broadly speaking there are two types of theory of knowledge, the one tending to rationalism and an Idealist-Theistic conclusion, the other to a non-Theistic Realism which is open to the charge of irrationalism. The choice, that is, seems to be between on the one hand regarding the growth of finite experience as a process of increasing union with a complete Experience of Reality which is actual and for which there are no mysteries, and on the other hand regarding it as a matter of entering into external relations with a Real which need never yield all its secrets to mind because it is independent of any mind whatsoever. I do not think I am unfair in denying that the latter view yields us a rational Universe.

I must now mention the subjects which I have selected for more detailed treatment, since they are of immediate concern to the Philosophy of Religion. When we consider the relation between finite and Absolute experience, the first problem which naturally arises, I think, is this. Each one of us appears to himself to be an entity with an existence in some sense separate from other people and from the Absolute. Now if the Absolute is an experience which is not myself, how can it be the

Whole, for the Whole must *include* myself? I am far from suggesting that this problem has escaped notice in the past; indeed, it lies so near the surface that that would have been impossible. But although this is so, and even if it be said that the problem which I have just mentioned is in fact and in intention the main problem which Absolutists have been attacking and that it is therefore impossible that I can have anything fresh to say, I would still press for a hearing. For Absolutist writings are by no means of the clearest, although Dr. Broad is going too far when he says that they often "seem to start from no discoverable premises, to proceed by means of puns, metaphors and ambiguities. . . ."[1] No attempt therefore to set out clearly some of the assumptions of this school will be entirely wasted. But it is not only a question of obscure *writing*; the causes of obscurity lie deeper. One feels that at some early stage in their philosophical studies these writers acquired a point of view which separated them from ordinary men and that they had become unconscious of this by the time they wrote their books. They used therefore a language which conveys little to ordinary men, and, what is worse, they tended to use ordinary words with extraordinary meanings. I can think of no other explanation of the remarkable fact that on the one hand we have a school of philosophers of unquestionable genius and insight, and yet on the other hand we have a Professor of Philosophy of London University who, writing of the fundamental conception of this school, tells us that:[2]

> "neither Bradley, nor Bosanquet, nor any of this school of Idealist Logicians, has ever succeeded in making clear what exactly is meant by the principle of identity-in-difference upon which the metaphysical logic of the Idealists is based."

My excuse for writing on this particular topic is that I have succeeded, I think, in attaching a meaning to the logic of identity-in-difference. I am, of course, far from suggesting that I have succeeded in grasping something which distinguished modern writers have found baffling, for I readily admit that my own interpretation of this aspect of Idealist Logic might well be regarded by a full-blooded Absolutist as an anæmic affair. But it does seem to me that there is a real need for someone to try to interpret that fundamental logic of Idealism in what I might call the modern manner. Speaking broadly, a change has come over the method of expounding metaphysics in England in recent years, and it is, I think, true to say that most writers nowadays follow the example of Dr. Moore and Mr. Bertrand Russell and make a determined effort to be intelligible. Critics of Bradley have charged him with covering obscurity of thought with fineness of writing, and although I think the charge is unfair I agree that it has been a disadvantage to Absolutism to have been expounded by men who aimed at, and certainly had a gift for, fine writing.

[1] C. D. Broad: *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*, preface, p. lii.

[2] S. Stebbing: *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, preface, p. viii.

There is need for a type of exposition, therefore, which eschews eloquence, metaphor and poetry and which aims first and foremost at clarity. The foundations and the steel framework of the edifice must be logic; the beauty must come, if it can, later. My aim, then, in writing of this fundamental problem of Absolutism, this problem of the separateness of souls which is at bottom the problem of identity-in-difference is to lay bare certain arguments on which I believe Absolutism to depend but of which I know of no thorough treatment in the modern manner either by way of defence or attack.

This particular topic is therefore a treatment from a certain admittedly narrow point of view of high matters which are usually, and more popularly, approached from other angles. I must frankly confess that I have neither the inclination nor the equipment to approach them from the standpoints of Mysticism, Hindu philosophy or of Theosophy. There is, I feel, a need for a sympathetic study of Absolutism from the standpoint of a twentieth-century Western mind.

After dealing with this first problem I propose to discuss its bearings on certain other problems of Philosophy. In particular, I believe that our conclusions in the matter of identity-in-difference throw valuable light on the question of freedom. Throughout this book emphasis will be thrown on the contrasts between finite and Absolute experience, and our conclusions with regard to the contrast between the finite experience of separateness and the Absolute experience of inclusiveness and unity will enable us to attempt some constructive work with regard to the contrast between man's experience of freedom and the Absolute experience of complete system. We shall finally be led to study the contrast, indeed the contradiction, between our experience of error and evil and the notion of an experience which includes ours but yet is free from error and evil.

CHAPTER II

FINITE SEPARATENESS AND ABSOLUTE UNITY

WE are now to discuss the most fundamental of the problems of the relationship of the finite to the Absolute experience. We are to consider the fact that on the one hand each of us experiences himself as an entity in some sense separate from his fellows and from the Absolute, if Absolute there be, and that on the other hand we are bound to conceive of an Absolute as a centre of experience which is essentially one and inclusive, and therefore not really separate from the finite centres. We are to consider the contrast between the finite experience of the separateness of souls and the Absolute experience of the union of souls.

The metaphysic of the Absolute is, of course, bound up with the Idealistic Logic, and the discussion which immediately follows will be mainly concerned with Logic. References to Ethics and Psychology will not, especially in later parts of the discussion, be excluded, but as a matter of method I propose to make Logic the basis and to appeal to these other studies when the argument demands. My aim will be to examine the basis of the Absolutist philosophy and thus to discover to what extent, if at all, it enables us to see that the contrast in question is no sign of a root contradiction.

One of the commonest, and at first sight the most damaging, of the criticisms of the Logic of writers like Bosanquet and Bradley is that it tends to make a human being a mere adjective of the real, and denies to him substantive existence. This objection is stated by Bosanquet himself as follows:[1]

> "If every judgment in ultimate analysis qualifies an existing reality by an abstract universal, it is impossible to arrive at a plurality of individuals which can be ultimate subjects of predication, because no combination of abstract universals can confer the uniqueness which alone distinguishes an individual. There can therefore be but one ultimate individual to which all predicates must belong; and this doctrine is Absolutism."

It seems to me that in this chapter Bosanquet accepts the criticism that his Logic does not permit of a plurality of ultimate subjects of predication. But he denies (pp. 260-262) that the uniqueness of an individual cannot be conferred by universals.

[1] B. Bosanquet: *Logic*, second edition, Vol. 2, chapter viii, pp. 251-252.

The passage can, of course, only be treated against the background of the Idealist Logic as a whole. One of the most important features of this Logic is its doctrine of the Judgment. While differing profoundly from both the traditional Logic on the one hand and symbolic Logics such as that of Bertrand Russell on the other, it presents features in common with both. It agrees with the traditional Logic in regarding all judgments as in a sense predicating an attribute of a subject, and yet it can quite easily find room for relational judgments such as "A is north of B" without distorting them in the way that traditional Logic does. For it insists that all judgments without exception predicate a universal content of Reality, of Reality as in some sense a unitary whole. Reality is the ultimate subject of every judgment, and *the whole proposition*, whether categorical or hypothetical or disjunctive, whether singular or particular or universal, whether subject-adjective or relational, is the predicate. The real Subject of the judgment, as distinct from the grammatical subject, is Reality.

The essence of the doctrine is, I think, Bradley's distinction of the "what" from the "that," which seems to correspond more or less to the distinction of essence from existence. Curiously enough, this fundamental doctrine of Absolutism seems to be an insistence on a point on which critics of Absolutism like Bertrand Russell and A. J. Ayer have themselves insisted—the Kantian contention that existence is not an attribute. It is because Bradley saw so clearly that existence can never be a predicate that he insisted that we must find room for it in the real Subject. Bradley and A. J. Ayer are at one in regarding the grammatical sentence as a metaphysical delusion and snare, for the latter tells us that:

> "those who raise questions about Being which are based on the assumption that existence is an attribute are guilty of following grammar beyond the boundaries of sense."[1]

But the conclusions drawn by the two schools, the Absolutist on the one hand and the logical positivist or philosophical analyst on the other, differ as the poles. The situation is not without an element of humour. For whereas the logical positivist accuses the despised metaphysician of being misled by the structure of the grammatical sentence into a belief in a mythical "substance," the Absolutist, for his part, can regard positivists and pluralists as themselves misled by the grammatical sentence—misled into believing that since each sentence has its own grammatical subject the Universe must consist of separate substantival bits corresponding to those grammatical subjects.

Be that as it may, Idealist Logic puts the whole of the "what," everything that can possibly be said about anything, into the Real Predicate, and this means, of course, that the Real Subject cannot be thought of as having being without the Real Predicate, just as the shape of a material object would have no being were there no "matter." (I use

[1] A. J. Ayer: *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 34.

capital letters to distinguish the real from the grammatical subject and predicate.) There appears, of course, to be a contradiction between the statement that the Subject is Reality and the statement that the Subject, without the Predicate, would stand for nothing. But the contradiction would be claimed by the Idealist Logician to be merely verbal, and inherent in the very fact that the grammatical sentence is inadequate to the deepest metaphysical analysis. On this view no word—at all events no word with any connotation—can be consistently used to stand for the Real Subject, since all connotation belongs to the Real Predicate. If we are to say that Reality is the Real Subject of the judgment we must explain that by "Reality" we are trying to indicate its existence without its essence. We can *think* of existence without essence although there cannot *be* any existence without essence. Perhaps it would be better to say that the Real Subject, on this view, is "That which is" rather than "Reality," remembering that for the Idealist Logician "That which is" refers primarily to the given here and now which is the substratum of every predication and the sole guarantee that *anything* is real. According to Idealist Logic of this school the judgment always means "That which is has such and such qualities and relations."

The essential thing to notice here is the connexion between this doctrine of the Judgment and Monism. If the Real Subject were identified with the grammatical subject, if for instance the Real Subject of the sentence "The boat is on the sea" were "The boat," the question of the unity or plurality of the Universe would remain an open one, for the sentence would be a statement about *part* of the Universe, namely the boat. But in insisting that the Real Subject is always the same—"That which is"—one is on the way to Monism, for the plurality can only find a place in the Predicate ; the unity is substantive and fundamental, the plurality derived and adjectival. The next step is to say that for Idealism the Judgment,[1] a living concrete unity of judging act and judged content, does not describe or copy a Real from which the person judging is separated, but *constitutes* the real-for-him. (This only applies, of course, to the concrete act-with-content; its expression in a proposition is a much poorer affair.) The real-for-me is what I "realise" by an act of judgment. Now this judging act-with-content is a unity. One is led, therefore, to stake one's metaphysic on the organic connexion between the unity of him who judges, the unity of the judging and the unity of "that which is," of the object judged. This is Idealist Monism.

In the light of this conception of the nature of the judgment, we are now in a position to examine the passage from Bosanquet with which we began this chapter. The argument amounts to this. If the Absolutist is to hold that in any sense a plurality of individuals exists, this plurality must be guaranteed to him by what, on *his* theory of the judgment, is the Real Predicate. For him the Real *Subject* is, so to speak, only the

[1] The word "Judgment" is sometimes used for the act of judging and sometimes for the judged content. These are separable for analysis but inseparable in existence, and so the word often means both at once.

existence-aspect of the content which is the Real *Predicate*. The subject has no features, not even plurality, in itself, for features or qualities or relations are supplied by the Predicate. But, the argument proceeds, the Predicate consists of universals, and no universal or complex of universals can confer substantive individuality. This means that plurality of being is always and only an adjective or quality of the One Real.

It may be objected here that not all judgments predicate *universals* of the Real, for if I say "That is St. Paul's Cathedral," and point to it as I speak, I am predicating a particular. The Idealist Logician would deny this. The Real Subject of even this judgment, he would say, is Reality, for the whole of Reality with its stupendous richness impinges on me, is guaranteed to me, by that tiny area of immediacy which I call the "here and now." The Idealist Logic declines to make a fundamental distinction between what the traditional Logic calls a singular judgment and what it calls an abstract generalisation or universal judgment. They are *both* singular since their Real Subject is this particular concrete Universe of Reality. They are both abstract as regards their real Predicate, for the Predicate does not supply the unique "this" but only "thisness," which is repeatable and universal. All buildings have "thisness," a definite spatial relation to other buildings. The *unique* "this" cannot be conveyed by any word or any abstract idea ; one can only, as it were, point to the focal point, the here and now, where we meet Reality. And we each meet it alone.

I think that the connexion between the Idealist doctrine of the Judgment and Monism, as seen in the insistence that plurality is only an adjective of substantive unity, can be illustrated from the early cognitive experience of an infant. At some moment he must become aware for the first time of an extended patch of colour. At a later moment he may become aware that there are two patches making up a larger patch. This is, we will suppose, practically his whole Universe at this rudimentary stage of his development. Now in Bradley's language the whole patch, consisting of two smaller patches, is a "that" and has a "what," this last being the two colours which distinguish the two patches. It is a presented real ; it is *one* real simply because it is cognised in one cognition as one object ; and it has a certain nature, a nature which includes plurality and differences and similarities and relations. It would not be true to say that since there are two patches distinguishable within the one patch, there are *two* "thats" each of which has its own "what." There is only one "that" ; the twoness falls within the content, within the real Predicate of the judgment, within the "what." All plurality is but an adjective-complex of substantive unity.

But if all plurality, according to this criticism of Absolutism which Bosanquet accepts and defends, is adjectival of the one Real, it will follow that if Mr. Jones is to be called a distinct individual, it cannot be because he is a separate substance, if by "substance" we understand a really separate point of existence. Only the Whole can be such a substance, can be an individual ; only the Whole can be self-dependent and

self-explanatory. It is only a matter of convenience that "Mr. Jones" is the subject of the grammatical sentence.

Returning once more, then, to the quotation from Bosanquet with which we began this study, we can see the justice of the criticism that the Idealist Logic renders it impossible to arrive at a plurality of individuals which can be "ultimate subjects of predication." But we have yet to consider the further statement that "no combination of abstract universals can confer the uniqueness which alone distinguishes an individual." The Absolutist is not out to deny facts, and he presumably feels the thrill of unique individuality and the rich concreteness of life as much as any "individualist." Are there any grounds for holding that his Logic is adequate to such experiences?

For Bosanquet, individuality and substantiality are matters of degree. To say that a person or an animal or an insect is an individual, or a substance in the metaphysical sense, is never entirely true and is less true the lower down the scale of existence we go. And such truth as the statement has is not based on the fact that there is, in the case of these beings, a separate substance underlying its adjectives and relations, for there is no such separate substance. The true view, he holds, is that the finite "individual" is a complex of adjectives of the Real or Whole. Moreover, the qualities which constitute my "nature," which make me what I am, derive their content from relationships to what I regard as other than myself. Everything that I am seems bound up with my cognitive, affective and volitional relationships to other things or other people. Now an individual's degree of individuality and value, Bosanquet holds, is proportional to his richness of content, to his harmony and self-consistency, to his unity and self-dependence. And since perfect self-consistency and absolute all-inclusiveness—perfect self-consistency *because* absolute all-inclusiveness—are found in the Absolute alone, it follows that the individuality and substantiality, as well as the value, of an "individual" are proportional to the extent to which his experience, cognitive, affective and volitional, approaches that of the Absolute.

But a question of great importance arises here. What do we mean in this connexion by "approaches"? If the finite person stood apart from the Absolute as a separate entity, the approaching would be merely an increasing of the degree of *similarity* between him and the Absolute. But, as we have just seen, Absolutism demands that he shall be considered in some sense an *adjective* of Reality, and therefore the "approaching" is something more than a matter of increasing similarity. It is to this question that we must address ourselves.

But we must here suspend the main argument while we discuss something which we shall need before we can push it further, promising to resume it on p. 39.

The analysis of his awareness of a physical world in time and space convinced Kant that an essential feature of that awareness was a unifying principle which he called the synthetic unity of apperception or the transcendental unity of self-consciousness or, finally, the transcendental

ego. The reality of this ego is not guaranteed by any one sensation or feeling or bit of experience; it is involved in the nature, in the very possibility, of the whole. This, indeed, is what Kant meant by "transcendental." Kant's contention can be summed up very briefly in a quotation from Professor Pringle-Pattison:[1]

> "Mere change or mere succession would be . . . first A, then B, then C, each filling out existence for the time being and constituting its sum, then vanishing tracelessly to give place to its successor—to a successor which yet would not be a successor, seeing that no record of its predecessor would remain. The change, the succession, the series, can only be known to a consciousness or subject which is not identical with any one member of the series, but is equally present to every member, and identical with itself throughout. Connexion or relatedness of any sort—even Hume's association—is only possible through the presence of such a unity to each term of the relation."

Those of us whose thinking is usually accompanied by visual imagery quite naturally tend (judging from the frequent use of the word "centre" for ego) to picture the relation at any moment between this transcendental ego on the one hand and the stuff of experience or objects of knowledge of which it is the unity-principle on the other hand, as the relation between the centre of a circle and the circumference. Just as a centre presupposes a circumference and a complete circumference presupposes a centre, so there can be no unity-principle or transcendental ego without the stuff or objects and no stuff or objects without the ego. It is, however, of some importance at this point to draw attention to one difference between our visual imagery and the doctrine which it illustrates. Whereas in geometry we never, when we say "centre," mean the centre *and* the circumference, we do sometimes speak in Philosophy of the ego or self when we mean not only the centre or unity-principle but the centre together with the stuff of experience. For the sake of clarity I propose therefore to speak of the "abstract transcendental ego" when I mean the centre or unity-principle considered in abstraction from that of which it is the unity, and of the "concrete ego" when I mean this abstract transcendental ego together with the stuff or objects of which it is the formal unity.

Each of these conceptions, however, is to be distinguished from a third conception—the empirical ego, which, in a study of an Absolute Idealism based on Kant, it is necessary to explain. The distinction between the formal ego and the material elements in experience I propose to mark by the use of the terms "abstract transcendental ego" for the first and "matter" or "stuff" or "objects" of experience for the second. It will follow that the "concrete ego" is the transcendental ego plus the stuff of experience. But the self which is popularly distinguished from other people, or the self which in certain psychological and ethical discussions is distinguished from the notself, I propose to call the empirical

[1] A. Seth (Pringle-Pattison): *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 11.

ego or the empirical self. I am not here suggesting that Psychology, Ethics and common sense agree as to the meaning which they attach to the concept of the self. I am only saying that for our present purpose we can class all these meanings under the term "empirical ego." Nor do I wish to be understood as endorsing all Kant's doctrine of the empirical ego. I merely use this term as conveniently expressing the fact that the distinction which I draw between "myself" and the world which is other than me, or between "myself" and "other people," is a distinction *within the stuff* of my experience; it is quite a different distinction from that which I have drawn above between the form and the stuff, between the abstract transcendental ego and the objects, of that experience. Whereas this latter distinction, as we have seen, can be visualised as the distinction between the centre and the circumference of the circle, the distinctions with which Psychology and Ethics and common sense are concerned can be visualised as a dividing up of the circumference itself. The division of the circumference is not, however, a fixed one from the standpoints of Ethics and Psychology, for the "self" can be conceived as extending itself to embrace the family and the tribe and so on, and Bradley tells us[1] that "it is far from certain that at some time *every* feature of the self has not, sooner or later, taken its place in the notself" and *vice versa*. But the whole scene of this ebbing and flowing is the stuff of experience; the self and the notself, in this use of the words, are each some portion of the circumference, some particular feelings or volitions. But the abstract transcendental ego is the unifying principle of that whole within which the distinction of empirical self from notself breaks out. As centred in my transcendental ego, i.e., as concrete ego, I think of my empirical self as just one person in the class of persons, as just as much "*external*" to my transcendental ego (if this objectionable term be allowed for the moment) as are those "other persons." The abstract transcendental ego is that aspect of the concrete ego which is always the knowing subject, whether the empirical self is, at the moment, or is not among the objects occupying the focus of attention. The abstract transcendental ego is that which *must* be as the condition of there being any experience at all; its reality is guaranteed not by any one part of the field of consciousness but by the nature of the whole.

It would seem that the chief difficulty of this view is that of the relationship of transcendental ego to empirical. The fact is, each one of us can regard himself from two points of view. I am just one person in a world of persons—an empirical ego. But I am also concrete ego, a mode of the Absolute, and from *this* point of view the material universe and other men and even my empirical self seem as it were merely "for me." From the first point of view solipsism is refutable, and has even been regarded as self-contradictory. The argument, which has been put with great force by Psychologists, is that a child only becomes aware of his empirical or his bodily self by a process in which it is set over against and contrasted with other selves. Self and notself are correlatives and

[1] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, second edition, p. 78.

solipsism is therefore nonsense, since an essential feature of notself is "other persons." This line of argument is valid so long as we ignore the second point of view to which I have just referred, a point of view which dates from Descartes. That the subjective twist given to Philosophy by that thinker's *"Cogito ergo sum"* argument has led to grave errors I readily admit, but I believe these errors to be but separable accidents of one of the most valuable contributions to philosophical advance that has ever been made. It is one of my deepest convictions that a philosophy which recognises the legitimacy of *both* these ways of looking at life, even if at the end it is still faced with mysteries, is profounder and truer than any philosophy which achieves an appearance of clarity and simplicity by refusing to admit the second of the points of view. With regard to this particular question of the refutation of solipsism, it must be remarked that the last word cannot be with the psychologist. He is doubtless right in saying that in actual fact we did not *first* become directly aware of ourselves and *then* infer the existence of other people, but that we became aware of both together and each by means of the other. But the real problem is not to trace the method by which our beliefs were acquired but to justify them to ourselves now. Here I claim that that awareness of my "concrete ego" is *logically* prior to my belief in other people's existence, and that I can only justify the latter belief by inferences of an analogical character, practically certain but not having the formal certainty of a deductive inference. But this "I" which is logically prior is not merely the empirical ego. It shares the detachment of the Absolute; in a sense, as we shall see, it *is* the Absolute.

My exposition so far may be regarded as Kant interpreted by Green. This line of thought is not prominent in Bradley, and in my view the latter's work loses in clarity through his preference for a psychological rather than a strictly epistemological approach to the problem of the self.[1] Chapter 9 of *Appearance and Reality*, dealing with the relation of self to notself, ignores the Kantian analysis completely. With regard to his attack on the reality of the self it need only here be said that he was insisting that the Absolute must not be considered as having the limitations of a finite self, nor can it be conceived as a group of selves. This does not involve the rejecting of the transcendental ego. There is one passage, however, in *Appearance and Reality* which does at first sight appear to be a rejection of the Kantian epistemology, and this we should now examine briefly. On p. 279 there occurs the following sentence:

> "The psychical series, we may be told, demands as its condition a something transcendent, a soul or Ego which stands above, and gives unity to, the series."

This view he then proceeds to attack. If his attack is merely directed against any notion of a soul as a "thing" which is transcendent in the sense of capable of existing without any of the feelings in the series, I

[1] It will be seen as I proceed that this is not the only point on which I prefer Kant's treatment to Bradley's.

have nothing to say. But the inclusion of the Ego in his attack, although he here seems to use it as a synonym for "soul," gives us pause.

A close examination of the whole passage, however, reveals to us, I think, his essential agreement with Green, although there are undoubtedly differences of emphasis and of interest. What he is attacking is "something transcendent." Now the formal ego of Kant and Green is certainly not transcendent; it is immanent, for it is the inherent condition of there being any experience. When therefore Bradley asked how, if an ego was transcendent, it could give unity to the series, the point could be conceded at once. But it left the transcendental ego untouched. As everyone knows, Kant's "transcendental" and the theologian's "transcendent" mean quite different things.

I think Bradley more or less concedes (on p. 283) the point for which I am contending. He is arguing that our awareness of an ego, our awareness of the continuity and identity of a psychical series, must itself be a term in the series. He will not allow that there is any psychological datum which is not an "event," i.e., one term in a psychical series. But this apparent surrender to Hume it at once qualified by his insistence that while it must be *at least* an event in the series of events, it is also (in accordance with his [Bradley's] theory of the Judgment) taken as ideal, i.e., its "what" is torn from its "that" and referred away from its occurrence as a psychical event. We refrain from pressing the question who is to do the "taking" and the "referring away" if not an ego of some kind, and we content ourselves with the following quotation from this exposition:

> "Continuity and identity, the other world and the Ego, do not, as such, exist. They are ideal, and, as such, they are not facts. But none the less they have reality, at least not inferior to that of temporal events."

This is quite orthodox idealistic monism after all. "They are ideal" but "they have reality." If we want reality we must have the existent *and* an ideal construction. Bradley realised as clearly as Kant did that the identity of a series could not be *merely* an event in the series. His apparent disparagement of the Ego was only an insistence (and I do not think Kant would have objected) that the discovery by the series of its identity as a series, or the reflection by the series on its identity as a series, is always an event in the series however much *more* it may be.

No modern treatment of this question of the transcendental Ego can afford to neglect the criticism by the late Professor Alexander in his famous introduction to *Space, Time and Deity*. His criticism is of special relevance to the problem with which I am dealing, for he rejects not only any transcendental view of the Ego but the root idea, very vital to our discussion, that the self can be an object to itself.

On p. 16 he tells us that "my experience declares the distinct existence of the object as something non-mental." Here he is analysing the

ordinary perceptual experience of an individual. By "distinct" he here means that the object does not depend for its existence on the fact that someone is being aware of it. At first sight this statement appears to contradict Idealist doctrine, but there is in fact nothing in it to which the modern Idealist need object. For in the first place, as I have already suggested, modern Idealism is realist in its Epistemology so far as the finite consciousness is concerned, and in the second place Alexander was using the word "non-mental" in a special way.

For Alexander, the mind as we experience it is a "continuum of mental acts" (p. 17). His fundamental contention is that whereas we *contemplate* objects we "enjoy" our acts of contemplation. We never, that is, have the mind—the mental act or continuum of mental acts—as an *object*. The reason why I know that I have, or rather am, a mind is not that my mind is an object to me; it is that when I am aware of objects, when I am "contemplating" objects, I "enjoy" the contemplation of the objects. By "enjoy" Alexander seems to mean that we live through, or in, and that we *consciously* live through or in, the act of contemplating the object, but that the awareness of the contemplating is quite different from the awareness of the thing contemplated; it is a different *kind* of awareness. This "enjoying" is an awareness which is not an awareness of an object but only of the subjective act or continuum of acts. The continuum of these enjoyed acts of contemplation is, according to Alexander, what we mean, or rather what we ought to mean, by the mind.

It is clear, I think, that since he *defines* "mind" and "mental" in terms of this continuum of awarenesses alone, and not including the objects contemplated, then in saying that the objects are non-mental he is doing no more than using his terms consistently and is in no wise contradicting Idealist doctrine. The Realist cannot effect a short and easy refutation of Idealism by pointing to the fact that in seeing a stone we are cognising a non-mental object. The modern objective Idealist does not claim that objects of consciousness are "in the mind" or are "mental" in the sense in which, for the Psychologist, ideas are "in the mind." The metaphysical standpoint must be distinguished from the psychological, and in fact it may be said that the root fallacy of the metaphysics of the Locke-Berkeley-Hume line of thought is that it is not metaphysics but psychology of cognition, valid for certain purposes but not valid in the final metaphysical construction. If an Absolutist in the stress of an argument slips into the statement that the physical world or the generalisations of science are "in the mind," he means by "mind" something much more than Alexander means here. To revert to, and to amplify, our earlier illustration, it may be said that when an Absolutist speaks of "in the mind" in the way just described, he means by "mind" what I have called a "concrete ego," i.e., the centre of consciousness, symbolised by the centre of the circle, plus the act or event of contemplation, symbolised by the area of the circle, plus the objects of contemplation, symbolised by the circumference or part of it. I have never been able to understand why Dr. Moore, in his famous *Refutation of Idealism*,

thought that Idealists did not distinguish between the sensing and the sensum, the perceiving and the percept, the judging and that which is judged, nor why he thought that Idealism would cease to appeal if this distinction was grasped. At all events, his refutation did not touch *Objective* Idealism. Modern Idealists have certainly not overlooked the distinction. Surely it is the Idealist of the Kantian succession, more than anyone, who has insisted that even the most primitive consciousness cannot be accurately described as the "occurring of sensation," but that there is in it judgment, the categories and the subject-object distinction.

Now Alexander, following Lloyd Morgan, has analysed experience into an -ing and an -ed. There is the act of contemplation of which we are aware by "enjoying" or consciously living through it, and there is the object contemplated, whether particular or universal. But he has omitted the Ego. It is as though he conceded that the circumference of a circle must enclose an area but denied that it needed a centre, although I hasten to add that since he would presumably have refused to agree that the analogy of the circle is a good one in this connexion, I do not intend this remark in itself to be regarded as a refutation of his attitude on the subject ; I am merely concerned to expound the Idealist's view, which I take to be that experience in its cognitive aspect must be analysed into *three* aspects which are illustrated by the circle. The centre is the formal or transcendental ego, the area corresponds to the cognitive relation between knower and known, ego and object, the circumference corresponds to the object-continuum. Views like Hume's or like that expressed by William James in his essay *Does consciousness exist ?*[1] seem to confine experience to the circumference only ; there is no area and no centre ; there is the stream of sensations, imagery or feelings and nothing more. Alexander avoids this extreme by holding that the circle, so to speak, has an area, an enclosed space—an "enjoying" of an act of contemplation which is over and above what is contemplated. But his circle (if he had used such an analogy) would have had no centre, for on p. 17 he criticises a view which regards the mind "as something over and above the continuum of enjoyments . . . an entity superior both to things and to passing mental states." I think it may be assumed that he has Kant's analysis in mind here, for he goes on to refer to this "entity" as "postulated" by those who believe in it—he is aware that they do not claim to any direct experience of it.

Now although Alexander denied that an ego must be "postulated to account for certain experiences," he admitted that the postulation of unseen entities is habitual in science. He argued, however, that these—atoms aud ions, for instance—are conceived on the analogy of something else which *is* known to experience, whereas the postulated ego which is "something over and above the continuum of enjoyments" is "a mere name for something, we know not what." But it is very doubtful, and it has become more so since Alexander wrote, whether it can be claimed that Physics only postulates

[1] James, Wm.: *Essays in Radical Empiricism.*

concepts which are analogous to what we experience, if by "experience" we here refer to sensations, percepts, or memories of such. Some of the concepts of modern Physics are quite incapable of being *imagined*—space-time for instance, especially if it be conceived as four-dimensional, or wave-mechanics. And it seems to me that whereas Physics is compelled to postulate in order to generalise, co-ordinate and anticipate sense-experience, the postulation by Metaphysics of "something over and above the continuum of enjoyments" is even more compelling. I cannot see how there can be a continuum of enjoyments having enough unity to be called a mind but which is nothing but the "enjoyments" of which the continuum is composed. The principle of unity must surely be logically "over and above," although logically involved in, the enjoyments considered as an aggregate. The physicist is compelled by practical needs to postulate ; the metaphysician is compelled by the need to make an intelligible construction. Alexander goes on to say that the mind's "connexion with mental acts must be as intimate as the connexion of any substance with its functions, and it cannot be such as to allow the mind to look on, as it were, from the outside and contemplate its own passing states." The intimacy of the connexion of mind with its functions we readily concede, but it does not seem to follow that the mind cannot know (cannot "contemplate" the fact, to use Alexander's term) that it is a mind and has "passing states." It seems to me that I *do* "look on, as it were, from the outside" at myself and become an object of my own thought. Alexander's contention here, however, is vital to his argument, and his introduction of the concept of "enjoyment" is with this in mind.

He is arguing that although minds are of a higher order of existence than the things they know, yet minds and things are, as it were, co-ordinate. They exist side by side ; things are not subordinate to, or parts of, minds. Now it is in connexion with this contention that he makes his distinction between contemplating objects and enjoying contemplations, and urges that the mind is never object to itself. The argument is ingenious, and it takes us to the heart of the problem with which we are dealing. It is summed up thus on p. 19 :

> "If I could make my mind an object as well as the tree, I could not regard my mind, which thus takes in its own acts and things in one view, as something which subsists somehow beside the tree. But since I cannot do so, since my mind minds itself in being aware of the tree, what is this but the fact that there is a mind, whose consciousness is self-consciousness, which is together with the tree ?"

The essence of the argument is that in knowledge one always knows an object which is not one's own mind. We have already commented on the ambiguity of the word "mind," but for the moment we will not take exception to the realist's assumption that knowing is a relation between a mind-term and an object-term. Alexander has to face the question how, if the thing known is always other than the knowing mind, a mind can know of its own existence. His answer is that the mind

does not know itself; it only "enjoys" itself. This view, I agree, or something like it, is almost inevitable if any form of pluralistic realism is to be maintained. For, as Alexander saw clearly when he wrote the passage, if, to Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith and tree are equally objects, we are in for the distinction of transcendental Smith from empirical Smith; only empirical Smith is co-ordinate with tree, the two being objects distinguished and contrasted within the objective field contemplated by the transcendental Smith. And transcendental Smith tends, as the history of post-Kantian Idealism has shown, to become a centre around which the whole universe revolves. This is to anticipate our argument, but I mention it here to bring out clearly the motive, as I see it, behind Alexander's concept of "enjoyment." I may also point out that it is precisely because the modern Idealist agrees that in analysing the act of knowing we must *always* distinguish subject from object (quite a different thing from distinguishing "mind" from object) that he insists that the Smith who is *always* subject is the transcendental Smith while the objective Smith who is co-ordinate with the tree is "empirical."

Alexander's concept of "enjoyment," then, is his answer to Idealist monism. It can, I think, be pointed out that he is soon up against a difficulty, that of deciding whether we "enjoy" or whether we contemplate as an object the fact of the togetherness of mind and thing. He comes down (p. 21) on the side of "enjoy." "The mind in enjoying itself enjoys its togetherness with the horse." We may surely ask how the awareness of a relation, the relation of togetherness, can be anything else than the knowledge of an *object*. There is, I think, a further objection. Even if I admit that I have a special kind of awareness of my *momentary* act of contemplation, which awareness is not knowledge of an object, surely my awareness of the *continuum* of enjoyments is a mental construction of an *object*. The idea of a continuum of enjoyments is at least as complex a construction as that of a soul or a substance.

I do not think I am mistaken in seeing in Alexander's treatment of this subject a tendency to regard as the valid method of obtaining metaphysical truth a going back behind all mental construction to the raw material of experience, to what we take to be primitive consciousness. If this method is to be followed, all mental constructions alike are ruled out as false. But the essence of rationalism, as we have seen, is that the real-for-me is constructed, actively grasped, not passively received by immediate intuitions. If this is denied, then all constructions without exception which are conveyed to us in words, equally Alexander's with Bradley's, equally Bergson's with Caird's, must be rejected.

This digression from the main argument was necessary because one's view of all the problems discussed in this book is affected by one's decision on the question whether on the one hand the knower and that which is known are co-ordinate, or whether on the other hand the knowing centre is, as it were, the focal point of the whole universe, including the subject-object distinction in its survey just as it includes all other distinctions, all other objects. We must now take up the thread of the argument where we left it on p. 30.

The position when we made our digression into the subject of the ego was briefly this. We had seen that the Idealist Logic explained the individual as in some sense an adjective of the one substantial Real. We also touched on the point that the individuality, substantiality and value of an individual were regarded as proportional to the extent to which his experience approached the Absolute experience. And we saw that the nature of this "approaching" was going to provide us with a very real problem, for it was clearly impossible to interpret it as a matter of an increasing similarity between two separate entities.

The question now before us is that of the relation between concrete ego (as defined on p. 31) and the Absolute, and between one concrete ego and another. For the sake of simplicity we can for the moment narrow down the Universe to two beings and say that it is the question of the relation between Smith-as-knowing-Smith-and-Brown and Brown-as-knowing-Brown-and-Smith, and of the relation between each of these and the Absolute. It will be seen that the first of these relations is far different from the relation between Smith and Brown within the consciousness of Robinson.

There is no doubt that in some sense Smith and Brown are distinct beings, and let it be said at once that our discussion here obviously cannot decide the question whether the individual survives death. Our conclusions, whatever they may prove to be, must be compatible with the fact that I can make the perfectly intelligible statement that I expect to survive next Christmas. In whatever sense, therefore, Smith and Brown are "distinct individuals" and will continue to exist as distinct individuals after next Christmas, they may, so far as our logical or metaphysical interpretation of "distinct individuality" is concerned, survive death. The question of immortality or survival must be reasoned out on other grounds. Smith and Brown are, then, distinct beings. But is the whole of the concrete ego Smith numerically separate from the concrete ego Brown ? If so, it will follow that the abstract transcendental ego of each is also entirely separate and distinct from that of the other, since the abstract egos will be the respective unifying principles of two entirely separate beings.

Complete and entire separation would mean, of course, a monadology of the Leibniz type, and this would immediately raise the problem how two such distinct entities could interact or even appear to interact. Attempts to claim an absolute separation of this kind have, it is generally agreed, broken down, and it is not necessary to treat this extreme view at any length. We can, in fact, regard them as refuted along with the refutation of any purely subjective type of Idealism, any type, that is, which holds that knowledge is an awareness of states of, or sensations or ideas "in," our minds. Theories of this sort can easily lead to a strict monadology, for they regard our knowledge of the outside world as arrived at by juggling with feelings "in" a mind, and by the very use of the spatial metaphor "in" they betray themselves as holding that this "mind" is a sort of "thing" which stands apart from that which it knows.

But since Objective Idealism holds the common-sense view that I perceive the physical world *itself* and do not merely deal with "ideas" which are copies or representations of it in my mind, it must clearly give up the idea of the absolute separateness of souls. For it is not open to the Idealist, as it is to the Realist, to say that we are separate from one another in spite of our knowing the same physical world, for the Idealist holds that the objects which a man cognises are just as much a part of what he is as are his emotions and volitions; subject and object are, in fact, as closely involved as are shape and matter. Emotions, volitions, transcendental ego, material objects—all alike are abstractions from what I have called the concrete ego, abstractions which can be thought of separately but which cannot *be* in separation. If therefore the world which any two beings experience is one and the same world, the two beings, or, to revert to our more exact language, the two concrete egos, cannot be entirely separate. They must overlap, so to speak.

It is my intention rigorously to exclude from my treatment of the subject anything which might be called mysticism, for I am approaching the question from the standpoint of Logic. But there is a passage which states the conception which we are approaching with some force and insight. In Bosanquet's *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, he quotes (on p. 9) from Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience:*

> "I have sometimes sat looking at a comrade, speculating on this mysterious isolation of self from self. Why are we so made that I gaze and see of thee only thy wall and never thee? . . . And then it has fallen upon me with a shock . . . that I *am* in thy soul. These things around me are in thy experience. They are thy own; *when I touch them and move them I change thee.*"

One of the most cogent reasons for rejecting any form of strict spiritual monadology, any form of belief in the entire separateness of spirits, is that the world which we know is no mere aggregate of particulars but, to say the least, contains elements of universality. It is one thing to say that the moon which I see is only similar to, and not identical with, the moon which you see; but it is quite another thing to say that the universal which I cognise is only similar to, and not identical with, the universal which you cognise. So long as one is only thinking of particulars, some sort of case can be made out for the view that the cognised objects are only similar but not identical. One might accept some such view as is put forward by certain Realists, namely that when I see the moon I am cognising a set of appearances or a set of sensa which are not the same as the set which you are cognising. But it is hard to believe that the Law of Gravitation or the basic principles of inference known to me are exactly similar to, but are quite separate and distinct subsistences from, the Law and the principles respectively known to you. At all events, in a metaphysical inquiry based on the conception of truth as a coherent whole, such a belief would be clearly a self-contradiction, and we must therefore pursue our inquiry from the standpoint that

common sense is right in assuming that we all know the same world. As we have just seen, this means that we must assume that souls are not entirely separate.

The question before us, therefore, is whether we can hold a doctrine of the interpenetration of souls without passing from Logic to Mysticism. The answer of the Idealist Logic is an emphatic affirmative, for it puts forward its doctrine of identity-in-difference as just what is demanded by the situation. As I mentioned earlier, I am aware that in the view of certain competent thinkers the doctrine has not been made intelligible, and I do not claim to explain fully what its exponents have understood by it. I am only trying to say what *I* understand by it. On the other hand I am not seeking at this point to say anything really new, for I am trying to bring out what I am sure is in neo-Hegelianism. The fact of the matter is that I have taken considerable pains to worry out, and set in logical sequence, certain considerations which the exponents of Absolutism have, it seems to me, either subconsciously assumed or else thought too obvious to mention, and which Absolutism's critics, so far as I am acquainted with them, have equally ignored. When a subject is so profoundly mysterious any exposition is bound to have an individual colouring, and probably no one's treatment of it would be entirely unoriginal.

The doctrine of identity-in-difference can be traced back to Plato. For Plato, individual horses, for instance, participated in, or imitated, or derived what reality they had from, the one universal horse. Professor Stace goes so far as to say that :[1]

> "In this technical sense the Ideas are substances. They are absolute and ultimate realities. Their whole being is in themselves. They depend on nothing but all things depend on them."

However that may be, what concerns us here is the controversy, which is quite an important one in the history of Philosophy, over the nature of the universal and the class. There have never been lacking philosophers who have felt that fundamentally Plato was right, and that any purely nominalistic treatment of classes is wrong. They cannot regard a class as an aggregate of separate particulars between which there exists an ultimate and unanalysable relation of mere similarity.

It is this notion of similarity which is, I think, the root of the problem, and the best point at which to attack it. The view which the Idealist Logic rejects is the view that when we say that two things are similar, all that we really mean is that the things are entirely separate entities between which there exists a relation of similarity which is as ultimate and unanalysable as relations like "above" and "below." The essence of the Idealist's position is that similarity is *not* an ultimate relation, but that it can be analysed into identity and difference. Two chairs, for

[1] W. T. Stace: *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 187-8. *See* also the passage from Professor Pringle-Pattison quoted on p. 47.

instance, are obviously similar in certain respects. They are, we will suppose, dissimilar in certain other respects, say in colour. Now if we treat the matter from the point of view of the Idealist Logic, we must say that they are *really*, not merely metaphorically, one and identical in respect of the points of similarity. Similarity is a compound of identity and difference.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the close connexion between this way of looking at the matter and the Platonic notion of the relation between the universal idea and the particulars which "participate in" it. The connexion is, however, even closer than I have indicated, for modern Idealists too regard the identity as somehow the basis or the ground of the difference.

To the common sense of the modern man it seems fantastic to describe two chairs in this way, to say that there is really one universal chair which is the reality and that the two particular chairs have only a derived being, grounded in the universal chair. And many critics would add that besides being fantastic it is pointless, and merely a matter of the use of words. It does not seem to lead anywhere ; in the Pragmatist's language it does not "make any difference" ; for no piece of experience, no crucial experiment, could demonstrate that the Platonic way of describing the chairs is "right" and that the common-sense way is "wrong."

It seems to me that this objection must be allowed, *if we take material objects like chairs for our examples.* And the Idealist ought to be willing to concede this since he believes that the concept of material objects existing independent of mind is only a convenient fiction. It really does not matter *how* you choose to regard material objects if they are but useful abstractions from the concrete subject-object whole. The problem only becomes a real one—and this is of central importance to my argument—if we consider it as a problem of the relation between what I have termed concrete egos, and of the relation between a concrete ego and the Absolute.

This is supported by a further consideration. I propose now to arrive at the doctrine of identity-in-difference by deducing it from the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles. Now I have just suggested that the doctrine of identity-in-difference is of little significance or importance when applied to material objects, and if therefore I can show that the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles is, similarly, important with regard to concrete egos and of little importance in the case of material objects, the whole argument will hang together. Actually, I am prepared to go farther in the case of the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles and maintain that it is false in the case of material objects and true of concrete egos. I shall, then, be holding that the doctrine which provides the premise is true of concrete egos only, and that the doctrine which provides the conclusion is significant, and of philosophical importance, in the case of concrete egos only.

Leibniz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles (a principle which McTaggart[1] preferred to call the principle of the dissimilarity of the

[1] J. M. E. McTaggart: *The Nature of Existence*, Vol. 1, p. 101.

diverse) can be stated for our purpose as being the principle that it is impossible for there to be two or more exactly similar things, if by "exactly similar" we mean exactly similar in qualities and standing in exactly similar relations. Now as applied to material objects there are two observations which can be offered about the principle. The first is that it is *in fact* the case that the members of any pair of material objects in the Universe differ from each other with respect to their spatial relations; for the two bodies occupy different points of space and therefore their spatial relations to the rest of the world must be different. But this necessity is grounded on the mere fact that the distribution of matter in the Universe is of an irregular pattern. The second thing, therefore, to be said of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles as applied to material objects is that it is not *necessarily* true, not true, that is, of all conceivable material universes. For it would be possible to conceive, for instance, of a universe of space stretching infinitely in all directions, and entirely empty except for two entirely similar billiards balls. In this case, if there were no absolute direction and no absolute motion, the two balls would be exactly similar with regard both to their qualities and their relations, and yet they would certainly be two and not one, separated as they would be by a space interval.[1]

The principle of the identity of indiscernibles, as I have stated it, is therefore not true as applied to all conceivable cases of material objects in space. We have already suggested that the other principle with which we are here concerned—that of identity-in-difference—is of little philosophical significance or importance as applied to material objects. Let us therefore consider both these principles as far as concrete egos are concerned. I shall maintain in this case that the first is true and the second both tenable and important.

Starting with the first of these principles, let us ask ourselves what would be involved in the statement that there existed two exactly similar persons, two persons whose qualities, histories, relations with other people, were exactly similar in every respect. Let us suppose Oliver Cromwell to be exactly duplicated. Now it is perfectly clear that our supposition involves the duplication not only of Charles I and General Fairfax, but of every other person who had any influence, direct or indirect, on Oliver Cromwell. It presupposes two Stuart periods; in short, two exactly similar universes. These two universes would be entirely ignorant of each other's existence, for since in this universe we have no knowledge of a duplicate universe, the duplicate universe, if it existed, would equally have no knowledge of ours. There would therefore be no evidence in either universe that the other universe existed. There could be no crucial test; there could be no sort of relation between the two. The assertion of twoness, therefore, would be entirely arbitrary.

[1] I have been asked, would not the two balls determine an absolute direction, which would provide a basis for saying that one ball was *the* right one and the other *the* left. I answer, no. The line joining the balls would determine an angle relative to any chosen system of co-ordinates, but the point is that there is no one absolute system of co-ordinates.

If two, why not three, and so on. And as there could be no evidence for the twoness, as there would be nothing which the twoness would be "known as," we are justified in saying that the assertion of twoness would here be meaningless.

The reason why the principle of the identity of indiscernibles is true as applied to the case of persons but not as applied to material objects is, I think, fairly clear. It is that concrete egos, viewed as it were from the inside, are not "in" space—are not separated by spatial relations. Space is not an environment to the ego in the way that it is an environment to his body. Space is a form in which a man's world—a man's system of objects of cognition—appears to him. The question before us, therefore, is whether two concrete egos, two centres of knowledge each unifying a whole network, a whole universe, of spatial and temporal relations and terms related, could be intelligibly said to *be* two if they possessed exact similarity in every detail of these networks. In the case of the universe of two billiards balls in otherwise empty space it is at least conceivable that there might be an experience to which the twoness could be an object. But it seems *in principle* impossible for there to be any evidence whatever for an entire duplication of a *whole* time and space system presented to one centre of cognition. A whole of this sort could not know that it was duplicated without ceasing to be itself. Smith can be aware of the twoness of Brown-with-Jones, or of Brown-with-Smith, but not of Smith-with-Smith.

If we accept the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles as applied to finite spirits we shall tend to accept the Idealist doctrine, so far as spirits—or concrete egos, to use my suggested term—are concerned, that difference is logically prior to distinction, not distinction to difference. It is not because there are two separate and distinct egos that differences become possible between them; it is because there are differences that twoness, that plurality, of spirits is a fact. To many this may appear as logic-chopping, but subtle as is the point at issue and difficult as it is to state, I believe that an appreciation of the Idealist's contention is essential for an understanding of his whole philosophy. We shall have later to consider the doctrine in greater detail, but at the moment we must content ourselves with pointing out the connexion between the principle of the identity of indiscernibles and the Idealist doctrine of the judgment—the doctrine that all finite things are permutations and combinations, so to speak, of universals which are adjectival of the one real. The two doctrines clearly stand together; in both, complete similarity of *content* involves complete identity of being.

Our next step is to show the connexion between the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles and the logic of identity-in-difference. This can be stated as follows. Since we know from the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles that absolute and entire similarity, as between concrete egos, is absolute and entire identity, it follows that *partial* similarity, or what is usually called resemblance, is partial identity, or identity-in-difference. If in respect of their complete similarity two Mr. Browns

would be not two, but one—really and not metaphorically one—it follows that in respect of their partial similarity (their resemblance as men, as Englishmen, as good fellows) they are to that extent not metaphorically but really one, and that their differences are in some sense adjectives of this underlying unity.

It is not, of course, impossible to doubt this. It is quite possible to hold that even if complete similarity is complete identity, nevertheless partial similarity is not partial identity. One could say that two persons are just as truly two whether they are extremely dissimilar or extremely similar. It would be possible to hold that although complete similarity would mean the absence of any ground for predicating twoness, yet once we perceive the slightest degree of difference we have as strong reasons for predicating the entirely separate existence of the two egos as we should have if the degree of difference were very great. I know of no short and easy refutation of this view. But it seems to me to lead to a pluralism which does not explain, but rather explains away, the universal aspect of the real and which closes the door for ever on the possibility of progress in metaphysics. The doctrine of identity-in-difference has at least the merit of suggesting vast possibilities for constructive thought. In particular, it leads, I think, to a profounder and more satisfactory treatment of the question of Divine transcendence and immanence than does this other view; the latter, in fact, has not really faced the question of the meaning of "in" in such phrases as "God in us." Indeed, since its notion of existential distinctness is based on spatial metaphors, its notion of immanence seems to be spatial too. The doctrine of identity-in-difference also, as we shall see, throws light on such problems as that of moral obligation. And it alone can point to possibilities of reconciling our belief in the systematic unity of the Real with our conviction that human beings are in some sense free and responsible beings.

We prefaced this discussion[1] with the statement that since, for Idealism, what a man perceives and thinks constitutes part of what he is, and since he perceives and thinks parts of the real universe and not merely copies of them "in his head," it follows that if we know the *same* material world we must, so to speak, interpenetrate one another. In other words, if we start with modern Objective Idealism we *need* the logic of identity-in-difference. If what I know enters into my being and what you know enters into yours, and if we both know the same world and the same universal truths about it, then we must be identical as well as different. We are identical in so far as we know the same world and the same universal truths about it, and we are different in so far as our experiences of and in the world are different.

So far we have been dealing with the relation of concrete ego to concrete ego. We cannot, however, deal with this convincingly unless we consider the relation of concrete egos to the Absolute. This next step can, I

[1] *See* p. 40.

think, be profitably approached by considering a criticism of Absolutism from the pen of Professor Pringle-Pattison[1]. It is in the form of a criticism of T. H. Green because Green:

> "explicitly identifies the self which the theory of knowledge reveals . . . with the universal or divine self-consciousness,"

and because, according to Green, this ego which the Theory of Knowledge reveals is an eternally complete consciousness which makes the animal organism of man a vehicle for the reproduction of itself. He criticises Green for attributing to an ego which is a mere abstraction "a constitutive activity which is tantamount to creation."

This is, I think, an instance of the need to which I referred earlier of explicitly distinguishing the abstract transcendental ego from that concrete ego which is the abstract transcendental ego together with the stuff or matter or content of experience. For Green never meant that an *abstract* ego, a mere point or centre, was the creative source of all that is. What he had in mind as a creative source was certainly concrete. An abstraction could not be an active spiritual principle.

Pringle-Pattison went on to insist (p. 28) that what Kant was analysing in the *Critique of Pure Reason* was:

> "not any individual mind or consciousness but consciousness in general. . . . The transcendental logic, in a word, is the study of knowledge *in abstracto*. But just because of this perfectly general or abstract character which belongs to the investigation, the results of the investigation must also be perfectly general or abstract."

He sums up his argument in the charge that the Idealist of the type of Green has converted consciousness in general into a universal consciousness. Pringle-Pattison is not here attacking the theory of a universal consciousness as such; he is merely arguing that you cannot start with the theory of knowledge, which is the analysis of *knowledge in general*, and then, without more ado, hypostatise your abstraction, your common feature in all knowing, into a concrete universal knower.

But if my analysis has been correct, Green's assumption has a long history behind it, for it goes back to Plato. The root of the matter is Professor Pringle-Pattison's words "perfectly general and abstract." I am not sure that he is not here assuming what for me is the very point at issue. For the very question before us is precisely this: *Is* humanity a number of persons so completely separate that when we think of their common features we are thinking of something which is "perfectly general and abstract"? Pringle-Pattison himself saw that there was another way than this of looking at the matter. For he says (p. 30) that Green's mistake:

[1] A. Seth (Pringle-Pattison): *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 23.

"is all of a piece with Scholastic Realism which hypostatised *humanitas* or *homo* as a universal substance, of which individual men were, in a manner, the accidents."

If Professor Stace is right[1] Scholastic Realism was here thinking of the relation of *homo* to individual men in a way similar to that in which Plato thought of the relation between any general idea and the members of the class denoted by the idea.

It seems to be as much an assumption to regard Kant's analysis as the analysis of an abstraction—of an "abstract universal" human knowledge—as it is to take it for the analysis of something more concrete and metaphysically fundamental. I am not here concerned with the historical question of what Kant himself intended. I am merely urging that those of his successors who adopted, more or less, his critical analysis but who regarded it as the analysis of the thought-process of a concrete World-spirit as well as of the thought-processes of men, had at least this to be said in their favour, that they had made a synthesis of two very important constructions—a Logic of Identity-in-difference which had its foundations in Plato and a critical philosophy which was the creation of Kant's genius. And when it is remembered that Kant's outlook was influenced by that introspective view of personality which dates from Descartes and which is in contrast to that external treatment of the mind which was so characteristic of the Greeks, it would seem that Absolute Idealism is, fundamentally, a synthesis between a theory of the relation of particular to universal which goes back to Plato and the modern or "inner" conception of personality which became explicitly metaphysical in Descartes but which owes something both to Christianity and to Roman jurisprudence. This reflexion brings us back to our point that although the Logic of identity-in-difference does not illuminate problems of chairs and tables it becomes a vital piece of constructive thought when applied to the relation of concrete ego to the Absolute.

If we now carry the idea of similarity as identity-in-difference to its logical conclusion we must reason as follows. If points of similarity are points of identity, and if each concrete ego is similar to every other in that it is, as it were, centred in a transcendental ego, then concrete egos will all have one and the same transcendental ego.[2] So far as I know, no Idealist has consciously reasoned thus, but it is, I think, his underlying assumption.

There are, of course, fairly obvious objections to this conception. But as I said at the outset, I am not trying to state my argument deductively; I am making a construction which must be judged by its final coherence. It will not be possible to deal with all objections until the whole has been outlined. But we can here touch on the objection that you and I are just as distinct and separate beings if we are in complete

[1] *See* p. 41.

[2] For a transcendental ego is a formal centre, and cannot therefore differ as between concrete egos.

agreement and sympathy as we are if our interests lie in opposite directions and our deepest convictions are in conflict—that our attitudes to life may be so similar as to be indistinguishable and yet your toothache is not mine. The Absolutists' reply is that it is not because we are separate that my pain is not yours; it is because my pain is not yours that we are in some sense separate. If I could, by some perpetual and perfect telepathy, henceforward experience your life exactly in the way that you will do, including your memories of the past, and if you could experience my present and future life and my memories with the same complete similarity of detail, then surely any assertion that we were two would be meaningless. (It need hardly be said that this hypothesis would involve that we should be viewing even "material objects" from the same perspective and that we should therefore have a common "body".) If, again, I am told that to-morrow morning a man will wake up, remember a past life exactly similar to mine and continue exactly as *I* shall continue, what else am I being told than that *I* shall wake up and carry on my life where it was interrupted by sleep? The Absolutist, by replying thus, is insisting that the principle of individuation is in the *content* of experience, and not in the separateness of one transcendental ego from another. I am not, of course, suggesting that any such flowing together of souls actually happens in that state which we commonly call "after death." If—to anticipate later discussion—there is moral value in this very shutting out of other experience which is the necessary condition of finite being, there seems no obvious reason why death need be thought of as terminating it. The Christian doctrine of the value of the individual soul can be as readily interpreted from the standpoint of identity-in-difference as on the theory of separate soul-substance. The question of survival after death must be discussed from an ethical, empirical and pragmatic standpoint.

The common element shared by finite experience is, then, not conceived by the Idealistic Logic as abstract but as concrete. In direct antithesis to the classical Logic, Idealist Logic conceives of the universal as having more, not less, "intension" than any of the individual experiences participating in it. The essence of the neo-Hegelian position is that the universal experience is more concrete than any of the particular experiences which it underlies. It is more concrete because it includes them. There is none of that stripping off of determination after determination, till we reach a pure being which is pure nothing, which is inevitable if we try to reach a final *abstract* universal. What I call my individuality, that which gives me my distinguishing characteristics, is not something which, so to speak, stands outside the Absolute. Considered from the standpoint of the concrete universal, my individuality is an abstraction from the whole. All that I am is in the Absolute. It seems to me that there is a connexion between this conception and that which is suggested by certain results of psychical research, to say nothing of mystical experiences—the notion that the normal function of the brain is not to enable us to remember but to enable us to forget, not to create thought but to sift it. The idea in both these approaches is that we achieve

what we call our individuality by a process not of including but of excluding, and that "attention" is the process of building up an individual thought-world at the cost of shutting out all except what is attended to. The "many-coloured glass" of human life is poorer, not richer, than the "radiance of eternity," which we can hardly think of as white, as Shelley did. That which we exclude, that of which we are subconscious or unconscious, is not the subconscious or unconscious *in itself*, but only in relation to us. As we have seen,[1] Idealism has no room for the subconscious or unconscious in its final construction of Absolute experience. The Absolute is conceived as self-determined Being, not undetermined Being, as vastly more conscious, not less conscious, than finite beings.

The line of thought which we are pursuing deals, then, with the relation between souls in the following way. If we start with two conscious beings, A and B, it is clear that A might conceivably experience the whole of B's life as well as his own, and that B might not be able to experience any of A's except the part common to both. Now if we think of A's experience as including all B's and C's and D's, but of B and C and D as not experiencing all of A's or of each other's experience, we get a simple picture of the kind of relationship which is conceived to exist between finite and Absolute experience. There is a common feature in all, from the Absolute down to the humblest finite centre. And, if we take a general case of experience-inclusions, leaving out for the moment the special problems connected with the Absolute, there might well be the same *a priori* element in all—the categories of time and space and causality, in addition to a vast amount of common matter in the way of scientific law and æsthetic and emotional content. In virtue of all this similarity of content between all these experiences, similarity, that is, as between the including experience and each included experience and as between one included experience and another, the Absolutist pronounces them one and identical, and in saying this he intends no mere *metaphorical* union or identity; he means *real* identity.

It is important to notice that A need not be just the sum total of B and C and D with nothing left over. A's experience might well include vast fields and strange forms of experience of which B and C and D might remain for ever ignorant. Bradley's[2] attitude on this important point seems curiously off-hand. He admits that there is no reason for asserting that there should *not* "be elements experienced in the total, and yet not experienced within any subordinate focus." In other words, he sees no reason to insist that the Absolute is exhausted by its finite modes. But he equally sees "no positive ground for maintaining that the higher experience, which contains and transforms the relations, demands any element not experienced somehow within the centres." But surely the burden of proof lies on him who would assert that the Absolute is a higher unity of concrete egos and *nothing more*. For the problem of seeing

[1] *See* p. 13.

[2] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, second edition, p. 467.

how, by taking a number of finite beings with all their contradictions, incoherences and imperfections, a "harmonious" Absolute somehow results, is difficult enough in all conscience, without the added condition that this must be done with the finite materials alone, so to speak, and with nothing beyond what *they* contribute. On the face of it, the Absolute, although immanent in men, would appear to be also so vastly transcendent that I must confess to a certain sympathy at times with the Barthian theologians when they insist that God is "wholly other." I think Barth is wrong in his main position, but if I had to choose between an Absolute which was merely a transmuted humanity and a Barthian "Wholly Other" I should choose the latter.

I may at this stage be asked why, since I believe in a transcendent God and have carefully guarded against ruling out the possibility of human immortality, I hold to a metaphysical and logical doctrine which is usually associated with extreme immanentism and a disparagement of human hopes of survival. My answer is that one of my purposes in writing this book is to distinguish between what is usually associated with Absolutism and what is really implied by it, and that my belief in identity-in-difference is due to the fact that if it is rejected I cannot satisfy my desire to see Reality as a systematic unity. It is my deepest conviction that Reality must be such a unity, and I would even *define* metaphysics as the science which studies the relation between this unity and the apparent plurality of the universe. At the root of the belief in pluralism there is, it seems to me, metaphysical scepticism. Now it will, I think, make clearer the extreme value and importance of the principle of identity-in-difference if we study a criticism of Absolutism which occupies the chapter in William James's *A Pluralistic Universe*, entitled "Compounding of Consciousness." In this chapter James is very far from *himself* rejecting the notion that a consciousness can have being both in itself and also as a part of a wider consciousness. But he argues that rationalists or intellectualists ought to reject the notion outright, for from *their* point of view there is a contradiction at the heart of the business. He complains that whereas he, with his "will to believe" in the compounding of consciousnesses, had been restrained by these logical or intellectualist objections, his Absolutist friends (p. 197) had disregarded their own "intellectualistic type of logic" and had gaily assumed the compounding in question. In other words, the anti-intellectualist had felt the logical scruples and the intellectualist had ignored them.

His argument can, I think, be fairly summarised as follows. Suppose we have a consciousness which we will call A, whose total object of awareness is exactly similar to the sum of the objects of awareness of three "smaller" consciousnesses, x, y, and z. In other words, let us suppose that every detail of the objects cognised by x, y and z is exactly repeated or duplicated in the objects cognised by A, and that the objects cognised by A are exhausted thereby, so that A experiences all that they experience but nothing else. Now, says James, on intellectualist principles A is not *itself* the sum or compound of x and y and z. He is not here concerned with the question whether what A experiences is identical

with, or is only similar to, what they experience, for even if we insist that the objects known to x, y and z, when summed up, are *identical* with the objects known to A, he would still contend that A itself must not be said to be the sum or compound of x, y and z, so long as we are bound by the "intellectualistic type of logic." A is really, he urges, a fourth consciousness. You can sum the *objects* if you like, but you must not sum the knowing centres, the epistemological subjects. A is as much a fourth "consciousness" as it would have been if the objects known so it were *not* similar to, not identical with, those of x, y and z. The principle of individuation, according to the "intellectualist" logic as interpreted by James, lies in the separateness of the ego, and not in the differences of content or object. Applying this to the whole cosmos, James argues that you can take the Universe in the "each-form" as a number of separate finite consciousnesses, or you can take it in the "all-form"; but if you do the latter, your all-form is just a separate fact alongside of the each-forms and you are therefore worse off than before. Your Absolute, far from unifying your Universe, is a separate fact alongside of it.

The interesting point is that James did not wish to give up the notion of compounding, and as the only logic which he apparently recognised was what he called the intellectualistic type, he felt he had no choice but to scrap the logic and to turn to Bergson. It is surprising that James failed to see that the Absolutists were neither scrapping logic nor relying on the "intellectualistic type" of logic. They were using the Idealist logic. For they too were dissatisfied with the traditional logic—the logic of abstract identity which James had in mind when he spoke of "intellectualism"; they felt that while it might be applicable to things thought of, or symbolised, as being separated by space, it was certainly not applicable to the relationship of conscious centres to each other and to the ground and source of all.

The answer, then, to James, is that we are not confined to a choice between scrapping logic and scrapping the notion of compounding consciousnesses. We can hold both to the compounding and to logic—the Idealistic Logic. To James's argument that A is a fourth consciousness and therefore not a sum we can reply that it is both a fourth consciousness *and* a sum. The higher unity of the Absolute is additional in the sense that it is aware of reconciliation and harmony of which men are ignorant and of much content from which they are excluded. But this additional consciousness must not be thought of as outside or alongside the others. The use of these spatial metaphors is the root fallacy of the logic of abstract identity when it leaves its legitimate sphere of things in space. When an Absolutist writer uses language which suggests that the process by which a finite person passes from ignorance to knowledge, error to truth, evil to good is a process of *entering into* union or identity with the Absolute, he must not be understood as implying that when in the state of ignorance, error or evil the person was an entity standing *outside* the Absolute and possessing attributes not included in the Absolute. Anticipating the later exposition we may

say that phrases like "entering into union," "becoming identical" must in this connexion be understood as meaning the process of growing from less to more of the Absolute experience.[1]

In the chapter on the Compounding of Consciousness to which we have referred James made another criticism of Absolutism the consideration of which will, I think, throw considerable light on the relation of finite to Absolute experience. He says:

> "We indeed differ from the absolute not only by defect but by excess. Our ignorance, for example, brings curiosities and doubts by which it cannot be troubled. . . . Our impotence entails pains, our imperfection sins, which its perfection keeps at a distance."

We shall have to deal with this objection more fully when we come to consider the problems of error and evil. But we can now consider it in a preliminary way.

Bradley, as a matter of fact, had foreseen this objection. In more than one passage, and the same is true of Bosanquet, there is an insistence that all those experiences which flow from our very finitude, from our apparent separateness, are preserved in the Absolute. They are in a sense transformed, but they lose nothing in the transformation; it is the transformation which an isolated sentence receives when it is seen for the first time in the context from which it has been torn. In *Appearance and Reality*[2] Bradley tells us that "the differences are not lost, but are contained in the whole. . . . The self-consciousness of the part, its consciousness of itself *even in opposition to the whole*—all will be contained within the one absorbing experience." Unfortunately Bradley does not maintain this position consistently, for towards the end of the book[3] he tells us that:

> "We have a rearrangement not merely of things but of their internal elements. We have an all-pervasive transfusion with a re-blending of all material. And we can hardly say that the Absolute consists of finite things, when the things, as such, are there transmuted and have lost their individual natures."

One fails to see how, in such a radical transfusion and re-blending, one's "consciousness of one's self in opposition to the whole," will remain as such. If therefore we are to look for the answer to James's objection it is to page 161 rather than to page 469 that we must turn. Can an opposition be "overcome" by addition and without cancellation—which will of course be necessary if the finite is to be "preserved" in the Absolute? Can the Absolute be omniscient and yet include my experience of ignorance and curiosity? Can it be good, or "beyond good and evil," and yet

[1] *See* p. 98.

[2] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 161.

[3] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 469.

include my sin? Can it be free from the limitations of selfhood and yet include my self?

Let us try to state the issue clearly. James's objection is that our very finitude, the very fact that our experience is only a portion of the whole, means that we have a quality which the Absolute has not. Any portion of the Absolute whole experience must, as portion, have a quality which the whole experience lacks. Because I differ from the Absolute by defect I must also differ by excess. Now Bradley, in the first of the passages quoted, in effect denies this and insists that any quality attaching to the part as part is present in the whole. My very opposition to the world, my sense of being "outside" the Absolute is present to the Absolute. But, as we have seen, Bradley insists in another connexion that a finite individual, while himself preserved in the Absolute, is so transfused as to lose his individual nature. Now surely this is to concede James's point that the finite has something which the Absolute lacks, namely the positive characteristics attaching to finitude and human personality. Now it is vital to monism to insist that all our characteristics are found preserved in the Absolute experience; if this is denied, then we clearly are existences *additional* to the Absolute and we are in for pluralism. The problem which we have to discuss, then, is whether finite individuality —the personality and selfhood of a finite being—as well as all the qualities inhering in this finitude as such, such as ignorance and sin, are preserved in the Absolute.

Suppose that we could have as complete a knowledge of Mr. Jones as is possible to a finite being, and suppose that we could then, while keeping this knowledge in the focus of our attention, suddenly expand our experience to the utmost limit, i.e., the Absolute experience. Now Bradley in the first passage referred to seems to imply that although all that we previously knew of Mr. Jones would presumably appear in a fresh light, he would not cease to be recognisable as a being persisting in time, with feelings and volitions and so on, and, what is more, he would not cease to be recognisable as Mr. Jones. For "the differences are not lost but are contained in the whole." But Bradley in the second passage apparently believed that if we, so to speak, kept our eye on Mr. Jones while we suddenly passed from our own to the Absolute standpoint, Mr. Jones *as such* would have disappeared. Not that his *contents* would have been destroyed in the smallest degree; they would all be there, since, as Bradley and Bosanquet insist, "all that belongs to appearance belongs to Reality," but the relationship between his constituent elements which appeared to make him a kind of unity would be seen in such a fresh context that the unity would be transmuted out of recognition. My difficulty here is that a theory which demands that everything that belongs to appearance shall belong to reality is, surely, logically bound to insist that not only content but arrangement of content, not only Mr. Jones's matter but his form, shall be preserved. Can anyone say where transfusion ends and destruction or loss begins?

This is one of the most fundamental problems of Philosophy. We have on the one hand to recognise that the Real is a systematic unity

and that therefore its parts are not self-existent monads but are grounded in, are organic to, the whole ; but on the other hand to recognise that the Real, the Absolute experience, includes all that pertains to the parts *as parts*. We have to insist that the Absolute sees the *answer* to all the problems suggested by Mr. Jones's apparent separateness, i.e., sees him as grounded in the systematic unity, and yet feels to the full all his feeling of selfhood, of opposition to the world, of impotence, ignorance and human weakness.

But we do not profess to see how all this is done. There seems to be a common belief that Absolutism, in contra-distinction to traditional Theism, and even more to Barthianism, is based on a confidence that the human mind can plumb the deepest mysteries of the Divine Being. This is very far from being true. There is in Absolutism that same recognition that the finite cannot grasp the infinite, that same healthy agnosticism about Reality, as we find in traditional Theism. This is, however, quite a different thing from that metaphysical scepticism which we have already discussed.[1] The Absolutist is not a sceptic ; he does hold that certain propositions about Reality are known to be true. We know, for example, or at least it is the postulate of all serious thinking, that Reality—the whole of Being—is capable of being experienced by one Mind, and that this experience will be entirely free from mystery. We know, too, that all contradictions are reconciled, and that in particular plurality is reconciled with unity without being negated or destroyed. But, and this is sane agnosticism, we do not profess to know how this is done. We can but use imperfect analogies. Let us use one now, remembering that it is only an illustration, not a demonstration.

If I strike together on the piano the notes E and F, I get a harsh dissonance. On the other hand the striking of E and F together can occur in a passage of great beauty if the discord is properly resolved. The sound of E and F together, which is meaningless when nothing else is sounded, contributes, when in the larger context, to that ineffable significance which great music has for those with ears to hear. Now musicians, having the limitations of finite beings, must either take in the passage as a whole and not attend to the ugliness and meaninglessness of the dissonance—it being lost or swallowed up, so to speak, in the wider significance—or else must attend to the dissonance and lose the wider meaning. Our powers of attention being limited we cannot at one and the same time attend to the special qualities which the details, as details, possess and also attend to the qualities possessed by the passage as a whole passage. But it is surely the crudest anthropomorphism to believe that a similar limitation of the power of attention occurs in the Divine Mind to which everything is explicit—to believe, that is, that any detail is lost or "merged" and that God must lose sight of the trees in seeing the wood. If we hold God to be omniscient we must hold that he can attend equally to the details as details and to the whole pattern, to the trees as well as the wood.

[1] *See* p. 19.

This brings us to an extremely important conception. The creation of the finite world—an eternal act, not something done at a past point of time once for all—is just this attention of the Absolute to the parts *as parts*. As Idealists we mean by the creation of the finite world the creation of finite beings, and we can therefore sum up the relationship between the concepts of the Absolute, God and finite beings as follows. The Being of God is the Absolute's all-knowing; the being of finite beings is the Absolute's each-knowing. The inner life of God, God as utterly transcending men, is the Absolute's experience of the Whole, completely free from mystery. But the lives of finite beings are equally the Absolute, the Absolute's each-form experience. To regard this each-form experience as outside, or additional to, the all-form experience, is fallacious.[1] Simply because the Absolute is not limited or thwarted as we are, it can at one and the same time realise, attend to, share, our limitations, and yet grasp the whole in which the limitations are removed, the problems solved, the harmony and self-groundedness of Reality realised. Simply because God is unlimited he realises, i.e., creates, our limited finite experience. God necessarily, i.e., from the necessity of his own nature, creates a world of finite beings. We can only deny this by the suggestion that in attending to the Whole he escapes experiencing the parts as parts.

We here part company with traditional Theism, or at least with those traditional Theists who hold it a derogation from the Divine Majesty to suggest that God is essentially or necessarily a Creator. The point is so important that we must discuss it more fully.[2]

Perhaps the greatest source of error in metaphysical thinking is the substitution of picture-thinking, analogies or metaphors for pure thought. The temptation of monists has been to use physical analogies like "transfused" or "merged." The temptation of traditional Theists has been the use of spatial metaphors, the interpretation of the distinctness or separateness of spirits in spatial terms. Theologians have been especially liable to this when discussing the transcendence and immanence of God. If the point had been put to them explicitly they would at once have agreed that God is not "in" space; they might even have conceded my point that human centres of consciousness are not "in" space either, in spite of the convenient metaphor "centre." My body, which is one material thing amongst others which the spiritual "I" cognise as an object, is in space, but "I" am not; space is merely a form or order in which I cognise objects. But even if they would have conceded all this, the fact remains that there has been a tendency to talk as though God's "transcendence" means that he is "outside" of me while his "immanence" means that he is "within" me. I have tried to show that the rejection of picture-thinking has led to the doctrine of identity-in-difference with

[1] The justification for this statement is, of course, our preceding discussion of similarity as identity.

[2] It is clear that the conclusion we have just reached definitely settles the question of the reality of the finite world, of pain and of sin. Since they really *are*, even for the Absolute, they are not illusions, not unreal. Of this more will be said later.

its insistence that the distinctness of spirits is simply their qualitative difference and that their points of similarity are points of real, not metaphorical, identity. In the light of this, let us consider the conclusion which we have reached on the question whether God is to be thought of as *necessarily* creator.

I can spare the reader a discussion of the idea of creation as having occurred in its completeness at a past point of time, since Mr. Mascall, in his recent book *He Who is*, states what I regard as the right conclusion very clearly. On page 98 he tells us that creation has nothing to do with the question whether the world had a beginning in time or not, and he adds in a footnote that St. Thomas Aquinas maintained that it is impossible to prove by reason alone that the world had a beginning in time. On page 101 he remarks that there is no real distinction between God's creation of the world and his preservation of it. On pages 43 and 44 he argues that St. Thomas's unmoved First Mover was not conceived by the Angelic Doctor as the first term of the time series. "The point is not really that we cannot have an infinite regress in order of nature, but that such an infinite regress in the series of moved movers would necessitate an unmoved First Mover not *in* the order of nature but *above* it."

I am not sure, however, that Mr. Mascall's further treatment of the relation of God to man is quite consistent with this view. For he argues that although God is necessary to the world in the sense that the world could not *be* without God, yet the world is not necessary to God. Now if we had to think of God as "in" time and as having decided to create the world at a certain moment, and if the question were put to us, did he create it of his own free will or did someone compel him, there could of course be no doubt as to the answer. But this would be an inadequate and anthropomorphic treatment of the subject. If we argue from a world in time to an extra-temporal personal ground of that world, if, that is, we say that it has been, is and will be because he eternally is, then we must say that the world is necessitated by the nature of God and beyond that we cannot go. To say that he need not have done it is surely to relapse into that metaphorical and anthropomorphic point of view to which we have just referred, the point of view from which God thought of as "in" time and confronted at a certain moment with the choice, to create or not to create. God's creation of the world must, of course, be thought of as free, since whichever way you look at it no "decision" was *forced* on him, but we cannot escape the conclusion that the creation was necessary and that it was a necessity of God's own nature. And what more than this do we need in order to assert the freedom of God in regard to creation? To say that a man is free is to say that his acts are grounded in his own nature, necessitated by his own character, by himself. Freedom, in the case of men, is not motiveless or irrational choice, although Mr. Mascall, on page 103, seems to come dangerously near saying that it is. He tells us that "In so far as we are able to say why a will acts as it does, we are limiting its nature as a will.

It is possible to assign motives for the acts which our human wills perform, precisely because their freedom is limited ; but even in this case no complete reason can be assigned, for, if it could, the act concerned would not be free but necessary. In the case of God, whose freedom is absolute, there is no reason whatever that we can assign."

I shall be dealing later with the problem of human freedom, but it must be said at once that an act which has no complete motive, reason or ground is not the act of an intelligent being, and cannot be regarded as an analogy to the Divine creation of the world. I would agree, of course, that in so far as the words "motive" and "reason" suggest that a being is working in time and has to use present means to attain a future end, the analogy is imperfect as applied to God's creative "act." But if we are to say that the act of creation has no ground, or no complete ground, i.e., does not necessarily follow from God's nature, we are attributing to God something which is the very opposite of freedom. Mr. Mascall, however, saves the situation by the last four words of the passage I have quoted—"that we can assign." To say that we cannot assign a reason is not to deny that there is one. Mr. Mascall indeed goes on to affirm that God's will must act in accordance with his own moral nature, which is all that my argument requires. But even so, he still maintains that while God necessarily wills himself, his willing of the world is not necessary, since God and the world are of "radically different orders of reality."

I do not follow his argument here. I am not at all sure that a precise meaning can be given to the phrase "order of reality," but whether or no, it is surely the case that however low in the scale of reality such an order may be, it did not create itself out of nothing. In the last resort, therefore, it must be grounded in God, and therefore necessitated by God's nature. It may be well, however, to consider an important difference between the respective approaches to the problem by traditional Theism and Absolutism.

Mr. Mascall points out on page 72 that in effect each of the five ways of St. Thomas is in the form of a syllogism, which can be stated:

> "If there exists a being that is finite in such-and-such a respect, then there exists a being that is infinite in such-and-such a corresponding respect. But there does exist such a finite being, therefore there exists the corresponding infinite being."

The argument is from *a* finite being to *a* necessary being. But surely there is an assumption here. What this is it is difficult to state clearly, for it is not an explicit assumption ; it is rather a vague tendency to take it for granted that because finite being and infinite being are two different subjects of predication, are represented by two different grammatical "subjects," therefore they are distinct "substances." Now, as I have tried to show, the most fundamental question for our metaphysical discussion is just this—in what sense *are* finite beings distinct from each other and from the Infinite? Surely the Idealist is making a more

cautious and critical approach to the problems of God and man when he begins by arguing, not from *a* contingent being to *a* necessary being, but from contingent being to necessary being.[1] We must not *assume* complete existential distinctness, for our problem is to discover just in what sense beings are distinct and whether they overlap, as it were, and share a common being. It is vital to exclude any assumptions on this point at the outset. To adopt this caution commits us neither to a pluralism in which God disappears nor to a pantheism in which man disappears. In the Idealist approach, the idea of God is not, as in St. Thomas's argument, introduced at the outset. The Idealist's fundamental conception is that Reality is the whole of being and that it is this being-as-a-whole which is necessary, i.e., self-necessitated, self-grounded. The finite being is clearly a part of the whole, and is "contingent" in the sense that he *appears* as a brute or arbitrary fact; the inference is that he must be grounded in, necessitated by, the self-necessitating whole.

Now the traditional Theist is not unnaturally critical of a view which suggests that in *any* sense we with our ignorance and sin are, without subtraction, "part" of the Divine being. But the Idealist for his part is equally dissatisfied with an attitude which on the one hand holds that God is omniscient and therefore knows, not merely in an abstract external way, but with full realisation, my inner experience—knows it and feels it as I feel it—but which yet on the other hand refuses to draw the obvious inference. For what a conscious being knows, realises, experiences, is the very stuff of his being; so long as he is not experiencing he is nothing; to sleep for ever is to be non-existent. My being must therefore be in a sense included in the Divine being.

The reconciliation of the two points of view is the recognition that although the use of the terms "part" and "whole" is almost inevitable, since human language was constructed to deal with material objects in space and is only applicable analogically to the things of the spirit, they mean something quite different when applied to consciousnesses, to spirits, to what I have called "concrete egos," from what they mean when applied to material objects. The root of the matter is the realisation that whereas for material objects similarity is *not* identity, for spirits it *is* identity. The traditional Theist need not be shocked by the view that since I am "part of" or am "included in" God, my error and sin are included in God. For the Idealist is only saying in his own, and what he regards as more adequate, language (since it allows of his maintaining the systematic unity of Reality) what the Theist says when he affirms that God, as omniscient, knows or realises fully my sinful and erroneous state of mind. For, as we have seen, one cannot escape by saying that it is one thing to know about something and another thing to be it; mere "knowledge about" is imperfect knowledge, the knowledge of someone who is not omniscient. Complete knowledge is identification; knowledge which is an external relation is but partial knowledge. If an omniscient God knows me, he must realise my very subjectivity, my sense

[1] I mean, by this, an argument from being which is not seen to necessitate itself to being which does necessitate itself.

of being a unit divided from and opposed to the real. He must feel as his own my very separateness from himself, with all that it involves. In me, sin and error occur in all their tragic isolation. They are the dissonance which is in itself ugly and meaningless. In God they are in the full context, and are therefore eternally redeemed. They make a necessary contribution to the rich harmony and significance of the whole. But they are not *lost* in this context, for everything that belongs to appearance must belong to reality. Evil is not just swallowed up in the good. The fact that, in isolation, it *is* evil, remains; for God, being omniscient, can attend equally to text and to context. Evil, error, the individual himself—these are not transfused out of recognition. How all this is done we do not know and we, as finite, cannot know. But we know that the thing *is* done and that not one jot or one tittle of the plurality is "lost."[1]

At first sight this conclusion may appear repugnant to some of the convictions of simple Christians. Take for instance the question of suffering. As a limited being man is subject to anxieties and fears, and popular theology very naturally insists that if God is Love he must be thought of as entering fully into these experiences, as sympathising in the real sense of that word, i.e., suffering *with* us. Now at first sight one is tempted to say that the Idealist construction which I have outlined leaves no room for this, for God *qua* Whole cannot possibly feel the anxiety and fear which are bound up with ignorance of the issue, bound up with the fact that the view is only a partial one. The same objection, however, can be pressed against traditional Theism, for it too holds to the omniscience of God. A really omniscient omnipotent God cannot suffer the pain which attaches to ignorance and impotence. The doctrine of the impassibility of God is a perfectly orthodox one.

The answer, I think, is that if our deepest religious needs are to be satisfied it is necessary to hold that in some sense God does not suffer and that in another sense he does. We must hold that he does suffer by complete sympathy, and here the Idealist can fairly call attention to his doctrine of identity-in-difference, his doctrine that sympathy is so far identity, and complete sympathy complete identity. Both Absolutist and traditional Theist can insist that as omniscient God fully realises the pain attaching to the part as part, the fear and ignorance and impotence, although he also, in view of his fuller knowledge, knows that the fear is groundless and that the whole context is good in spite of the evil of the parts. The religious value of the doctrine of the Divine impassibility can be seen by a simple human analogy. The kind of human sympathy we need in our distresses is surely that which can only be given by one who, while entering fully into our state of mind, is in his own being serene and happy. We cannot lean on, or receive strength from, one as ignorant and impotent as we are ourselves, one who, in suffering, *merely* duplicates our own experience. A finite God would be religiously valueless. The glory of the doctrine of the impassibility of God is this, that an increase in union with him is an increase in peace and in joy.

[1] The question of guilt and human responsibility will be discussed later.

We may now for a moment glance back at the way we have come. We have outlined a theory as to the fundamental structure of Reality which seemed to us to follow inevitably from the two premises that (*a*) all being is experienced being; (*b*) Reality, or being-as-a-whole, is a systematic unity. We can escape the conclusion if we deny either premise—if we concede that some being is not experienced by anyone, human or Divine, or if we allow that Reality may be an ultimate dualism or pluralism. We could not see how a Theist could consistently concede either point.

The treatment so far given, however, is not complete, for a critic may remark that to the concrete experience of men in everyday life, an experience which naturally lends itself to a pluralistic interpretation, we have opposed a metaphysical speculation based on a logical theory. The answer to this objection is that all that we have so far studied is the bare bones of a solution to our problem, the problem, that is, of reconciling our finite experience of our separateness from each other and from God with the demands that Reality shall be shown as one all-inclusive experience. We have yet to show that in the everyday life of common men there are experiences which should give pause to any assertion of entire separateness, experiences to which the logic based on the notion of identity-in-difference claims to be relevant. It may well be doubted, I think, whether, a purely epistemological or logical treatment of the problem can be really intelligible, let alone convincing, unless it can be shown to have relevance to wider philosophical problems. We can, and I think we must, reject Pragmatism as a metaphysical theory or as a theory of knowledge; we must, that is, reject the Pragmatist's *definition* of truth; but I am persuaded that Pragmatists have done Philosophy good service in calling it to the task of relating its abstruse discussions to the life of men. If a conception is to be intelligible, it must answer the question: "What is it 'known as,' and what can we expect to happen differently if we accept it from what would happen in a world where it did not hold?"[1]

I now propose to try, therefore, to make the preceding discussion more intelligible by pointing to its implications in the field of Moral Philosophy.

[1] *See* Wm. James's *Pragmatism*, p. 148.

CHAPTER III

ABSOLUTISM AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY

THE main problem with which we have been concerned is to show how finite beings who are in some sense separate can be included in one self-conscious experience of complete systematic unity. We endeavoured to show that the Idealist Logic, the Logic of identity-in-difference, furnished a formal solution to the formal problem. We have now to show that this Logic is a basis for an adequate explanation of certain experiences—a more adequate explanation, in fact, than the traditional logic of abstract identity. My immediate task will be to show that in the moral consciousness the finite experience of apparent separateness becomes an experience of real union.

I propose to begin with the moral philosophy of Kant. If we ask ourselves whether there is anything really vital for us to-day in this system, if we try to single out what is permanent and ignore much that criticism has found wanting in the details of Kant's exposition, we can, I think, lay hold of two fundamental principles. The first is that an individual's consciousness of moral obligation cannot be explained in terms of that individual's desires or fears; "I ought to" cannot be explained in terms of "I want to" or "Fear compels me to." The second is that right conduct can be explained as rational conduct.

To take the first point. This is where Kant's insight was so much keener than that of some writers on Ethics to-day. He set his face resolutely against any tendency to explain the consciousness of moral obligation in terms of desire or fear—against any tendency, that is, to explain it by explaining it away. His analysis of moral obligation rejects any type of doctrine which holds it to be sufficient to point to the psychological factors involved in the evolution of moral feelings—any type of doctrine which substitutes for Ethics a natural history of the moral emotions. For Kant, any "explanation" of the moral consciousness as ultimately derived from a desire to win the approbation of the tribe or of the tribal god, or from a fear of the tribe's censure or of the god's wrath, would be poor philosophy even if it were sound genetic psychology. The essence of his exposition of the matter is that the consciousness of moral obligation is a unique phenomenon because it is neither merely a desire "from within" nor merely fear of a law "from without." It *is* awareness of a law, a law as rigid and as independent of my fleeting moods and desires as is the law of gravitation; but it is *my* law; it is a law which I give myself. The uniqueness of the consciousness of moral obligation lies in just this curious combination of

inner and outer reference. As against my subjective desires and moods it is a rigid Other ; and yet in recognising it I identify myself with it.

The interesting thing about this analysis is that Kant intended it as the recognition of a brute fact. It just *is* a fact, he said, that moral obligation is of this nature. He was not seeking to bolster up any philosophical or religious orthodoxy by fitting this moral fact into a metaphysical scheme. For Kant, of course, did not believe in the possibility of speculative metaphysics in the sense in which that term was understood in his day. But the interest for us lies in this, that if we, free from Kant's metaphysical agnosticism, ask what metaphysical doctrine best accords with this analysis of moral obligation, the Absolutist can surely reply that his view of the relationship of soul to soul and of soul to Whole is just what we need. For how, unless I am in some sense one with an experience which is both I and yet more than I, can I give a reasonable account of this curious moral obligation which is not merely *my* desire, which is something absolute and grounded in that reality of things which is so much more than me, but yet which springs from *within* me and is recognised as expressing my deepest nature ? No pluralistic philosophy, no Deistic theology can do justice to the phenomenon of moral obligation. Already, then, we can see the beginning of concrete significance in the doctrine of identity-in-difference.

But when we look a little closer into the Kantian ethical doctrine, we find that the Idealist Logic has more to say. A theory of right and wrong has, it seems to me, to deal with three problems which it is important to distinguish. The first is that with which we have already dealt—the nature of the consciousness of moral obligation, and we have seen that while Kant regarded moral obligation as an ultimate fact, the Idealist Logic and Absolutist Metaphysic claim to exhibit its coherence with a certain interpretation of the nature of things. The second problem is that of the *content* of what some writers call the moral criterion, others the moral ideal, and others the moral law. Whereas the first problem is stated by the question "What is this consciousness of moral obligation and how can we explain its existence ?", the second problem is stated by the question "What is the content of the moral judgment-system, what is the content of this which claims the support or the authority of the consciousness of moral obligation ?" To put it more crudely but more forcibly, the first question is "What do I mean by 'I ought' ?" ; the second is "What are the things which I ought to do ?" Modern writers on Ethics often recognise clearly the distinction between these essentially different questions ; they recognise that when we have explained to our satisfaction the *content* of the moral law or the moral ideal, we have still to explain the nature of moral obligation.[1] Another way of expressing what I have in mind here is to say that a test for rightness is no more a definition of "rightness" than "turning litmus red" is a definition of "acid."

[1] Sir W. David Ross, for instance, in his *Foundations of Ethics*, points out on page 27 that the proposition "right action is that which produces most pleasure for humanity" is not what Kant called analytic, but synthetic.

Of the three main ethical problems which I mentioned we have now outlined the first—that of explaining the nature of moral obligation—and the second—that of deciding on the content of the moral judgment-system. The third task, I think, is to find some rational connexion between the answers which we give to the first two problems, to find, that is, why the curious phenomenon of moral obligation is connected with this particular judgment-content. We might explain beautifully what moral obligation is, and also the things which we ought to do, but we should not have finished our work unless we had shown that the metaphysic which furnished the first explanation also furnished the second so that the two made a coherent whole.

Now with regard to the first problem Kant has, I feel, given what is essentially the right answer—to the extent at any rate that he analysed the consciousness of moral obligation correctly and refused to explain it in terms of the moral agent's desires or fears. But Kant's attitude to speculative metaphysics prevented him from dealing with our third problem—he would not, that is, look for a more ultimate fact which would connect moral obligation with moral content. As everyone knows, he merely used his brute fact of moral obligation as a premise from which to argue that there must be a God and a future life—a very different proceeding. With regard to the second problem, that of the moral *content*, he gave what again I believe to be essentially the right answer; he said that right conduct is rational conduct. But here again there is no speculative background, and therefore no possibility of seeking a more fundamental fact which shall provide the solution to the third problem by showing the essential connexion of the first with the second.

Our task is now clear. We have to state in brief outline what Kant meant by rational conduct, and we have to inquire whether our exposition of Absolutism, which has already claimed to throw light on the nature of moral obligation, will also offer a reasonable explanation of the fact that it is to "rational conduct" that we feel the moral obligation. In other words, we must look at the Kantian solution to the second problem and then proceed to the third.

"Rational conduct" can be explained in this way. Because I am rational, that is, capable of conceptual thinking, I can form the concept "man." I can therefore take an objective view of myself, and by this I mean that I can think of myself as one member of the class "man" and therefore counting only as one. I *can* therefore be impartial as between myself and others, and this is what underlies the famous Kantian principles of conduct. In itself, however, the fact that I am rational and therefore have the power, which animals have not, of taking an objective view of myself and being intelligently impartial as between myself and others, does not furnish any motive or bring any obligation. The fact that I am rational only means that I can, *if I choose*, be impartial and objective towards myself. The third problem, therefore, presents itself, and we must now ask whether the metaphysical theory of identity as applied to experiences, which has been claimed as an explanation of the peculiar nature of moral obligation, can also explain why this moral

obligation is an obligation to act rationally in the sense defined. The answer is this. It is just this rational, conceptual thinking which is common to men as men, and which is therefore the basis of their agreement as to objective truth. Feeling, sensation, even perception must differ with individuals, but in concepts, in universal judgments, agreement is possible and often, indeed, inevitable. Now it is his power to have concepts which brings with it, as we have seen, a man's capacity for regarding himself in the light of his class relationship as merely one man among men. But when I thus think of myself rationally and objectively, i.e., when I think of myself as merely one among others, I am thinking of myself as other men naturally think of me. Now on the principle of identity-in-difference, when you and I are thinking similarly on the same subject, we are, to the extent of the similarity, identical, since similarity is identity-in-difference. Putting it more definitely, when I, as concrete ego (i.e., as abstract transcendental ego plus the stuff of my experience) am thinking of that empirical ego which I call "myself" and am thinking of it as one being among others, as one in the class, then to that extent I am one with other concrete egos, for I view myself as they view me ; and I am also one with the Absolute, for I view myself as I must be *for* the Absolute, for it is at least certain that the Absolute is not biased in *my* favour. As rational, then, as capable of thinking of all things, including myself, conceptually, objectively, impartially, I have already transcended my narrow exclusive individuality, for a common point of view must include, to the extent that it holds the field of my consciousness, a common or objective will or purpose or desire.[1]

The answer to our third problem is now in our hands. If it is in virtue of union with the larger Experience that I have that curious awareness of moral obligation which is, so to speak, both from without and from within, and if it is pre-eminently in virtue of rational thinking that I *am* in union with this larger Experience, it will follow that the consciousness of moral obligation will be a consciousness of moral obligation to act rationally, objectively, impartially as between myself and others and as between man and man. A right action must be justifiable by, though it need not be inspired by or due to, an appeal to universal principles. When I experience moral obligation, when I decide that "I ought" to take a certain course, I am neither obeying an external command nor am I following a subjective fancy. I am—as rational and socially-minded and therefore in real union with other rational and socially-minded beings and with the Whole—freely giving a command to my wayward self. The solution of the mystery of conscience is the recognition of the paradox that I am identical with and yet different from an impartial Observer who is not, as some moralists have treated the matter, merely an imaginary or ideal figure, but a concrete reality.

This seems to me to be the essential idea in the Idealist metaphysic of ethics, and it also seems to me to be a very great achievement, worthy

[1] This reference to common or objective *desire* or purpose is, of course, a departure from the pure Kantian ethic. I shall touch on this later.

perhaps of ranking with the discovery of the infinitesimal calculus, the law of gravitation and the fact of biological evolution. For it is nothing less than the linking of fundamental principles of logic to fundamental principles of morals. The reason for the almost universal failure to pay tribute to the achievement of this line of philosophers is, I think, twofold. No discovery in the field of philosophy can be as spectacular as the discoveries of science, for the philosopher is dealing with everyday notions, and when he records his discovery men say that they knew it all the time. And the discovery with which we have been dealing has been very gradual. Plato made his contribution to it, and it is perhaps even now not complete.

It is important to notice that the theory hangs on the real union of soul with soul and with the Absolute. No mere metaphorical union, no loose and merely poetic usage of terms like "the spirit of man" will avail if the thought behind them is that finite beings are really separate "substances." The mere fact that you and I are similar in being rational furnishes no explanation of a common will, a common interest. It offers no explanation of the fact that reason brings with it not only the knowledge that I *can* act rationally but also the will to do so. A rational atom could not possibly feel the will of the Other as also its own desire. It could accept, and co-operate with, the will of the Other, either from fear or from enlightened self-interest or from love. But "conscience" cannot be identified with any of these.

I have adopted, or rather adapted, a Kantian type of view of the nature of moral obligation and moral law. Absolutist writers like Bradley and Bosanquet made rather a different approach to their metaphysical Ethic. The Absolutist's treatment of ethical problems as matters of the conflict of "selves" does, however, in my view need the doctrine of the identical Transcendental Ego—common in all men—to make it intelligible; and it needs also the Kantian notion of rational conduct.

The foregoing outline of the type of moral philosophy which is demanded by the metaphysic which I have expounded in the previous chapters leaves, of course, a great many questions unanswered. I must now proceed to deal with these. First I must make it clear that I have no idea of limiting the moral ideal to mere impartiality as between man and man. The *nature* of the good, not merely its impartial distribution, is an essential part of ethical inquiry. Even a society of pigs might conceivably be impartial, and even altruistic, in the matter of pursuing piggish ends, satisfying piggish desires, but they would of course be at an ethically lower level than a society of human beings who unselfishly co-operate in the pursuit of human ends, the satisfaction of human desires. But it is, I think, as impartiality, as objectivity as between man and man that the categorical imperative is experienced. Self-culture is enlightened self-interest; if there is no conflict between my interests and other people's, the categorical imperative does not come

into the picture. It was because Socrates had this in mind[1] that he said that virtue is knowledge, that if I *fully* realise where the greatest good for me lies I shall naturally pursue it. Common sense rightly makes a distinction in its condemnation of, on the one hand, a man who sacrifices his own interests by choosing the lesser of two available goods, and, on the other hand, the man who sacrifices the interests of others in the pursuit of his own good. The first man we call a fool, the second a knave. The two aspects of ethical inquiry, however, are connected. I cannot intelligently promote the good of others until I have discovered what are the highest goods. Along with the discovery where my best interests lie comes the realisation that what is best for me may also be best for others, and this is where the imperative of objective impartiality comes in.

This is not to deny that each individual is to achieve and distribute the good in his own way. I can recognise that Mr. Jones has the same claim to consideration as I without insisting that we shall be moral duplicates. The importance of the insistence that conscience is a matter of rationality is that while on the one hand it rejects any subjective view of morality, while it holds that in every real moral conflict there *is* an objective right and wrong, it holds on the other hand that what is right in this particular circumstance for this particular person with his particular potentialities must be discovered by reasoning. And since life is so complex one need not deny that the more subtle decisions are perhaps matters of art rather than of science. To say that there *is* one objectively right course, whatever we may feel about it, one course which a detached and impartial observer with a knowledge of *all* the facts and a desire for the greatest possible good would approve, is one thing. To say that there is only one way of finding the right course is quite another. The "reason" which is to decide the "right" course need not, of course, be thought of as the individual's unaided reason. Indeed, an individual's moral character is largely a social product, and I am far from disputing the need for the moral education of the young. In holding that moral action is rational action, all that it is essential to hold is that the right decision, whatever factors in the individual's past history have led him to it and whatever emotional or even instinctive urges he may have had in coming to it, is that which *would* be willed by him if he were an impartial observer desiring the greatest good.

So far I have *assumed* without discussion that the common and rational point of view is accompanied by a *desire* for the "greatest possible good." This is of course a complete break from the Kantian ethic, and in any case must be discussed a little more fully. It is one thing to say that the end to which the moral imperative urges us is the end willed by the larger Experience which includes us ; it is another thing to describe this end as the greatest possible good. Among other matters, we shall have to ask whether the "greatest good of the greatest number" is an adequate and intelligible description of the end in question. But perhaps the

[1] I mean that Socrates was considering merely the question of the individual's *own* good.

best way, certainly the most interesting way, to elaborate my ethical doctrine will be to relate it to the views of recognised authorities on Moral Philosophy.

My ethical doctrine can, I think, be described as intermediate between *a priori* or intuitionist views on the one hand and the subjectivist views of writers like Westermarck on the other. This can be seen with regard both to the concept of moral obligation and the nature of moral judgments.

Let us first consider the concept of moral obligation. Writers like Dr. Broad and Sir David Ross seem to regard language about what is "right," what one "ought" to do, what it is one's "duty" to do, as based on concepts which are ultimate and indefinable. Rightness and duty are either indefinable notions or are an ultimate, unanalysable kind of fittingness. Just as the concept of cause cannot be analysed into, cannot be explained or explained away as being, the experience of regular succession of simple feelings or sensations, but is an ultimate category of thought, so the statement that I ought to do so-and-so cannot be shown to be merely a manner of stating that I am feeling certain emotions and desires—fear, for instance, or a desire to win approbation—but is equally the expression of an ultimate category of thought. When we say that we "ought" to do something, we are saying something which cannot be accurately restated in terms of some *other* notion or notions than "ought."

Now in so far as it is the intention of these writers to insist that we are sometimes confronted by a choice between two possible actions one of which *is* right and the other of which *is* wrong whatever we or anyone else may *feel* about it, I agree with them whole-heartedly. In other words, I hold, as against Westermarck's subjective view, that a person's belief that his duty is something independent of his or anyone else's feelings on the point at issue, is a true belief. The words "It is my duty to do so-and-so" are not merely an expression of a certain kind of emotional urge to do it.

But I do not think that the matter of ethical objectivity can be settled by epistemology, by an appeal, that is, to the fact—if it is a fact—that the notions of duty and right are unanalysable or indefinable. It is one thing to prove that when I say "I ought to do so-and-so" I do not mean that I have certain feelings, and to show that my moral judgment intends or professes to be a statement of objective fact. It is quite another thing to prove that this claim to objectivity is a valid one. I do not think that the subjectivist can be answered by this appeal to the Theory of Knowledge. What is surely needed is to fit our ethical doctrine into a coherent philosophy which is both metaphysical and ethical. I do not—since I accept the Coherence Theory—regard metaphysics as entirely prior to ethics or ethics as entirely prior to metaphysics. Metaphysics must take account of ethical facts, but one's interpretation of those facts will depend on one's metaphysic. Now in the preceding chapter I have attempted an explanation of the notions of duty and rightness by showing how they can be regarded as arising from the immanence within us of a

universal Experience. If this explanation is rejected, and if in its place we can put no explanation which is similar to mine in being metaphysical, I do not think that the objective character of duty can be maintained by a mere appeal to the indefinability of the *notion* of duty or to the *a priori* or intuitive nature of detailed moral judgments. If the appeal is to Psychology, or to Epistemology or to a Moral Philosophy which has no metaphysical or theological presuppositions, I cannot see how Westermarck is to be answered. I am not thinking so much of the point I have urged in a preceding section—that rational Idealism is the only alternative to a scepticism which must include in its deadly grip ethical as well as metaphysical judgments; my point here is rather that the view of Westermarck, according to which moral judgments are only the expression of an emotion felt by the individual making the judgments, seems to me to be easier to defend than the view of moral philosophers who agree with Westermarck in eschewing a metaphysical ethic and who try to meet his psychological attack with an epistemological defence—who try, that is, to settle the matter of the objectivity of moral judgments by an appeal to the alleged fact that our notion of "right" is indefinable.

My metaphysical interpretation of the notion of "duty" is essentially in terms of desire or volition, but not, of course—for that would be a subjective view—*individual* or *private* desire or volition. It is based on the fact that I am one with a universal Experience which is not biased in favour of *my* bodily self, my family, my nation, as against other selves, families, nations, but which desires the "greatest good"—a notion which I shall of course have to define later. Although, therefore, I emphasise the *rationality* of moral action, I insist that the driving-force of conscience is not reason but rational desire or volition—the will to further the greatest good by acting in accordance wth general principles which ignore any special claim of me *as* me.

So much for the nature of moral obligation and the meaning of the concepts "right" and "duty." When we come to the *content* of the detailed moral judgments, I agree again with Westermarck that we must look to emotional states rather than to particular intellectual syntheses or intuitions for their *immediate* ground, although I am not, as he was, content to leave it at that. I find it difficult to believe that there are a number of *a priori* synthetic universal judgments linking "right" or "duty" to specific types of conduct in specific situations—judgments known by an intellectual synthesis to be true in the way that "every change has a cause" is known to be true. The very fact that modern ethical intuitionists admit that their moral principles are only "*prima facie* duties," since some other *prima facie* duties may conflict with them, surely suggests very strongly that they are not to be thought of as purely intellectual apprehensions, but rather as the expression of emotional attitudes or sentiments.[1] The fact that there is no very exact agreement

[1] In *The Right and the Good*, Sir David Ross speaks of *prima facie* duties. In *The Foundations of Ethics*, he adopts the term "responsibilities." The significant point is that he cannot say that they are absolute rules to be obeyed without question.

as to the number and formulation of these moral axioms points to the same conclusion.

Let us take a simple instance, that of the obligation to keep one's promise. The view of Sir David Ross and Dr. Broad, if I understand them aright, is that there is a self-evident moral rule, patent to human beings capable of efficient reflexion on the point, that a promise should be kept if the keeping of the promise will not conflict with the requirement of some other similarly self-evident moral rule. The Westermarckian or subjectivist type of view, with which I agree so far as it goes, is that we have a "sentiment," or a tendency to a certain emotional reaction, where the keeping or breaking of promises is concerned. This sentiment has been developed by suggestion or even explicit teaching from the society in which we have been brought up, although the raw materials may have been instinctive. Now there is a sense, of course, in which a judgment expressing an emotional attitude is an intellectual synthesis, but the two views are really opposed. To put it forcibly, if not quite adequately, we may say that on the former, or intuitionist, view, the intellectual judgment is the ground of the emotion, while on the latter view the emotion is the ground of the judgment. On the former view, my "feeling strongly" on the subject of the keeping of promises is due to my intellectual apprehension that the concept "wrong" must be synthetically predicated of the concept "breaking promises"; on the latter view my intellectual grasp of the fact that it is wrong to break promises is due to my feeling strongly on the subject.

In spite, however, of my agreeing with Westermarck so far, I am really far more in agreement with Sir David Ross and Dr. Broad, for I do not think that we can leave the matter where Westermarck leaves it. They are right and he is wrong on the main point, objectivity versus subjectivity. For a judgment on a moral problem which merely expresses my feelings is not yet a really moral judgment at all. The condition of its becoming such is that it shall pass the scrutiny and obtain the approval of the immanent universal Reason which is also my reason. This view guarantees the objectivity of right and wrong, for the universal Reason will not encourage my subjective tendency to call right that which benefits myself.

The true view of the function of reason as the essential factor in the experience of moral obligation can best be seen, I think, by contrasting it with Kant's on the one hand and with Sidgwick's on the other. For Kant, the essence of the truly moral choice was that reason should influence the will without the intervention of any emotion or desire. Indeed, reason and the moral will were practically identified. To act from compassion or loyalty or love alone would be morally valueless. Kant did not mean to disparage these emotions, and his view is not nearly so horrible as at first sight appears. His point was that emotions are in themselves quite an unsafe guide and that if one acts from emotional impulses alone, one is as likely to act from bad ones as from good; at least, an emotion which normally leads to right action may in any given case, if followed unreflectingly, lead to a wrong action. What makes

the compassionate or loyal or loving action morally valuable is its being ratified, so to speak, by the rational judgment that it is *right*, a rational judgment which could ensure that the action would be done whether the emotion of compassion, etc., were being felt or not. I do not think that Kant really believed that the feeling of compassion *detracted* from the moral value of the act. Provided the person who did the action under the influence of an emotion would have done the act because he knew that it was right, emotion or no emotion, I do not think that Kant, had the point been put to him, would have denied that the act had moral value.

Kant's view, then, was more sane and human than it has sometimes been represented to be. But the point on which he has by almost universal agreement failed to be convincing is his attempt to set up a formal criterion of the courses of action which are allowed or forbidden by the categorical imperative. The only case I know of where his test is at all applicable is that of promise-breaking. You cannot will that promises should be broken, for in so doing your will is self-defeating, since no one would be convinced that they could trust a promise if promise-breaking were the rule. But even in this most favourable instance it can be objected that the argument uses empirical factors and is not purely formal. In insisting that to approve of promise-breaking is to will that promises will cease to be believed and trusted, and that therefore they will cease to be given and therefore cease to be broken, you have, it is true, arrived at a formal self-contradiction, but the argument turns on the empirical fact that human beings proceed on the principle of "once bit twice shy." In rejecting Kant's formal criterion, then, we are bound, assuming that my metaphysical explanation of moral obligation, and the identification of moral action with rational action, are accepted, to assume that rational beings have a *desire* to act rationally, i.e., that the very fact that an action is seen to have that impartiality as regards one's private interests and that tendency to promote the greatest possible good which a rational being as such is capable of conceiving, brings with it a desire to perform it. This brings us to Sidgwick's view.

Sidgwick treated the desire to do the reasonable thing, as such, as just one desire amongst others, co-ordinate with them. Any of these desires might well lead to right actions, since actions inspired by any of these desires might lead to an increase in the general good. I think this might be regarded as a satisfactory way of looking at the matter if we were not raising the question of the nature of the experience of moral obligation, but if we *do* raise the question we have, it seems to me, to ask ourselves whether the desire to act rationally *is* merely one desire co-ordinate with others. Is it not, on the contrary, a unique desire, since it is that desire alone which *must* be felt when there is a real moral conflict? For a *moral* conflict does not necessarily arise when one hesitates between two courses of action, hesitates as to which of two desires we shall satisfy if we cannot satisfy both. Such a hesitation may be quite non-moral. If we are to describe the choice as a *moral* choice there must be present, at any rate implicitly or in the background, the desire to

do the right, the desire to negate any desire which is merely one's private desire and which, if followed, will lead to a less valuable result as judged from the universal standpoint. Now a desire to negate all private desires which clash with public good is not a desire co-ordinate with these private desires. It is the common, universal desire for the good as such, not my private good. It is, so to speak, the censor of all other desires. If it approves the action, the action is "right." If it disapproves of a proposed action, and yet is not powerful enough in a given case to inhibit the action, the latter is "wrong."

This unique desire, as I have just indicated, may not have to be felt explicitly by a person who has been subjected to good moral influences from childhood and has thereby acquired good "sentiments," i.e., tendencies to socially valuable emotional reactions. But unless the person is morally dead it is always ready to assert itself if necessary. Let us take an instance. I have a tendency—at bottom emotional—to regard as my own vocation the task of securing the best conditions of life for my own children. Now it is easy to see that such special desires as flow from this parental "sentiment" may lead to definitely wrong actions, and I feel fairly confident that if under a sudden impulse I was on the point of doing some really anti-social action in the narrow interest of my own family, my rational social "self" would at least put in a protest and provoke a moral conflict, even if it did not prevail. But actually, I hope, another sentiment or set of sentiments, tending to the condemnation of anti-social actions, would obviate the need for bringing up the heavy artillery of the categorical imperative. What actually happens with most of us, I imagine, on this particular moral issue, is that we have a shrewd idea that, at any rate under present conditions and given the present stage of moral evolution, the greatest good of the greatest number is served if *every* father feels a special responsibility for his own family and acts accordingly, while not disregarding the fact that other families have a claim to consideration. But this is a perfectly general principle, and action in accordance with it is therefore rational or moral. It would be quite a different state of affairs if I concentrated my efforts on my own family merely because it was mine and because I did not propose to raise the question whether the greatest total good would result. Such an attitude would be definitely wrong.

Let us take another example. I may be invited to engage during a certain part of my limited leisure in a certain form of social service, but I may feel, on the other hand, a desire to use that period for some form of self-culture. If I act, without reflection, on the latter desire and ignore the invitation as being unwelcome, I am merely being selfish. But if I have weighed the conflicting possibilities carefully, having in mind the general principle that no individual ought unduly to neglect self-culture since the advance of general culture depends on that of individuals, then I may be justified in refusing to engage in that particular form of social service at that time. There is, of course, plenty of room for self-deception; to be honest with oneself is not easy. But there is no more reason for

thinking that all our natural desires are wrong than there is for thinking that they are all right.

The function of the moral reason, then, is to decide which natural tendencies ought to be allowed to operate and which ought to be suppressed. The view I have outlined has relevance to the clash between two apparently opposite approaches to moral problems. One type of approach, that of Kant, seems to suggest that an action is only moral if carried out after a struggle against natural desire—although I am not sure that Kant really believed this. Another type, that which we associate with Aristotle, seems to lead to the opposite conclusion that a man is only really moral if he finds virtue easy and does not have to struggle. There is truth in both these views. It would be absurd to deny the moral worth of a man born in such a good moral environment and subjected throughout his childhood and adolescence to such wise influences that he had never had a hard moral struggle. Indeed, the whole aim of moral education is to create a society where such a life would be the normal thing. And yet it may be doubted whether, given the conditions of life on this planet, anyone has ever acquired, or will ever acquire, a strong character without some degree of moral struggle. In principle, however, it must be conceded that the ideally good man would not be even *tempted* to do wrong even though the pain of doing right was very great; his decision would never be in doubt, his character never in danger. Whether such a being could be described as truly human is doubtful, and it must be remembered that orthodox Christians hold that Jesus Christ was really tempted although he never sinned. But I do not think it can be denied that given a favourable moral environment from infancy, even ordinary men can, as regards *certain* forms of evil, be regarded as safe from temptation. The very suggestion that they might perform certain actions arouses such an intense loathing, or, if the actions are good ones, such a keen enthusiasm, that an appeal to the cold categorical imperative—to the consideration that the action *ought* to be avoided, or done, as a duty, is unnecessary. And there seems no reason in principle why such a state of affairs should not extend over the whole sphere of moral action, and not be limited to one or two types of conduct. In this connexion we may recall those words from Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*: "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

But could we expect to find this safe virtue in a man who has never had a moral struggle in the Kantian sense, who never, that is, has come as moral victor through that dark experience in which all passions, emotions and desires are enlisted on one side while on the other there is nothing but the stark "I ought"—the naked desire to do the right as such. Given the present condition of human society I should say "No." But in principle I do not think the possibility can be ruled out. For it is not true to say that we can only be strong to resist a particular temptation if we have struggled with it and overcome it in the past. Most people brought up in a good moral environment have never felt the slightest temptation to certain base forms of evil; on the contrary the

very suggestion that they should commit such an action arouses in them an intense emotional resistance.

The view of Aristotle on this point is, then, in the main correct. But it would be going too far to say that it is a sign of moral weakness to feel a temptation or to have to struggle against it. A right action is a right action whether done with or without a struggle. And Kant's view is sound, moreover, in another respect. For a rational and self-conscious being, even if his character has grown, rather than struggled, to maturity, must not be thought of as unconscious of the categorical imperative. If he *were* unconscious of it he would be morally immature—innocent rather than really good. As rational and self-conscious he knows perfectly well what he is doing. He may, it is true, do the right easily and happily because he would be unhappy if he did not do the right, but if he has arrived at moral maturity he knows that the right *is* right and that he "ought" to do it whether it brought him happiness or unhappiness. It is not true to say that if one does not feel the categorical imperative as an enemy to one's private or bodily self one does not feel it at all.

The most fundamental aim of good men is to make it easy for the next generation to grow up good, to make virtue safe. If one holds that there is greater moral value in being exposed to temptation and just holding on to virtue by the skin of one's teeth, then morality must be admitted to be essentially self-defeating. In creating the conditions of moral safety one is destroying the possibility of moral value. Such a view leads to fantastic conclusions. One ought, for instance, in that case try to make virtue *hard* for the next generation; one ought, that is, deliberately to increase its moral dangers and temptations so that there will be the greater merit, the greater value, if in spite of these obstacles it achieves virtue. The whole question of the relation of moral character and moral value to "merit" and to "guilt" will need careful discussion.

Our attempt to build a moral philosophy on the foundation of our metaphysical conclusions, or at any rate in harmony with those conclusions, may be summarised so far as follows:

(*a*) The experience of moral obligation arises from the immanence in us finite beings of an Absolute or universal Mind.

(*b*) Moral judgments are objective, and therefore either true or false. For in all moral conflicts there is one of the courses open to us which must have the approval of the immanent Mind. A moral judgment is true if it expresses this verdict, false if it opposes it.

(*c*) There are no absolutely unconditional moral rules[1] except the obligation to aim at the greatest good, although most of the moral rules accepted in Christian countries can nearly always be approved as guides to that end.

[1] There is of course no contradiction between (*b*) and (*c*). (*b*) says that a judgment *on a particular situation* is objectively true or false. (*c*) says that no abstract generalisation except the widest one is *universally* true. For instance, "Promises must always be kept," is not absolutely true.

It is clear that our next task must be to discuss the concept of the "greatest good." and to justify our assumption that the criterion of rightness and wrongness is the good or evil effects of the action.

I have already argued against the view that on epistemological grounds one can hold that there are a number of more or less detailed rules of conduct intuitively grasped by the human intellect, such as the rule that one should keep promises or the rule that one should refrain from stealing or killing. We saw reason to believe that these rules have an emotional basis, and that if after reflexion we approve them it is because we recognise that a society which regards them is more likely to achieve the greatest good possible than one which ignores them. I now wish to discuss the point not from the epistemological standpoint but on wider grounds, and to ask whether as a matter of sound ethics there *is* any moral rule which can challenge the rule that our action should aim at achieving the greatest good possible.

Take for instance the obligation to keep one's promise. It is certainly the case that all normal persons in civilised, and probably in uncivilised, countries "feel" strongly on this subject, and there can be little doubt that it is essential for the well-being of society that persons should keep their promises and be able to trust other people to keep theirs. We may well decide, therefore, that we ought to encourage in the young the cultivation of the sentiment or emotional tendency in question, and that we ought to make it a general rule that promises should be kept. We "ought" to do this because the general good will thereby be promoted. Moreover we ought not lightly to approve the breaking of a promise even though the keeping of it may cause an apparent balance of pain or the breaking of it an apparent balance of pleasure. For even on utilitarian principles we have to consider the bad effects of example and the undesirability of establishing a precedent of promise-breaking.

But even defenders of the intuitional view admit that there might be a case where a promise ought to be broken. For the keeping of the promise might involve, on their view, the breaking of some other moral rule intuitively known to be binding on us. Indeed, the intuitionist will even admit that it might be right to break a promise because the keeping of it would have very painful consequences for someone, and he will admit this because he accepts the obligation to increase the general good as *one* of these intuitively known moral laws. The difference, however, between his view and mine is that he holds that there is a certain, or rather an uncertain, number of moral rules grasped by the intellect and which are, *prima facie*, binding on us, and that if these rules conflict we must decide as best we can, with no one overriding rule to guide us, which of them it is right to obey, at the expense of disobeying the others, in the case before us. My view, however, is that we have an indefinite number of emotional tendencies from which we can rightly frame provisionally binding moral rules, but that in cases where these rules conflict, the overriding obligation is to try to achieve the greatest possible good. With regard, for instance, to promise-keeping, I hold that the ultimate rational basis for this rule—the obligation to try to

produce the greatest good, also affords the only possible justification for breaking it in exceptional circumstances. Surely no final appeal to any other rule could settle the matter, for these rules are no more absolute than the rule about keeping promises.

We need not rule out the possibility that a special moral rule might be of such a nature that in no circumstances would its breach effect an increase in the greatest possible good. The rule that one ought not to torture prisoners might well be of this nature. But this does not prove that the rule is intuitively grasped, still less does it challenge our principle that the overriding consideration when moral conflicts arise within us is the goodness or badness of the effects of our actions.

A criticism which we have to face here, however, is this. If the one test of the rightness or wrongness of a proposed action is its effect, so far as we can judge it, on the total good in the world, then one must not give any weight to considerations of merit or of gratitude in the distribution of this good. I must not, that is, say that Mr. Jones has a special claim to receive a certain good because of some service he has rendered, or that Mr. Brown deserves an increase in happiness while Mr. Smith deserves to be made thoroughly miserable. If the one test of my action is the greatest increase in the total good in the world, I must not confuse or complicate the decision by suggesting that Mr. Jones has a special claim to gratitude and Mr. Brown to reward. The critic who is pressing this against us is usually willing to go so far as to say that one ought to show gratitude, or do "justice" to Brown and Smith, even if the maximum possible increase of *total* good is *not* thereby achieved, and that since our insistence on a single criterion rules out considerations of merit and gratitude, our view is plainly false.[1]

My answer to this criticism is this. It is one thing to hold, as I do, that if we are seriously and sincerely facing a moral problem on which moral philosophers and religious teachers and other leaders of thought find it difficult to give guidance to ordinary persons, the criterion which, by a process of reasoning, we have to apply to the problem is the effect of our decision on the "greatest good." It is quite another thing to hold, as I do not, that the greatest good will best be achieved by everybody going about, as it were, with a hedonistic calculating machine and asking whether their every action is likely to have optimific results. I have not suggested that the instinctive and emotional basis of human relationships and social codes should all be ignored and that everyone should become a self-conscious rational hedonist. The driving forces of the moral life are the emotions, and although I believe that a correct interpretation of the nature of moral obligation reveals that dimly and implicitly the pure moral reason is its basis, I believe that explicit appeals to the pure reason need rarely be made, and, indeed, ought only to be made by mature and competent thinkers. If the issue is some great problem connected with sex, or with war, it may be necessary, and it probably will be necessary, if the discussion is to be fruitful, to consider whether the course

[1] The rational principle—central to my exposition—that no person is to be merely a means to others' welfare, provides of course for justice.

which one contemplates will lead to the greatest good, or even to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But I do not think that the greatest good will be achieved if everyone is consciously seeking it all the time. There is something in Butler's suggestion that God is a rational utilitarian but that men are not wise enough to be.

My answer, then, to the critic who raises the problem of gratitude and justice is a simple one. We have undoubtedly an emotional disposition, possibly an instinctive one, to like people who are kind to us and to desire—at any rate at the moment—to increase *their* good without reference to the good of other people. We have also a detached desire that the good shall be rewarded and the evil punished. Now the fact that we have an emotional tendency, even if it is an instinctive one, does not mean that that tendency is right and must not be fought against. But if a desire is almost universal, is "natural," as we say, then we ought to be very sure of our ground before we pronounce against it. Now it does seem to me extremely probable that a society of persons who are grateful for kindnesses, who feel strongly, if somewhat crudely, on the subject of making the good happy and the bad suffer, will be a better and happier society than one devoid of such feelings. On the whole, therefore, I do not feel that I ought to discourage these sentiments, or even to inhibit them, and refrain from acting on them, in my own case. But this is not to say that the repaying of kindnesses and the administration of what men call "justice" are matters of cast-iron moral laws intuitively perceived, and to be obeyed mechanically. I retain the right to discourage gratitude, or even to refrain from a mechanical "justice," in special circumstances, and the test of such exceptional treatment of a situation would be the effect of my action on the general good.

The critic may, however, even now not be satisfied. "Suppose," he might say, "that you could know for certain that by hurting some innocent person very severely, mentally or in body, or that by arranging for some tyrant's assassination, you could bring about a more generally happy state of affairs, would you not be bound, on your view, to act accordingly?" The reply, again, is simple. Man is finite and does not know what all the consequences of his actions will be. If I "knew for certain," I should be God. Now no one would suggest that it would be wrong for *God* to terminate the existence of a man whose continued existence would cause untold misery. But I am not God, and I cannot calculate the direct, let alone the indirect, effects of my actions. Certain it is that a society where life is held cheap and obnoxious persons are eliminated by private enterprise is *not* a happy society. Would it not have been a good thing if Hitler's nurse had strangled him at birth? Would she not therefore have been justified in so doing if she could have foreseen the recent war? Possibly, but the point is that we have to lay down rules of conduct for nurses who are *not* all-prescient.

I agree, then, with writers as different as Bradley and Sidgwick in holding that on the whole we should accept the morality of our society. I certainly will not take the responsibility of disparaging any of these

conventional rules of conduct. But neither will I treat them as iron laws to be obeyed slavishly. The ultimate, though not the initial, justification for obeying any rule of conduct is that as rational I freely choose to do so, because I believe that this will lead to the best results.

It is now our task to render more definite our conception of the greatest possible general good. Those moral philosophers who agree in rejecting intuitionism, in rejecting, that is, the view that certain classes of actions in themselves, quite apart from the results, are to be approved or condemned, and who agree therefore that actions must be judged by the results which they are calculated to produce, may be divided into two main classes. The first class holds that there are a number of good results, or values, which right actions tend to create, and that these cannot all be reduced to one common denominator, while the second class holds that all statements about what is good or has value can only be intelligibly interpreted as statements about the happiness of sentient beings. The first class, which can be described as non-hedonistic utilitarians, holds that there are many things which can be produced by our actions which are really good in themselves. For instance, if by some action or series of actions I have helped some person to achieve a good character, or have helped to create a beautiful object, then I have been producing something which is clearly good in itself. The second class, however, would say that the alleged "goodness" or value of anything is not something intrinsic but is merely its power to confer happiness on sentient beings.

I take the latter view myself, and it seems to me that as an Idealist I am bound to do so. As I can only conceive of the "being" of anything as "being for" some centre of consciousness, I naturally interpret the "value" of anything in terms of its appreciation by that centre. But even if I could admit that material objects, or universals other than values, could have their being in entire independence of any experience, I still could not see how any statement that they were "good," or had value or beauty, could have meaning unless interpreted as a statement that persons could in certain circumstances derive some form of satisfaction from experiencing them.

It is true that popular language down the ages has applied the word "good" indiscriminately to a number of very different types of object; to material objects, to moral characters and to artistic taste, for instance. We speak of a good system of drainage, a man of good character, a man of good taste. But we cannot proceed to argue that therefore there is a common quality which we may call "good" or "value" which "resides" in material objects, abstractions and human souls alike. That sort of reasoning would be on a par with saying that objects fall to the ground because they possess the quality of heaviness. The logical positivist has rightly insisted that it is one of the tasks of philosophy to *criticise* ordinary language. We must not imagine occult substances and qualities to correspond to our nouns and adjectives. The point at issue is, I believe, a good instance of the truth of the analytical school's contention that some

nouns and adjectives cannot be defined by synonyms, and that the only thing to do is to recast the whole sentence. The real meaning of "good" and "value" can only be brought out by recasting the sentences in which these words occur so that they become statements about the states of mind of conscious beings.

Now it seems to me impossible to maintain that there is a common quality of good or value possessed intrinsically and objectively by material objects, men's moral characters and abstract universals quite independently of any awareness of these objects by conscious beings. It is surely impossible to maintain that "good" as applied to a sewage system means objectively and intrinsically the same as "good" applied to a man's character or to a symphony. But it is by no means impossible to maintain that there *is* a common feature in the states of mind with which we contemplate these various types of object. There is something common to the states of mind in which I contemplate the benefits of the sewage system, enjoy fellowship with the good man, listen to the symphony, and eat a meal when hungry. And since, if this is so, I am entitled to use a word to describe this common feature, I cannot see why the words "pleasure"—used in a technical sense—or "happiness" should not serve. This does not mean that there is a "thing" called happiness which can only vary in *quantity* and which is present in varying amounts in these various states of mind. Nor does it even mean that there is a quality called happiness which can have qualitative variations, just as the quality "colour" can be pink or blue. It is not correct to say that the happiness I experience in listening to a symphony is different in quality from that which I experience in doing mathematics or eating a meal, for it is not correct to say that I experience happiness at all. I experience a concrete whole ; not an abstraction like happiness or misery.

The matter is extraordinarily difficult to put accurately. The fact is that in dealing with these things of the spirit we use metaphors—terms drawn from material things. Hedonists have said that men seek happiness, and their opponents have very rightly retorted that they do nothing of the sort ; they seek concrete situations. The hedonist is equally entitled to make the point which I have already mentioned, namely that his language is no more inaccurate than that of philosophers who talk of values as though they were inherent in material things and abstractions. Now strictly speaking we are not even correct in saying that happiness is a common feature in various states of mind, for a "state of mind" is an abstraction and it could be argued that the happiness is in the person and not in his state of mind. Perhaps the most adequate way of saying what we mean is this. Human beings have many differing experiences which can all be classed together as those in which those beings are "happy." These experiences can be arranged roughly in a scale. Persons enjoying experiences at one end of the scale can be said to be more happy, or to have a greater quantity of happiness, than those enjoying experiences at the other end, but these expressions are only metaphorical. At one end of the scale are states of mind which we share with the lower animals ; at the other end are those which we

have every reason to think are—in a way which philosophy can to some extent explain—akin to the Divine. The justification for the expression, inaccurate though it is, "greater happiness" as applied to the one end of the scale is that given by Plato, namely that men with natures more akin to those of animals only know the one end of the scale, while more "spiritual" men know the whole scale and yet prefer the other end. The scale has such an extreme range that it is natural to use different terms—"pleasure" for the lower end, "happiness" for the centre and "blessedness" for the higher end which includes religious and mystical experience. But this does not alter the fact that it is one and the same scale, just as degrees of warmth and degrees of cold are degrees on the same scale.

The ethical doctrine which I have outlined may be described as rational or altruistic hedonism. Let us consider a possible objection. Let us take the case of a person who, at real self-sacrifice, confers some material benefit, such as the supply of food or clothing, on other persons. It may be urged against me that while the enjoyment of these material things was a "good" or "had value," the greatest value produced by the action was not the happiness of the recipients of the charity but the effect on the character of the benefactor. For a good character has an absolute value.

Now it must be agreed that a good character has a value quite apart from any pleasure which actions flowing from it may confer on other people. But what *is* this value which is inherent in the good will, the good character? Surely it can only mean that a really good man is living through an experience which is *better* than it would be if he were not so good. Now we may use alternative words for "better"; we may say "higher." But in the final analysis I think we shall find that we really mean "happier," and that if we do not admit this, we can give no account of what we do mean. A man who has experienced the good life, the life of rational morality as I have defined it, knows that if he ceased to be good he would not be so happy. When we say that one type of life is better or higher than another, we are comparing them in respect of that common feature of all experience for which the word "happiness" lies ready to hand. This is, I think, borne upon us when we study the *Republic* of Plato. For all his rightful scorn of the baser pleasures, he nowhere gives us any other than the hedonistic criterion for deciding why higher types of experience *are* higher. To speak of the ordered, or systematic, or proportioned, or duly subordinated or harmonious life does not solve the problem. Why is the ordered life, or even the life which fulfils the purpose of God, better than the unordered or rebellious life? Why is the life of a saint better than that of a pig? I can see no answer except to say that a person who has experienced both prefers the one to the other. This, in fact, is what Plato does say. The philosopher knows the whole range of possible experience; the carnally-minded man only knows carnal things. The preference of the man who has really experienced both is always for the things of the spirit. That is where Plato has to leave it, and so must we. But what

is the difference between saying "I prefer experience A to experience B" and saying "I am happier when living through experience A than when living through experience B"? To say that the joys of the mind are higher or nobler than the joys of the senses must be to say that they stand higher in the scale of happiness. To say that the blessedness of communion with God is an even higher experience than æsthetic or intellectual joy is only a way of saying that the soul finds its supreme happiness or greatest happiness in God.

But, it may be urged, does not Plato hold, and have not all the saints held, that it is better to be virtuous, however miserable, than to be happy in wrongdoing? The answer depends on a fuller explanation of the question. The suggestion may be that in spite of wretched circumstances a good man has a peace of mind, and even a subtle inner joy, which is more worth having than is the pleasure of the evildoer. This may sometimes be true, and when it is it fits my case. St. Paul in prison was perhaps happier than Nero on his throne. But the suggestion may on the other hand be that a man whose goodness is leading him to suffer acutely, whether mentally or physically, is better off than a bad happy man. I do not think this can be intelligibly affirmed unless by "better off" you mean that he has the certainty of winning through to a greater happiness, if not in this life then in the hereafter, than he would have achieved without this suffering. The statement that "virtue is its own reward" is, I think, plainly false. It is worthy of notice that he who saw deepest into moral realities has never lent his authority to this rather shallow generalisation, but on the contrary told us that the pure in heart are blessed because they have a reward other than being pure in heart, namely seeing God.

There is no subject on which there is more need for clear thinking and careful writing than the subject of the relationship between happiness and "value." Writers sometimes speak as though it could be our duty to make people good *at the expense* of their happiness. For instance, Mr. C. S. Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain*,[1] tells us that "It is for people whom we care nothing about that we demand happiness on any terms; with our friends, our lovers, our children, we are exacting and would rather see them suffer much than be happy in contemptible and estranging modes." But surely a father who chose suffering for his child, except as a passing experience and a means to a higher or more enduring happiness, would be a fiend. It is because we know from experience that one cannot be *very* happy, or enduringly happy, in contemptible and estranging modes, and that the price of great and enduring happiness must in certain circumstances be a period of pain, that what Mr. Lewis says is true.

My difficulty with the view that there is an intrinsic good, an intrinsic moral value, out of all relation to happiness, is that it makes the moral struggle ridiculous. We were sometimes told in the dark days of war that it was a glorious privilege to live in such times, since we thereby had a chance of attaining a moral greatness denied to those who have lived

[1] C. S. Lewis: *The Problem of Pain*, p. 29.

or who will live in safer and softer times. Why then is it our duty to "make the world better"? If a rational humane world where war was unthinkable, wealth distributed justly, leisure and security obtainable by all and disease largely banished was a world in which our characters inevitably degenerated, then we ought to aim at none of these results. If, for instance, in healing disease the greatest value produced was the effect on the character of the healer, then it would be immoral to try to banish disease thoroughly and on a large scale, for in so doing you would be destroying the conditions for the production of the morally valuable urge to relieve pain. The only escape from this fantastic conclusion is to hold that happiness, though not of course one's private happiness, is the true end of moral action.

It may be true, of course, that people living in tragic and dangerous times have a chance of developing a kind of courage which could not be developed in easier times. But I do not believe that physical courage is very high in the scale of values. It is something which we share with the brutes, and is a matter of temperament and "nerve" rather than of pure will. Moreover, the value of a human quality passes with the conditions which demand it. Surely the truth is that the human race is still in its savage infancy, and that the possibilities of real humanity—of that rational spirituality which is divinity—have scarcely begun to be understood. Men will not *begin* to live—to develop richer and subtler qualities of mind and spirit—until the problems of the means of living, the problems of war and poverty, have been solved. At this point I express no opinion as to the prospects of human progress on this earth. We may have to look for a kingdom not of this world. But however that may be, I cannot see how we can believe in God or morality if we are afraid of happiness.

It may be urged in criticism of the above exposition of a moral philosophy based on the philosophy of the Absolute that I have confined the categorical imperative to duty to man, and have ignored the possibility of there being a duty to God other than the duty to do his will to men. I propose, however, to treat of this subject when I come to discuss the question of Theism as religion, i.e., Theism not merely as a philosophica doctrine but as an attitude to life.

It may not, however, be out of place here to treat briefly a question concerning the relation between the Idealist Logic and Social Philosophy. I refer to the main lines of Professor Hobhouse's criticism, in *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, of Bosanquet's *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. A great deal of Hobhouse's criticism is on grounds other than metaphysical, and an Absolutist cannot of course object to this, as he should be the first to agree that the proof of the speculative pudding is in the ethical eating; a logical theory which leads to chaotic ethical consequences can scarcely be "coherent" in the Idealist sense of that word. But Hobhouse clearly recognised that the root of the matter is metaphysics. On page 32 he complained that an individual who "claims to be at least himself, an independent centre of thought and feeling," has

"not even selfhood left to him, for his self is realisable only in the organised whole in which he is a kind of transitory phase." And on page 41 he shows that the sum and substance of Idealist Social Philosophy is that "There is a common self, and this is no metaphor."

It seems to me that one can accept the main metaphysical teaching of Bosanquet without necessarily accepting his theory of the State, just as one can accept a great deal of Hegel and yet reject that deification of the State which has wrought such havoc in Europe. It will be useful to recall here the point which we made in discussing the bearing of the principle of identity-in-difference on the relation of soul to soul and of soul to Absolute.[1] It was that the differences between the experiences of two souls were not to be regarded as effects following the previous creation of two selves which are "separate substances." The distinct existence of the two selves is not logically prior, still less prior in time, to the differences between them. On the contrary, the differences are logically prior, though not of course prior in time, to the "separate existences" of two souls. But the popular view that two souls are "really separate" or are "cut off" from one another has a very real justification, although I deny that souls are separate *substances*. For the basis of the differences between two centres of consciousness is that private or peculiar experience which each of us has of a certain material object which we call our body. This private experience consists of sensations which give a man a knowledge of his own body which others do not possess. It is also the basis of that unique perspective from which each man views the material world. These unique and private facts involve a great deal more that is peculiar to the individual, including his private memory-chain. Now so far as we know, a unique centre of consciousness, a unique memory-chain, is only possible if there is this private spatial perspective and bodily awareness. To leave the Idealist standpoint for a moment and to use common-sense language, we can say "No soul without a body." The Absolute or Oversoul is the fundamental fact and the occurrence of its finite differentiations is somehow bound up with corresponding brain-and-nerve systems, each of which excludes all the Absolute experience except that tiny amount which is in the focus of the individual "attention."

Now it seems to me that one of the weaknesses of monistic Idealism has been its neglect of this consideration, possibly from a defective notion of the scope of metaphysics which has led it to stick to logic to the exclusion of any appeal to physiological psychology. In applying its thesis that similarity is identity its use of the word "spirit" has been vague. Is a "common spirit" of men—the spirit of a nation, for instance—metaphor, or does it mean a definite centre of consciousness? Bradley assures us that a group is more real than an individual man, because it approaches nearer than he does to the self-sufficiency and inclusiveness of the Absolute.

Now it seems to me quite wrong to ignore the simple fact that a group

[1] *See* p. 44.

does not, as such, have a brain and nervous system which can be the basis of its "separate existence" in the way that the human body is the basis of the individual's existence and peculiar and private self-consciousness. Any points of similarity between individuals are points of identity in the sense that in the Absolute they occur once, and are not duplicated. In other words there *is* a common centre which includes the common spirit of Jones and Brown, but this is not their municipality, or their nation, or their golf club or any other group to which they belong or in which they may be classed on the strength of some trivial similarity such as red hair. The common centre is nothing less than the Absolute. There are none of those mediating entities which Fechner speculated about.

Clearly some points of identity are much more important than others. I do not think that the nation or the "race" or most of our outwardly organised groups are of very great metaphysical significance. For they are not based on a common sharing of the deeper richnesses of the Absolute experience. An acceptance of metaphysical Absolutism is compatible with a very free criticism of such alleged entities as the State. The fact that two individuals happen to live in the same country and obey the same rulers is admittedly a point of similarity and therefore of identity, but it is in the things of the spirit that men find their real unity, for in these they experience greater reality, value, and freedom.

The view which I have just outlined may seem open to the charge of individualism, for its treatment of human groups sounds almost nominalistic. But fundamentally it is not individualistic for it insists on the union of all souls in the Absolute, and there is bound therefore to be a distinction in its treatment of human groups. The distinction must be drawn in this way. We have seen that, if the Absolutist is right, the mental, moral and spiritual growth of an individual is a process in which he grows, as it were, towards the fullness of the Absolute Experience, or a process in which the Absolute "returns to itself." But we have to face the fact that there is individual retrogression as well as individual progress, and that if individuals become evil in similar ways we may be asked to admit that our theory postulates their essential identity in this respect. There will be the unity of the thieves' kitchen as well as the unity of a church. But the distinction, I think, lies in this. The identity of souls forming a church will be an identity with the Absolute in a sense in which the union of souls in the thieves' kitchen is not. The identity of souls based on a common approach to the Absolute fullness is both metaphysically and ethically distinguishable from a "union" of souls—if it can be called such—based on a common *exclusion* of that measure of the richness of the Absolute experience which men are capable of sharing. Man is really only one with man to the extent that each positively shares the fullness of the Divine life. An essential feature of Absolutism is its treatment of evil and error as negative rather than positive, as being the *absence* of richer experience. In goodness and truth men find a positive identity with the Divine, and through this and only through this a union with each other.

This is no mere piece of remote speculation. It means in practice, when we remember the Kantian view of moral obligation as we have interpreted it in terms of immanence, that the mere fact that an individual finds himself in a group does not bind him morally to further its aims. He is only bound to do so if the group purpose is, as it were, mediating the purpose of the Whole. An individual may be right on some controversial point and his group may be wrong, for he may be in this matter in the largest identity with the Absolute of which men are capable, and this may not be the case with any other member of his group. The final test is not "Is my group, my society, approving my attitude and am I therefore in this respect one with them?" but "Is my attitude on this question a feature of positive identity with the Divine?" Most of those who hold that the moral outlook is essentially a social outlook will say that in the vast majority of instances the answer to the two questions is the same. But this need not *always* be the case.

CHAPTER IV

ABSOLUTISM AND HUMAN FREEDOM

THE Absolutist view of freedom is intimately related to its conception of the good life. I have, admittedly, given an emphasis rather different from that of Bradley and Bosanquet in my discussion of Absolutist ethics; I have, that is, given a Kantian prominence to moral obligation which is lacking with them, although I have related this to Absolutist metaphysic in a way that Kant would not have done. And my treatment of the moral end is far nearer to the rational hedonism of Sidgwick than to any Absolutist writer that I know of, although even here I do not believe that I have departed from what is logically *involved* in that treatment of the good life in the good society which is found in both Bosanquet and in Plato's *Republic*. For my point was that when all was said and done they never produced any criterion other than "happiness" as the basis of the moral choice. I have certainly had no intention of rejecting their doctrine of the good life as an approach to the self-consistency, self-sufficiency, inclusiveness or richness, and ordered unity of the Absolute experience; I merely insisted that a life might have all these characteristics without furnishing us with any warrant for calling it "good" unless we believed that a life with all these qualities was a *happier* life.

These observations are relevant to the approach to the problem of freedom, for the Absolutist doctrine of freedom will only be accepted by those who accept this Plato-Bosanquet conception of the good life. I have only one reservation to make in expressing my adherence to this doctrine, namely that since that good society which is the necessary setting to the good life is very far from existing in the world to-day, and may indeed be unattainable on this earth, the duty of promoting the happiness of others may involve an acceptance of suffering by the good man to an extent which both Plato and Bosanquet failed to recognise. But since the essence of a thing can often be seen best by taking an extreme case—and in the case of the nature of the good life we *must* deal with the Ideal—we can proceed to discuss the real nature of freedom as the Idealist sees it.

The whole Absolutist epistemology and moral philosophy can perhaps be summed up in two propositions. The first is that the urge to mental and moral growth is the urge (*a*) to consistency—to the removal of contradictions—and (*b*) to expansion, which we can define for our purpose as the bringing of more and more experience into the unity of conscious life. The second is that (*a*) and (*b*) are connected, for consistency is only

attainable by such expansion. With the epistemological side of this doctrine we are not here concerned, but the ethical doctrine must be briefly mentioned.

In the field of morals, contradiction or disharmony takes the form that is commonly called conflict of motives. If I am to have this I cannot have that, and yet I want them both. Now what does the Absolutist mean when he says that the conflict or contradiction is removed by expansion? He means two things and the two are connected. He, means, first, that to the extent to which a potentially rational being develops and expresses his full being, to that extent conflict tends to disappear. A "sound" education and a "healthy" environment could be defined as those in which he does tend to realise his possibilities of full and harmonious development. With such an education and in such an environment there becomes possible a growth in his rational nature and an increase in his æsthetic appreciations and in the whole range of his interests and joys; and with this there comes an increase in his power of self-analysis and self-criticism. And as his knowledge of the value-calculus increases, then, although it is still true that if he has this he cannot have that, he now realises that this is worth having and that that is by comparison worthless. The doctrine is, of course, derived ultimately from Plato's *Republic*. It is partly based on the view that there are not, in the things of the mind and spirit, the fierce competitiveness, the mutual intolerance, the painful reactions, which are so manifest in the case of the more primitive feelings. Mental health and freedom from inner conflict are, then, attained through expansion to wholeness. The passions are controlled simply because they are seen to be productive of *lesser values*; means are clearly distinguished from ends, and the whole man functions in an harmonious unity.

It is no criticism of this doctrine to urge that it is all very vague and general, and that, given the conditions of this life, the degree in which we reach such "wholeness" is very small. For the argument is that in proportion as we *do* grow towards full development and "expansion," we *do* attain a measure of consistency or freedom from conflict.

The second of the two meanings to be attached to the connexion between expansion and freedom from conflict is this. Not only is conflict between the parts of a man's nature reconciled by "expansion" in the way we have just seen, but conflict between man and man tends to disappear as each man experiences a healthy development. The growth of the rational in each man means that each is growing into ever greater identity with the living Whole and therefore into real harmony as between man and man. This is no mere piece of abstract reasoning; it is also a fact of experience. The competitiveness of passions, their tendency to intolerant exclusiveness and painful reaction and general chaos—all this is not only an experience within the consciousness of each person; it is a competitiveness as *between* man and man as well as *in* each man between the parts of his nature. Passions not only divide a man against himself; they divide man from man. It is in the things of the spirit that men tend to rise above their silly hatreds. True, there is sometimes

fierce competition between men of reputed culture, rationality, and spirituality, but this is surely because they are still controlled to some extent by non-spiritual interests. To the extent to which we truly love truth and beauty for their own sakes we do not care whether our personal contributions are recognised as ours or not. Few of us would claim that we have reached that high standard, but that does not affect the argument.

The fact that there is this twofold meaning to the assertion that conflict or contradiction is reconciled by expansion towards the fullness of the Absolute experience—the fact that expansion tends to reconcile conflict not only as between parts of a man but also as between man and man—is stated briefly by Absolutists in the phrase "*The rational self is the social self.*" The richer, the more harmonious, the more rational my own life, the wider are my social sympathies and the more I identify myself with wider and yet wider wholes of which I am a part. The two sides of Absolutist ethics can be in some respects compared with Butler's Prudence, or enlightened self-interest, and Benevolence respectively. But Absolutism insists that these are not two separate ethical principles but *two expressions of one principle*—the principle that the true end of man is growth *into the fullness of the Whole.* And after all, even from the point of view of common sense, it would seem that we cannot be intelligently unselfish unless we are intelligently selfish ; we cannot serve others efficiently unless we have found for ourselves what are the highest values. For the Absolutist, even self-sacrifice must be explained as a form of self-expression ; we die to live, we lose our lives to find them.

For the Absolutist, then, all true moral growth and all true mental growth are increases of similarity to and therefore of identity with the Absolute. For the Absolute is the perfectly harmonious and the perfectly inclusive, and it is each because it is the other. True, the difference between the dullest and the most brilliant of men, between the worst and the best of men, may be very little as compared with the vast difference between them all and the Absolute, but this does not affect the principle. Moreover, the value of these sweeping generalisations is not diminished by the further doctrine that in the last resort truth and morality only reach perfection by passing into something more than truth and morality. Nor need we reject the view of Professor A. E. Taylor that it is impossible completely to reconcile the claims of self-culture and social duty.[1] In anyone less than the Absolute, this failure to attain complete consistency is just what the theory requires.

This bare outline is, of course, open to much criticism, but I must confine my criticism to what is relevant to my subject. The foregoing was necessary in order to lead up to the Absolutist conception of human freedom. The doctrine is broadly this—that we are free in proportion as we are rational, or, what on this theory is the same thing, in proportion

[1] "From the now familiar duality of the moral ideal it will follow that in theory at least the goodness of the act might be measured by two not necessarily according standards—the standard of the degree of lasting satisfaction it secures for the individual and the standard of the extent of the social circle which in some way derives an increase of satisfaction from it." A. E. Taylor: *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 329.

as we are moral and social in our outlook. A man is free to the degree that his actions have their ground *within* him and are not unwilling compromises with something which opposes him from without. He is free whose actions flow from the coherent unity of his nature as a whole. If I am swayed by the passing passions of lust or anger, then I am not expressing *myself*, for my real self, i.e., the self which reason reveals to me, is rational, and when I "come to myself" I really desire to keep the passions in their place. Now because I am not, when I give way to passions, expressing my real self, I am not free. For from the point of view of my real or full self the cause of my action is an "other"—it is something which opposes ; I will not identify myself with it and it is in that sense an external force which has defeated me. Similarly, if I behave in an anti-social manner I am equally constrained by an "other" ; my action is not an expression of my real self, for my real self, as rational and social, is *ipso facto* impartial towards my empirical self. To be biased in favour of my empirical self, i.e., to be "selfish," is to thwart my real self.

Now if freedom is defined in this way, it becomes clear that freedom is a matter of degree. It is a positive conception ; it is no mere absence of constraint. In the last analysis only the Absolute can be entirely free, for only for the Absolute can there be no opposing "other" ; only for the Absolute can there be perfect harmony and all-inclusive systematic unity.

There is a sentence in Bosanquet's *Principle of Individuality and Value* (p. 23) which can, I think, be said to express the essence of his philosophy, and which can also be taken to summarise our discussion of freedom so far. "Logic, or the spirit of totality, is the clue to reality, value and freedom." To have arrived at such a vast generalisation, to have included such a range of experience in such a simple formula is, it seems to me, a noteworthy achievement. But so far as freedom is concerned it has been done, I think, at the price of omitting from the concept something which is, in the view of the common man, an essential aspect of it. It is this which sets us our main problem in the matter of freedom.

This problem is that of the apparent contradiction between the finite experience of freedom and the Absolute experience of complete systematic unity. The question at issue I conceive to be this. Can we reconcile with a belief in the systematic unity of reality the deep conviction of our moral consciousness that our past moral decisions *might have been other than they were*, even though all the relevant factors *preceding* those decisions had been what they were?

If it be asked why I select this problem, out of the many which arise when we consider human freedom, the answer is that in my view this is just the one problem which the Absolutist exposition of freedom as outlined above has failed to solve. I cannot doubt that the Absolutist is essentially right in insisting on a *positive* conception of freedom, and even though we should fail entirely in our treatment of the problem which I have just proposed, I should still hold that the

Absolutist doctrine of freedom presents fewer difficulties than any other which I know. But it is useless to shut our eyes to this ontological, as distinct from the ethical and the psychological, aspect of the freedom problem. The ontological problem is this. If we accept that psychological analysis of the sense of moral responsibility, or of the sense of guilt, which regards as an essential feature of these phenomena a conviction that the past need not have been, and that therefore a really moral choice could not be *predicted* with absolute certainty however complete one's knowledge of psychological and material facts preceding the choice, then we have a very real difficulty before us if we also insist, as insist we must if we are committed to Absolutism, that from the Absolute standpoint the whole is completely systematic.

My difficulty with Absolutism just here has been that I have not found in it any adequate treatment of the problem. Absolutism, it is true, professes to reject the notion of determinism as a *vis a tergo*, to reject, that is, a crude mechanical determinism in which the events and circumstances of the past are thought of as determining those of the present, and those of the present those of the future, in an "external" way. It rejects any idea that a person's action is the "resultant" of the impact of psychical billiards balls, so to speak. It insists that the source of action is a spiritual entity which functions as a whole, takes up and modifies "motives" in and through the unity of its life, and which acts teleologically. But when we examine the conception closely, we find that the Absolutist's self-determinism is but determinism after all, and we are left with our problem unsolved.

Bosanquet, for instance, seems to favour the idea that the physiological parallel to psychological events may be a deterministic system which is in the strictest sense mechanical. He tells us that :[1]

> "In the nature of things, there seems to be nothing to hinder the previous calculation of all physical movements and the behaviour of all physical systems *such as organic bodies* . . . there could be no reason why the accumulation of capacity for complex automatic responses to stimuli—*the physical correlate of teleological action*—should not be naturally explicable and capable of being scientifically predicted."

This seems plain enough. If the "physical correlate" of psychological events can be predicted, there seems to be no room, if we take the parallelism rigorously, for any real psychological freedom. It is true that Bosanquet tries to soften the blow ; he adds :

> "But new ideas, the significance of things . . . would be inaccessible to the calculator as such."

But the concession helps us little. For we are next told that :

> "If, however, we were to speak not of pure calculation, but of calculation plus intelligence, then no limitation seems theoretically

[1] B. Bosanquet: *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 114.

possible . . . calculation plus intelligence might in principle predict the whole of individual character and conduct, but this would only be possible if and because the intelligence in question was able to preconstruct the ideas and habits of the future individual."

By calculation, Bosanquet seems to mean mechanical or mathematical calculation, which would, of course, be confined to the physical or external aspects of conduct. But he seems to hold also that if the calculator, in virtue of his own intelligence, were able to supplement his physical knowledge by a thorough knowledge of the mind of the person under consideration, his power of prediction would extend beyond the physiological to the parallel psychical events.

It would seem then that Bosanquet does not rule out the possibility that mechanical determinism and the Idealist's self-determinism are merely the physiological and the psychological aspects respectively of one and the same fact. But even if an Idealist is not prepared to go as far as this, even if he rejects the notion that the workings of the nervous system are theoretically explicable on purely mechanistic lines, it is still, it seems to me, possible for him to hold a form of "self-determinism" just as rigid as ordinary determinism and just as inconsistent with the delivery of the moral consciousness. For although disinteresting himself in the physical parallels to motive and conduct he can hold that complete insight into a person's mind, combined with complete knowledge of his environment, would imply complete knowledge of his future actions.

Before, however, we pass to the question whether it is possible to reconcile the Absolute experience of complete systematic unity with the finite belief that the future is not rigidly determined by the past, we ought I think to examine this belief a little more closely. Is it true that the moral consciousness is based on the assumption that a present is not rigidly determined by a past and that therefore the past wrong action need not have been ?

In dealing with a question such as this, each of us will naturally tend, and each of us has a right, to look in the first place into his own mind. Speaking for myself, I am bound to say that if I look back on what I conceive to have been my mistake or my wrong action, the essence of the conviction is that the matter might have been, could have been, otherwise, although all the relevant facts preceding the moral choice had been exactly the same. One might not, of course, be willing to stake much in the way of metaphysical belief on a personal conviction of this kind, and I am far from suggesting that the conviction, as stated, is not open to criticism. But something of the sort does seem to be an almost universal human belief. Men do as a rule hold that events really *are* decided at moments of crisis—that something really does hang in the balance at those moments and not merely appear to hang in the balance. But as against this a rigid determinism, whether it is crudely mechanical or whether it claims to be a spiritual self-determinism, means that history is unreal and that no real decision is ever taken. I should not quarrel with this if it merely meant that events in time are the *appearance* in time of a reality which is in

some sense eternal or not "in time," for this, as we shall see later, may be true. But it means more than this ; it means that the appearance of activity and crisis is illusory, and this I could not concede.

Bosanquet's treatment of the question of prediction is interesting. He tells us[1] that while we should instinctively resent prediction of our conduct based on mere scientific calculation from data existing previous to our birth, we do not resent prediction based on observation and experience of our formed individual character. "We dislike not really the foretelling," he tells us in a footnote, "but the reduction to something which leaves out all we are." (I suppose he means that what we dislike is the reduction of ourselves to a whirl of electrons and so on.) There is truth in this, but it does not really meet the difficulty. For someone to tell me that he is certain that I shall conquer a coming temptation because my character is settled and strong, is of course far more flattering than for me to be told that I shall overcome the temptation because the whole psychological business is a parallel to a material system as predictable as the planetary motions. But in the end of the day it all comes to the same if the present strength and stability of my character could have been predicted at my birth on the basis of the psychological factors involved—my own and those of the people who have influenced me.

An even more valiant attempt to reconcile a belief in determinism with the moral consciousness is that of Rashdall.[2] The case is brilliantly presented, and one has to concede a good deal of it. He shows that the establishment of the truth of determinism would not affect the validity of value judgments, and that the moral consciousness of mankind does not refuse to call an action or a character good because it can be "accounted for." The moral judgments of men do not presume to decide whether, and if so to what extent, there was an element of unpredictable choice over and above the complex factors which determined the sanctity of a saint. The Indeterminist is not entitled to claim that the common-sense moral judgments of men, when analysed, afford him all the support he needs for his thesis. For common sense is content to denounce villainy and approve virtue without inquiring too closely into metaphysical questions. It would also be generally agreed, I think, that determinism is quite different from fatalism, and is quite consistent with exhortations to strive after virtue or (to use the stock instance) to pour water on one's burning house.

Rashdall's argument seems to me to fail, however, when he tries to reconcile the phenomenon of remorse with a deterministic theory of human conduct. On p. 333 of Vol. 2, he considers the case of a man who appears to have repented of a past evil life. He supposes that the man now becomes acquainted with the deterministic theory of the genesis of his bad self and straightway repents of his repentance :

[1] B. Bosanquet: *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 113.

[2] Hastings Rashdall: *Theory of Good and Evil*, Book 3. Rashdall was not, of course, an Absolutist, but his defence of an ethical interpretation of determinism is relevant to the Idealist's "self-determinism."

> "If such a theory did have that effect, this would seem to show that the sorrow was less sorrow for sin than the desire to throw the blame for it on somebody else—God or Nature, or "circumstances" or the like—or a desire to escape the punishment. . . ."

The argument is that a *genuine* sorrow for wrongdoing as such would remain unaffected by the acceptance of any theory whatsoever as to the genesis of that wrongdoing. But this is surely untrue. The sorrow might survive, but it must make a difference to the nature of the sorrow whether the wrongdoing was, or was not, believed to be an inevitability like inherited gout. And the simple fact is that remorse, or sorrow for past misdeeds, is a very different emotion from regret at having inherited a disease. The fact which confronts us, the fact of which our metaphysic must take account, is that this curious phenomenon of remorse is practically universal. It is not only in the darker tragedies of life that we find it ; in small degree, at least, we find it whenever we find a sense of moral responsibility at all. Whenever I feel that I ought not to have done something I feel that I need not have done it. I shall assume, then, for the purpose of this discussion, that we have to accept as a fact, explain it as we will, that no really voluntary action is rigidly "caused" by events and conditions *preceding it in time.* Whether we can reconcile this with a belief that the Real is not fundamentally pluralistic but a systematic unity is the problem which we have to face.

I am very far from suggesting that there is not a great deal of truth in the determinist's contention. There is no doubt whatever that any consideration of the nature and purpose of punishment, and of the conception of merit, must give a sympathetic consideration to the facts of heredity and environment which are now the commonplace of the street. And I am not at the moment concerned to deny the possibility of building up a moral society on the basis of a belief in determinism. I am not discussing whether determinism would "work." I am merely contending that to believe that history is not merely the playing of a written drama, is one of the deepest instincts of man, and of man at his highest. And if determinism is true, I simply cannot see why there should be this widespread belief that it is false. Any explanation to the effect that the false belief in freedom was a biological necessity in order to produce that belief in responsibility which is needed to ensure the survival of the race would, incidentally, contradict the determinist's thesis that our discovery of the truth of determinism would have no bad moral effects.

But if we reject determinism, what must we say of indeterminism ? If it be said that common sense demands freedom and personal responsibility, the determinist can reply that this surely means that *the man himself* is the cause of his actions, and on the face of it this favours determinism, not indeterminism. Sheer indeterminism would mean that there is an element of chance, of pure luck, which may occur in the process by which a man's total make-up produces a volition or which may intervene between the volition and the action. In either case the man is not responsible if, through this chance element, his action does

not accord with his character or his volition. We seem to have reached a dilemma. If his action is *not* determined by what he is, the man is not morally responsible, and he is not therefore really "free to act." But equally, if his action *is* determined by what he is, and if what he is is determined by *earlier* factors so that the whole series is theoretically *predictable*, then the man is not free and not responsible, for he is merely the transmitter of a cosmic push *a tergo*.

The fact which we have to face, I think, is that the moral consciousness of mankind, when analysed, is seen to reject alike indeterminism and determinism. On the one hand it insists that no element of blind chance intervenes between what I am and what I do. On the other hand it holds that the words "I need not have done it" have a definite meaning and are sometimes true.

To return, then, to our problem—the reconciliation between the Absolute experience of complete systematic unity and the finite experience of freedom. In a sense we have advanced a step towards the reconciliation, for we have rejected that sheer indeterminism which certainly could never be consistent with the Absolute experience of system. We have not, in other words, to try to reconcile system with chaos. But our task is difficult enough in all conscience, for we have to try to conceive of a real activity which is not completely predictable but which is yet completely systematic. That I should find a solution of a problem which has hitherto baffled the human mind would be a vain hope; but it may not be so hopeless to try to see where the solution must lie.

I think it possible that we should find the answer to the riddle if we could succeed in combining in one complete synthesis (*a*) a doctrine of freedom which I believe to be Kant's; (*b*) that doctrine of the relation of finite intelligences to the Absolute which we have seen to be linked to the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles and the logic of identity-in-difference; (*c*) a knowledge of the way in which *our* awareness of time is related to that of the Absolute.

Let us consider (*a*) first. As we have seen, an essential feature of the Absolutist ethic is its insistence on the importance of the element of rationality or self-consciousness[1] in man. So far, however, we have confined our attention to two consequences of this rationality, i.e., those bearing on the nature of the sense of moral obligation and the content of the moral life respectively. But there is, I think, a third consequence, a consequence which Kant himself saw clearly but which most Absolutists have not emphasised. It is this. At the stage at which man, in virtue of his rational self-consciousness, regards himself "rationally," i.e., conceptually or as one amongst others, he is also capable of becoming aware explicitly of instincts and feelings to which he has hitherto not attended. So long as he was not explicitly aware of them they worked *with the inevitability of* mechanical causation, as indeed they do in the lower animals. The preponderant feeling at the moment determines

[1] There is a close connexion between rationality and self-consciousness. It is only when I am capable of forming the concept of man in general, of thinking of myself as one man among other men, that I am completely self-conscious.

action as inevitably as the magnet attracts iron filings. But the coming of self-conscious rationality means the coming of a fresh factor into the mind, connected with, but distinct from, rationality itself. In other words, rationality has a function ; the rational man does not just stand aside and watch the interplay of his feelings and his actions in the way in which he watches the motions of the planets. In the latter case he can do nothing about it ; in the former case he can. In the case of a rational being, *feelings and actions do not form a causal series.*

It is important to avoid confusing this doctrine with one which resembles it but which yet is essentially determinist. The latter doctrine grants that rationality has a function, for the simple reason that the rational man is capable of emotions and motives which are absent from the lower animal. But when a man acts from what might be called rational motives, his actions are being *determined* by his state of mind at the moment, and in principle the position is exactly the same as when the cat is actuated by an impulse to catch a mouse. Clearly such a doctrine as this is compatible with the most rigorous mechanical determinism. But the Kantian doctrine, as I understand it, means something much more. Kant held that if I act because a certain feeling, however elevated or "rational," has got the better of me, I am not free. Kant's idea is much more profound ; it is that as timeless ego (not as empirical ego) I can, *though I need not,* introduce into the causal series a new and essentially unpredictable *factor.* My heredity and my feelings and circumstances, so long as I am not fully aware of them, determine my conduct inevitably ; but this ceases to be the case when I become rational and self-conscious.

Kant went so far as to say that in strictly moral choice, reason moves the will without feelings intervening at all. The reason *is* the moral will. It is not, I think, necessary for us to go as far as this. We need not even deny that moral feelings can sometimes be predicted and that action determined by such feelings is strictly moral action. All that we need maintain is that moral feelings have something behind them which no other feelings have. For the rational man, whether he has moral feelings to help him or not, *can,* because he "ought to," do the right, i.e., do the rational and social thing. If, owing to a good moral training or to past moral victories, he has moral feelings to help him, so much easier will be his moral choice, so much more formed will be his character and so much more predictable will be his decision. But the point is that the feelings are not in principle essential. He *can* break the causal feeling chain which would otherwise produce a wrong action, whether he has moral feelings to help him or not. Here again we need not deny that in the case of a man who has long practised evil, the possibility of his choosing the right is very slight ; we might agree that he cannot, in a sense, break the chain. But the point is that at some stage in a person's moral development he has used, or has refused to use, his power as a rational being of breaking an otherwise closed causal feeling-action series. This is the essential point, this power which conceptual, i.e., rational,

thinking brings with it of introducing entirely new, and therefore essentially unpredictable, determinants into the otherwise closed series.[1] The aim of moral education is to render the moral choices easier by enlisting on their side helpful "sentiments" or emotional habits; but in principle the person, as rational, is free. It is in childhood and youth, very largely but not exclusively, that the strictly moral, the strictly unpredictable, choices are made. You can predict with comparative certainty the decisions of the man of formed character, the man who has ceased to struggle and who finds virtue easy. But this is not to deny his freedom, for he is more free than ever—in the sense in which Absolutism uses the term and which I have already outlined. But Absolutists have, it seems to me, tended too much to confine their treatment of freedom to these aspects of inclusiveness and harmony. In their passion for the systematic unity of the Whole they have tended to a form of self-determinism which they have not sufficiently distinguished from mechanical determinism, and in their horror of the chaos of indeterminism they have not sufficiently emphasised the Kantian doctrine which I have just mentioned.

I do not claim to have followed Kant in all the details of his exposition. Indeed, since I make no claim to be a Kantian specialist, I might have felt some doubt whether I had not read into Kant what is not there,[2] were it not that since I studied the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Fundamental Principles of a Metaphysic of Morals* I have found support for my interpretation in Professor Nicolai Hartmann's treatment of freedom in his *Ethics*. Hartmann explicitly ascribes to Kant[3] the basic idea of his own doctrine that freedom consists in the introduction, into a "lower" order, of determinants from a "higher" one. Hartmann conceives of a lower order which is, in itself, a closed causal system—closed, that is, in the sense that it is impossible for anything *within* that order to break the chain. And the particular "nexus" or type of determination of this or any other real order is *never destroyed* even when the fresh determinants from the higher order are introduced. A momentary "free" intervention from above into a causal series *has purely causal effects*; the series remains causal; the nexus is not destroyed. But the momentary intervention has, of course, permanent effects on the future workings of the system. If there were no further intervention it would go on for ever as a closed causal system, but although the *law* of the system would remain unaffected by the intervention, the collocations, so to speak, would remain permanently different from what they would have been without the intervention.

So much for (*a*) (*see* p. 93). We have now to combine this doctrine of freedom with (*b*)—that view of the connexion between finite and

[1] Throughout this discussion I use the word "closed" in the sense used by Professor Nicolai Hartmann.

[2] What I have just said about Kant's doctrine of noumenal freedom differs from the exposition given by Dr. Broad in *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 137; but I notice that he is not, apparently, here interpreting the strictly ethical writings of Kant, but a doctrine enunciated in Kant's theological writings.

[3] N. Hartmann: *Ethics*, Vol. 3, chapter v, (*a*) and (*b*).

Absolute experience which we saw to be derived from the doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles.

We have already seen that this particular conception of the relation between finite and Absolute experience throws light on (1) the nature of the sense of moral obligation; (2) the content of the moral life; (3) the view that the degree of one's freedom is the degree of one's inclusiveness and inner harmony. We have now to see whether this same conception throws light on the view that freedom entails, besides harmony and inclusiveness, the power of inserting into the otherwise closed causal feeling-action series determinants which are essentially unpredictable. In other words, we have to ask whether the explanation of freedom in this last sense is to be looked for in that same mysterious fact which was so significant in its bearing on the question of the moral consciousness and the good life—the fact that a man is as it were a citizen of two vastly different realms, being both concrete ego and empirical ego, belonging to the eternal and standing as spirit outside and above the closed causal system of space and time, and yet belonging to it as well. We have to ask whether this dual citizenship, which explained how an external law "Thou shalt" could be also the law of my inmost being so that it was also my deepest self saying "I want to," will also explain *how a causal chain can be broken by an act which* (a) *is not just sheer chaotic indeterminism,* (b) *is really my act, and yet* (c) *has that ground in the nature of the Whole which it must have if the Whole is rational or systematic.* Can the act be really mine, and can it be in principle unpredictable from preceding data, if also it is grounded in the systematic unity of the Universe?

There is one difficulty which meets us at the very outset. We have envisaged a state of affairs in which an otherwise closed causal feeling-action series is invaded, as it were, by a free, rational and in principle unpredictable moral choice. Now since we have rejected indeterminism, is it not our task to show why in one case a man, as rational, translates his possibility of rational, impartial, socially beneficial action into actuality, and why in another case he does not? For if there is system there must be a reason in each case.

We must reply that although there is a reason, it would clearly be self-contradictory for us to seek that reason in the earlier events or conditions of the causal series. For we have already said that the free rational choice is unpredictable because not *causally* determined *a tergo.* The essence of the thing is the Kantian doctrine which, for our purpose, is sufficiently summarised in the passage from Professor Pringle-Pattison quoted on page 31. Consciousness of a succession of events in time is only possible to an ego which is not merely one event, or a number of events, in the series. There is a sense in which it may be said that there is an element in a man which is not *in* the series at all and not *in* time. Time, as we know it, and cause as we know it, are the forms under which man cognises certain of his objects, but he himself lives in an eternal present; the conceptual past and future are constructions on the basis of that given present. This, I think, is the view taken by Kantian Idealism, and for such a view the solution of the problem of reconciling

real unpredictable freedom with real complete systematic unity is bound up not only with the problem of the unity-in-difference of finite and Absolute experience but with the problem of the nature of time. This was condition (*c*) of page 93.

It may serve to make clear the bearing of the logic of identity-in-difference on the problem of freedom if we have in mind that particular aspect of the problem which has in the past been the subject of much theological controversy—the problem of reconciling human freedom with Divine "sovereignty" or with Divine grace. For it seems to me that this logic does offer a genuine synthesis of opposing views. Theologians like Augustine and Calvin have treated of the sovereignty or of the grace of God in such a manner as to deny human freedom. An act performed by means of irresistible or prevenient grace could hardly be called a free act. On the other hand the extreme Pelagian view ignored the very real difficulty—real, that is, from the point of view of Theism—that a God who was not the centre and source of the systematic unity and order of all that is could scarcely be called a God at all; He would be just one being among others. Each side ignored the considerations which would not fit its case—or if it did not ignore them it never really faced them. The fact seems to be that if you regard God and men as "separate" beings the problem is insoluble. Either men's actions are determined by God, and, since this determination is from without, they are not free; or else you have a complete pluralism in which your "God" is just one, although an important, member of the society, and the problem of the ground and source of the systematic unity of the whole remains unsolved. The synthesis which is effected by the logic of identity-in-difference is the following. Let us use "grace" as a convenient term for the vague idea that the Ground of all does somehow "assist" the individual to do right. The doctrine of identity-in-difference will then suggest that freedom and grace, so far from being in antithesis, will be completely harmonious. For my power of "freely" descending, so to speak, into the closed feeling-action causal series, and introducing into it fresh "moral" determinants, will not be the power and the freedom of an atomic, isolated ego; at the moment of a really moral victory my outlook on the situation, being similar to that of Objective Spirit or Absolute, will be in that respect identical with it, and I myself in that respect will *be* identical with the immanent Spirit which is the Ground of all being. This freedom which is really mine is the very freedom of the Absolute which alone (*see* p. 88) is completely free. If we retain the term "grace" with the theologian, we must say that we are only free if we are possessed by Divine grace. If we drop the term "grace" and speak more accurately, we can say that each one of us is free when, and only when, we are one with God and so draw on His freedom. "Every virtue we possess and every victory won" are in the strictest sense Divine creations, and yet we are our realest selves at such moments. For we find ourselves not by separateness from the Absolute but by union therewith. The process of discovering what "I" really am can only end when complete union with the Absolute is reached.

There are of course difficulties in this view; it would be easy to point to the apparent contradiction involved in talking of the Absolute and the finite being as if they were *two* who could *enter into* varying degrees of union, and yet holding that all the time the Absolute *is* the whole and that the finite never is a *separate* entity. The Absolutist, I think, regards this contradiction as inherent in the form of the grammatical sentence which has been moulded by that logic of abstract identity which, although adequate for things in space, is not adequate for the relation of spirit to spirit. Moreover we, in philosophising, are finite beings, and from our point of view the separation of man from God appears to be real. The Absolutist holds that the acquisition of truth and virtue, and the acquisition of freedom, are aspects of a process which is from the finite standpoint the self-expression of the individual and from the Absolute standpoint the return of the Absolute to itself. Why Reality is just what it is, why the Whole is differentiated into finite points of view which, as it were, seek to overcome their finitude and return to the Whole along the lines of the search for goodness, beauty, truth and freedom, we cannot expect to know.

The point with which we are immediately concerned is this, that although a man's free moral choice cannot in the nature of things—cannot *in principle*, apart from any practical difficulties—be "predicted" in the sense of inferred from the *earlier* events in the series by bringing it under a causal generalisation or law, *yet it can be held that it has an adequate ground in a higher spiritual order*. And this ground is not something *outside* the man which compels him; it is the very ground and essence of his own being. By the construction which I have described it seems possible, that is, to reject causal determinism in our account of moral choice and also to insist both that the ground of the action is *in* the man and that the man, when acting, is an element *in* the systematic whole.

But does such a conception leave us with an adequate view of history? We professed to have rejected the view that history is, as it were, the mechanical display on the screen of time of a drama written in eternity. We insisted that real decisions are taken, that there is real activity, and that choices could have been other than they were even though earlier conditions had been what they were. But have we not, in our anxiety to avoid the chaos of indeterminism, in our insistence on a spiritual *order*, fallen into the pit we hoped to avoid? Is our view distinguishable, for moral theory, from determinism?

The answer, I have already suggested, could be found if to our Kantian doctrine of freedom as the introduction of higher determinants, and to our conception of the identity-in-difference of Absolute and finite spirits, we could bring a knowledge of the way in which our experience of time is related to the time-experience of the Absolute. To begin with, it has been very rightly pointed out by philosophers that the word "timeless," which is often applied to the Absolute experience, can be taken to mean either of two quite different things. There is a timelessness which is

irrelevance to time. The truth of a proposition and the idea of triangularity are timeless in this sense. It would be absurd to ask "When was triangularity?" or at what moment or period of time Euclid's propositions followed from his axioms. This is the timelessness which is inherent in abstractions. But when we say that the Absolute is timeless we certainly do not mean timeless in this first sense, for the Absolute is concrete; we mean that the "time"-consciousness of the Absolute is different from ours. *We* are baffled by a time-series which is a "spurious infinite," an utter mystery, an infinite regress, for in our everyday life we picture time as a straight line in Euclidian space stretching "infinitely" in either direction. Now the most basic certainty of all is that an Absolute would *not* be confronted by utter mysteries, for everything that really is is possible, and therefore, to a complete experience, not in the least mysterious. To know a thing thoroughly, to know *all* about it, is to know why it is and how it can be. If we hold to the Absolute at all, then, we must hold that it is not confronted by an "infinite" time-series, or by anything "infinite" at all if we include in the connotation of that term that frustration of purpose, that notion of an unending task, which it means for us.

But we can proceed a step beyond the mere assertion that the time-awareness of the Absolute is different from ours. It is certain that the Absolute time-awareness does not negate or cancel ours; it takes it up into a larger context, into what we can conceive as other *dimensions*. Our justification for this assertion will be more apparent from our study in the next chapter of the nature of the antithesis of truth and error, of reality and appearance, but even now we can say that since the Absolute timelessness is not a fragmentary abstraction, the truth is more likely to be that by comparison *our* time-awareness is abstract, fragmentary, incomplete.

We may at once draw a very important inference, and answer the question asked on page 98. If the Absolute "time"-awareness does not negate or cancel ours, we need not regard as illusory those of our basic concepts like activity, decision, crisis, which are involved in our time-experience. And although we cannot grasp the whole truth, since we are not the Absolute, we can outline a conception which we may well believe to be true as far as it goes and which will do justice both to our sense of freedom and to our belief that reality is a systematic unity. The difficulty lies in just this, that we will not, on the one hand, accept any suggestion of indeterminism, of sheer chaotic chance, anywhere in the Universe, least of all in the moral decisions of men; neither, on the other hand, will we follow the Absolutist if he interprets his "self-determinism" in such wise that a choice is regarded as determined absolutely by earlier factors as such. We demand a determinism which is not a determinism *a tergo* but a determinism from a spiritual order of being above and beyond the time series as we know it.

The obvious first step is to inquire how far a teleological conception of the Universe will give us what we want. In the section of the *Ethics*

entitled "The Error of Finalistic Determinism," Professor Hartmann[1] argues that in a world determined finalistically throughout, there could be no freedom. Freedom for him, as we have seen, is essentially the introduction, into a "lower" order, of determinants from a "higher" one, without destroying the nexus or deterministic type of the lower. Now although this is clearly possible where the lower order is that of causal or mechanical determination, it is not, he says, possible where the lower order is a strictly teleological system. For in the latter the means to the end have been chosen in such wise that the process works out as a causal one. The end is known, the laws of the causal system are known, and things are so arranged at the start that the whole process works itself out by blind causality and yet gives us the result we want. This is how man imposes teleology on mechanism. Now if, in the middle of the working out of the process, new determinants are introduced from above, the original purpose will be defeated. Therefore, says Hartmann, teleology or finalistic determinism is absolutely incompatible with freedom; at least, finalistic determination of the Whole by One Immanent Purpose would be incompatible with the least degree of freedom for the parts, for the finite beings. But mechanical causality is not incompatible with freedom.

He criticises Absolutism from this point of view:[2]

> "But if the finalistic nexus dominates the natural process, then the cosmic ends, ruling with almighty power, stand over against the weak, finite, purposive efforts of man, who can make no headway against them. He is lamed, fettered, predestined even in the most secret aspirations of his heart, even in his sensing of values. This crippling of man is quite distinctively his moral undoing. It becomes evident wherever the metaphysic of the telos lets fall the harmless mask of mere naturalistic theory and shows itself as a tyrannical autocracy. This appears most fully in the pantheistic systems, the sense of which is that the all-dominating teleology of an Absolute Being has entered into the world, indeed into Nature itself, and *is* identical with the universal cosmic order. . . . In it [Pantheism] every teleology of man is summarily handed over to God, the course of the world is entirely the actualisation of His ends; and to man there remains nothing over but the role of the puppet on the stage of the cosmic comedy."

Before we deal with this argument of Hartmann, it will be well to ask whether, since he rejects Absolutism and "Pantheism" he succeeds in preserving both real freedom for man and real system in reality. At the outset of his third volume we are led to hope for great things. For he insists on real freedom on the one hand—insists, that is, that strict causality in the scientific sense, the causality which permits in principle of infallible prediction, is incompatible with freedom, for freedom is essentially the introduction of fresh determinants from a higher order

[1] N. Hartmann: *Ethics*, Vol. 3, pp. 69-72.

[2] N. Hartmann: *Ethics*, Vol. 3, p. 85.

into the causal system. And yet, on the other hand, he rejects "negative freedom" or chaotic indeterminism. "Freedom cannot consist in negative indifference, but only in a positive determinateness of a unique order, in a determination peculiar to the will itself. . . . Negative freedom as mere 'freedom *from* something' is altogether a false concept." (pp. 47-48).

So far, so good. We are to have real system as well as real freedom. And there is no doubt that Hartmann's conception of reality is that of a system. He thinks of a number of grades of being, each with its own type of determination, and each, from the standpoint of and as related to a lower one, "free" in the positive sense. What he calls the laws of strength, of material and of freedom apply throughout the whole range and make the grades a unity from top to bottom. The Absolutist can accept all this; it reminds one of the Absolutist theory of ascending degrees of truth and reality. But Hartmann will not have Absolutism or "Pantheism." And what is the result? Is it unfair to say that in spite of his earlier polemic against negative freedom, in the end he has to fall back on it?

It seems to me that he has set himself the impossible task of showing how a human person, presumably thought of as a separate point of existence standing apart from the rest of the Whole, can be free in a *positive* sense, in the sense of having creative determinants *within himself.* If chance, if indeterminism, is ruled out, how can we explain the creative determinants except by regarding the man as somehow grounded in the Whole and drawing on the Whole even in the act of "inserting" the "free" higher determinants? Hartmann seems to insist that the ultimate metaphysical source of the free act is in the man himself, and he will not let us trace it back farther. He tells us that there is a metaphysical factor proper to the human ethos (p. 192) but he can tell us nothing of this enigmatic factor. On p. 168 he says: "We cannot withdraw the veil from the metaphysical nature of freedom . . . To attempt to touch the mysteries *of the irrational* is childish presumption." (Italics mine.) And on p. 208 he tells us that "The principle of the person . . . is an irrational factor which cannot be pursued further."

But why trouble to devote a whole volume to the problem of freedom if in the end we are to say that freedom is irrational? Why all the heavy artillery of antinomies of autonomies, why the elaborate structure of types of determination? Why study metaphysics, why discuss anything, if one has to admit irrationality into the object of consciousness? Why protest that negative freedom—as mere freedom *from* something—is "altogether a false concept" (p. 48), if in the end it is to be confessed that "it is not to be inferred that in relation to values the will could not be free in the negative sense"? (p. 224). Why say (pp. 47-48) "so long as a will is not determined it is not a will," if (p. 225) you are going to say "Nothing stands in the way of the freedom of the will 'in the negative sense' as regards values, notwithstanding its positive freedom as regards the causal nexus"?

We can now return to Hartmann's rejection of teleology with the knowledge that he has not himself given us an alternative solution.

This may encourage us to hope that we may yet find in teleology something to which we may hold, and which we can use in our construction.

It may be admitted that if teleology means what Hartmann says—if, that is, we have to think of purpose in the Universe in exactly the way in which we think of a man devising and setting going a machine—if it is a matter of a "plan" conceived at the beginning of "time" as popularly conceived, and operating on a Universe whose original collocations were so co-ordinated with the plan that the purpose will be achieved by the workings of a mechanical causation—if teleology is just this, then Hartmann's criticism is just. But surely teleology does not necessarily mean that the end and the means thereto have been chosen at an earlier period of a "time" which must be pictured as a straight line in Euclidian space. It does not mean that the process is now proceeding mechanically.

Is it not possible, to begin with, to conceive of an end which can only be achieved if the means are *not* predestined links in a causal chain? I am not now attempting a final synthesis; I am merely adopting a provisional point of view in which, in order to avoid complications, we take our "time" in the popular sense of a common objective one-dimensional setting to our common life. Nor for the moment am I pressing the Idealist identification of finite with Absolute experience. I am merely suggesting that we can, from a more or less common-sense standpoint, conceive of a teleology in which end and means are not rigidly separated—in which, that is, the means are not merely means but partial ends. The finite beings themselves might be ends as well as means. There might be a cosmic purpose which harmonised with, and indeed needed, the lesser purposes. It might be the case that the nature of the cosmic end was such that it could only be fulfilled if the means were conscious beings making a free, i.e., a not *causally*[1] determined, contribution. The Universe is often conceived as a unity of such a thoroughgoing type that if any part were different this would involve a change in the whole system, but even this does not necessitate the view that the "parts" must be *causally* determined and that, if they are not, the system must lose its unity and become a chaos. The essential thing about a teleological view of the Universe is surely that the cosmic End may so adapt the scheme of things that it can still achieve *its* End without preventing the finite beings from having freedom to achieve their little ends. May it not be that the highest of all the possible systems—of all the various types of unity—is one which can retain its unity in spite of, and even by means of, what is usually called the misuse of freedom by the finite members? Is there not some evidence from individual experience and from history to support the view that one's very decision to be evil may in the long run be the occasion of a greater cosmic good? Such a suggestion is out of fashion at the moment; the belief that "somehow good may be the final goal of ill," is associated in some people's

[1] Throughout I use the phrase "causal determination" for determination "*a tergo*"—determination by *preceding* events.

minds with the Albert Memorial. But we need not be unduly influenced by the passing moods.

This, as we said, is from a provisional standpoint. But if we apply the notion of the identity-in-difference of finite and Absolute experience, and remember that the time-experience of the Absolute transcends ours, the reconciliation of cosmic end and cosmic system with human purpose and with human freedom is seen to be the more possible. The fallacy of the passage from Hartmann quoted on p. 100 is the fallacy of placing the all in antithesis to the each, the fallacy which results from picturing man and the Absolute as mutually distinct entities even while alleging that the individual is, by Absolutism, merged or lost in the Absolute. It is the fallacy of saying that if I am working out a Divine purpose I cannot possibly be also working out my own. It is true that that completeness of system on which Absolutism insists demands a ground or reason for every human action or choice, *but this ground need not be a compulsion from without and a violation of freedom.*

Throughout this discussion we have urged that a true analysis of the moral consciousness must allow that men are free, and by this we mean that their moral choices are not merely links in a causal chain. And for the purpose of clarity we have narrowed down the question at issue to the question whether an absolutely complete knowledge of the factors preceding, and relevant to, a moral choice, including the "laws" of human thought, feeling, desire and action, would enable the choice to be predicted with the same certainty as are the planetary motions. Another way of asking this question is to ask whether it is true to say—whether there is any meaning in saying—that a past decision might have been other than it was, although the relevant preceding facts and events had been exactly what they were. We decided that the moral consciousness demands a freedom which is incompatible with such predictability, and which is of such a nature that the assertion "it might have been otherwise" is true and significant.

Now the question which arises is whether a solution such as we have mentioned—the solution which, to put it broadly, denies that a moral choice has a cause but insists that it has a reason, really meets the demands made by this analysis of the moral consciousness. We have assumed that all that the moral consciousness demands on the subject is that our really moral choices shall not be *caused*, i.e., shall not be theoretically predictable on the basis of knowledge of *earlier* factors. But the fact remains that we have not found ourselves able to deny that there is a reason or ground for our moral decisions, namely a factor or factors in a spiritual realm which is not "in" time as *we* know time. We have insisted, in other words, that there is an explanation of every moral choice, an explanation to be found, if that were possible for us, in a knowledge of the real nature of time and in the real nature of that relationship between Absolute and finite experience which we vaguely term the relation of ground and consequence. But here an objection may be made, for does not this view of moral decision introduce a fatal qualification into our rejection of predictability and into our insistence

that the evil past "need not have been"? For what is the use of saying that an action is strictly unpredictable on the basis of a knowledge of all the factors preceding it in time and of all the laws, if laws there be, of conduct, if we are going to add that nevertheless knowledge of a higher *kind*, knowledge to which under the conditions of our earthly life we cannot aspire, *would* enable the choice to be *foreseen* with absolute certainty? What is the use of saying "My past moral decision might have been otherwise although the preceding factors and laws were what they were" if we really mean "My past moral decision might have been otherwise although the preceding factors and laws were what they were, *if conditions in an eternal spiritual realm were other than they are*"?

We are here at the heart of the mystery of freedom, and I am not so presumptuous as to think that I can give a clear and simple answer. But we need not exaggerate the difficulties. At least it is untrue to say that the Absolutist theory which I have outlined demands that this "knowledge of a higher kind" would enable the moral decision to be *foreseen*. For the essence of the thing is that the knowledge of a higher kind would not *fore*see. This word is only applicable to a time-awareness such as ours, which cannot be the full Absolute time-experience. What we are seeking is a very complex conception; it is necessary to try to hold together a number of considerations at once, and in concentrating on one we tend to lose sight of the others. The central feature of our exposition is that a moral decision is not forced on a man by anything other than himself. True, it has a ground or reason or end which is inherent in the reality of things. But the man is part of that reality, not something outside it. If you say that "my" moral decision is not really mine since it is the Absolute acting in and through me, I must reply, so long as I am under the influence of Absolutist theories, that I and the Absolute cannot, at the moment of a moral decision, be distinguished. And if you come back at me, as you are perfectly entitled to, with the reply: "But by 'moral decision' you not only mean good choices, but evil ones, presumably; are you indistinguishable from the Absolute *then*?" I freely admit the difficulty, but would point back to where I suggested that the identity based on good is metaphysically distinguishable from the identity based on evil. In one sense my evil choice is the Whole choosing in me, just as with the good choice; but in the good choice I am, as it were, nearer to the heart of the Divine, and sharing in the more central and ultimate purposes—those which will not have to be overruled as will the evil ones.

We are, it seems to me, up against a choice of difficulties. In ruling out scientific causation in one-dimensional time as inapplicable to moral decisions, I can perhaps allow myself to hope that I have made all the concessions to the demand of the moral consciousness to be free that I can reasonably be asked to make. To go further, I fear, would be to embrace some form of thoroughgoing pluralism, irrational indeterminism, pragmatism or positivism, and this in the alleged interest of morals would, I think, be suicidal. For in these forms of metaphysical scepticism the notion of an objective morality is dissolved away as completely as

the notions of truth and rationality. The moral consciousness demands above all things that the world shall be a moral order, and it is difficult to believe that a metaphysical chaos can be a moral cosmos.

If it be pointed out that the view I have outlined would be inconsistent with any display of anger towards a wrongdoer, I would reply that I am not sure that this is the case, but that even if it is, this is no reason for rejecting the view. Certainly it could only be reconciled with the adoption of an entirely constructive attitude towards the evildoer, but I imagine this would apply to most modern ethical theories. But does it satisfy our demand that history shall be real, that activity and crisis shall be what they appear to be and not merely the stage-display of a written drama? In reply, I think it can fairly be said that at least it allows one consistently to hold that the sense of crisis, of activity, is not illusory, for (as I hope the next chapter will make clearer) it is not the case, on this view, that this sense of activity is denied or negated in the Absolute experience; for the relation of the Absolute time-experience to our time-experience is not the relation of an *abstract* timelessness to a concrete time—it is the relation of whole to part, or rather of context to text, the relation of a whole co-ordinate system to one of its axes.

Parmenides and Heracleitus were, I think, both right, even though their theses appear in contradiction. The real, the *whole* system, cannot be said to change, if by "change" we understand a process involving an infinite series in a time conceived as a straight line in Euclidian space, stretching for ever in both directions. Back of all phenomenal changes there is the law, or principle of unity, of the system, which *we* have to regard as "timeless" in the abstract sense of irrelevant to time. It was perhaps this which Parmenides meant to express. But this is only one side of the truth. The dualism of an abstract timelessness expressing itself in a spurious infinite cannot be the final truth. The real is concrete; there must be activity in it, for *our* activity is not negated but included. But this real activity is "timeless," and by this we mean not abstractly timeless but something which bears to our time-experience a relation possibly similar to that which a figure in three-dimensional space bears to its projection on to a plane surface. By some such analogy we must conceive what must be the final truth about the Whole. It must be a time-experience which contains no baffling infinite regresses or insoluble antinomies. It is not finally and intrinsically and objectively mysterious, for from the standpoint of the Whole experience all significant questions must be answered. The real must be somehow an eternal activity which returns upon itself, and this whole activity is somehow broken up into the lesser activities which are ours. To deny that they *are* ours as well as the Absolute's would be to deny the Absolute, for, as Bradley insisted (*see* p. 53) my very sense that I am alone against the world, that I am a striving creative centre, is necessary to the completion of the Whole.

None of our basic conceptions of the Universe can be the complete truth because our time-awareness is only a projection of the real thing. But that is no reason for denying that some of them may be true as far as they go; they may be important and valuable parts of the truth

although not the whole truth. This, it seems to me, is what we must hold to be the case with conceptions like freedom, activity, personal responsibility, individuality.

But a very serious difficulty awaits us. For there is a sense in which a half-truth may be misleading and "false." And the objection may appear almost fatal in the case of an Absolutism which insists that all error is part of the truth. If error is part of the truth, if the very sting and evil of error is not in any positive quality but in the fact that it is only part of, and not the whole of, the truth, what have we gained by our assertion that the concepts of the moral life are parts of, although not the whole of, the truth? If *all* statements, however fantastic and absurd, are only "false" in the sense that they are less than the whole truth, have we gained anything by our contention that certain beliefs about activity and moral choice are true although not the whole truth? It is clear that any value this discussion may have will depend on our answering these questions, and to the problem of error and truth, appearance and reality, we must now turn.

CHAPTER V

ERROR, APPEARANCE AND REALITY

IN this chapter we are to discuss the relationship between the concepts of "error" and "appearance." As I have already explained, I was led to consider error as providing the third of the obvious contrasts between finite and Absolute experience. The first was the contrast between the finite soul's experience of the Universe as consisting of "separate" beings and the Absolute experience of complete systematic unity. The second was the contrast between the finite soul's experience of freedom and this same Absolute experience of complete system. In both cases the contrast was an apparent contradiction because the Absolute experience must be conceived as including the finite experience without destroying it or even subtracting from it. The third contrast, to which we now come, is between finite error and Absolute truth or reality. How can the Absolute include erroneous experience and yet be free from error?

At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, however, we saw that the question of error contained another serious problem, on the solution of which our belief that certain human conceptions are "true as far as they go," or can be validly predicated of the Absolute, would depend. This problem is really that of analogical predication, a scholastic doctrine which Mr. Mascall summarises[1] as teaching that although the terms of human speech cannot mean precisely the same when applied to God as when applied to man, they are nevertheless, when applied to God, not meaningless.

I shall discuss both of these aspects of the problem of error and appearance. The form of the discussion will be as follows. First I shall ask whether an erroneous experience can be part of a true experience—whether error can be part of truth. Secondly I shall convert the question and ask whether all finite and therefore partial experience, i.e., all "appearance" in Bradley's sense of the word, is necessarily erroneous—whether, in other words, there is true as well as false appearance. The reason for my describing the second question as the converse of the first is that whereas the first asks "Can error be part of truth?" the second asks "Must all partial truth contain error?" I answer the first with "yes," the second with "no."

The Absolutist is, I think, more or less committed to his theory of truth and error by the approach which he makes to the question. This approach is from the second of the two points of view stated on p. 32, and might be called subjective or even—though this would not be quite

[1] E. L. Mascall: *He Who is*, p. 12.

accurate—solipsistic. The whole business of truth and reality is for him a matter of constructing a coherent whole *from within*, not viewing a completed whole from without. He does not, so to speak, deal with propositions in *other people's* heads. The standpoint of Absolutist epistemology is the standpoint of the thinker of the thoughts which are being considered, not the standpoint of an outsider. This approach is, I believe, a legitimate one although not the only one. The Universe for each of us is not, from this standpoint, a house seen from the outside; it is a thought-house which we have each constructed for ourselves[1]; we have each built the house around us and we can never get outside it.

From this standpoint the Absolutist is bound to consider as inappropriate two views of truth and falsehood which have a superficial simplicity about them. The first of these is the view that truth and falsehood are qualities of separate propositions and the second is that the truth or the falsity of a proposition is an unanalysable external relation between the proposition and the object or fact to which it refers, a relation of "correspondence" or "non-correspondence" respectively. In other words, he finds it difficult to allow that a proposition in itself and by itself can be true or false just as a billiard ball can be white or red, or to allow that its truth or falsity is a simple matter of standing, like a map, in a relation of accuracy or inaccuracy to that to which it claims to "correspond."

The inner or subjective approach to which I have just alluded can be traced back, of course, to the great innovation of Descartes. True, Descartes started from a proposition which the Absolutist cannot regard as the real starting-point of the process of constructing one's thought-world. You cannot *begin* with "I think"; this comes later. The real beginning, when expressed in words, is something like "Experience is going on," or even "Experience is." The distinction of empirical ego from material world and from other egos comes later; the distinction of transcendental ego from the stuff or matter of the Universe comes later still. But throughout, the whole process of thought-construction is a process of judging. And this leads at once to the rejection of "correspondence" as the initial *criterion* of truth, although room can and must be found for the notion of correspondence in the completed construction. The truth of my judgment "I possess a black cat" cannot be guaranteed to me by my discovering that it corresponds to a separate "fact"—the fact that I actually do possess a black cat. The only way of getting at a fact is by judging it; I cannot possibly compare what I judge on the one hand with a fact on the other. The truth of the proposition "I possess a black cat" is guaranteed to me by the nature of the given here and now, i.e., sensations and vivid and persistent memory images, together with the fact that the proposition, or rather the judgment[2]

[1] This is not to deny the "given" element in experience. *See* p. 8.

[2] I use "proposition" for a judgment as expressed in words. The word "judgment" has unfortunately two meanings—the judging act and the content judged, and only the context can show which is meant. The judgment—as content—is always richer than the words of the proposition can express.

which it expresses, coheres or fits in with the rest of my thought-universe. It is possible to doubt that I possess a black cat; I may be the victim of a delusion; but since this judgment about the black cat fits in with what I perceive and remember and since I know of no reason for thinking I *am* deluded, I regard the proposition as true.

The universe-for-me, then, is throughout my whole life known to me by a continuous unitary Judgment—a Judgment consisting of my judgments. For Absolutism, and certainly for our purpose here, many of the distinctions made between the kinds of judgment by elementary logic may be regarded as of comparatively minor importance. For instance, the distinction of categorical from hypothetical judgment is not regarded as of very great metaphysical importance, for our Judgment is always, whatever its form, at bottom singular and categorical. If I make a statement couched in the terms of a hypothetical proposition, this, as Bradley has shown,[1] is in effect to make a categorical statement about this one Universe. To use a simple illustration, a statement that if people put shillings into one slot of the automatic machine they will get cigarettes and that if they put pennies into another slot they will get chocolate, is a categorical statement about the nature of the machine. I am still making a categorical statement even if my hypothetical proposition contains as its antecedent a condition which I regard as impossible, as for instance the proposition that if I am discovered putting in counterfeit coins I shall be sent to prison. The fact that I might regard my doing such a thing as unthinkable or my getting found out as impossible does not alter the fact that this "impossible" hypothetical proposition is a categorical statement about the law as it bears on automatic machines.

But it is not only the distinction of categorical from hypothetical that we can ignore. We can ignore all distinctions between judgments except the one distinction which is fundamental to the Idealist Logician—the distinction between partial and complete. For instance, the question of disjunction can be passed over, for we can treat it as a question of the degree of completeness of the knowledge of the person making the statement. Even a categorical statement like "Mr. Jones is at home" can be cast in the disjunctive form "Mr. Jones is either in his garden or his study or his dining-room or . . . in some part of the house." Conversely, to say that a flower is either red or yellow or blue is to make a statement which might easily have been categorical had we happened to have a word for "either red or yellow or blue." The distinction seems to be largely a matter of language; if we need a word to avoid a disjunction we coin one, as when a Psychologist, instead of saying that a feeling is either pleasant or unpleasant, says that it has "feeling tone." The only epistemologically significant distinction underlying the logical distinction is that of lesser or greater, vaguer or more accurate, knowledge.

In a similar way we can deal with negative statements. Every significant negative proposition is an expression of positive knowledge. The contradictory of anything is simply the general class containing what

[1] F. H. Bradley: *The Principles of Logic*, second edition, Vol. 1, p. 78, paragraph 50.

is incompatible with it—incompatibility being a notion logically prior to negation, and each of two incompatibles being as positive as the other. If we say that a flower is not red we mean that we have positive, though vague, knowledge that it is in the class of colours for which we do not have a special name but which we describe as "either violet or pink or . . ." This is disjunctive but positive. It is just a convenient device, this using of a "negative" to describe this very same class, i.e., "not red."

The question of the way in which we state our beliefs is thus seen, put broadly, to be largely a question of the degree of their vagueness or exactness, their partiality or completeness. The only exception we need admit here is one which does not concern our purpose. It is that, apart from the question of lesser or greater knowledge, the words in which we express our judgments may be determined by a particular purpose at the moment. When we make or write statements we often have a purpose other than the mere recording of our private beliefs. Our wording may be chosen with a view to convincing some particular person, and it will vary according to what he has just said, or to what we conceive to be the attitude of his mind at the moment. But these differences of wording do not concern us; they do not really concern the Idealist logic at all. For Idealist logic deals with the real beliefs of a man *as they are for the man himself*; it is not concerned with the almost infinite shades of emphasis which the *statement* of his beliefs may be given owing to his purpose of convincing someone else or owing to the state of mind of the person he is addressing.

The Absolutist theory of knowledge is concerned, then, with a total concrete state of belief, and not with the forms of particular statements. It does not profess to distinguish belief from knowledge—at least it does not attach any vital epistemological significance to the distinction. Its comparative indifference to grammatical form is seen by its refusal to identify the real subject of the judgment with the grammatical subject of the sentence.

Its attitude to grammar is, as we have already noticed, not dissimilar from that of modern logical positivists like Mr. A. J. Ayer. Indeed his distinction[1] between the explicit definition of a symbol and a "definition in use" is one which is relevant to our purpose. To define a symbol explicitly, he says, is to put forward another symbol which is synonymous with it; and to say that one symbol is synonymous with another is to say that if in a sentence in which the one occurs the other is substituted, the resulting sentence is equivalent to the first. But:[2]

> "We define a symbol *in use*, not by saying that it is synonymous with some other symbol, but by showing how the sentences in which it significantly occurs can be translated into equivalent sentences, which contain neither the definiendum itself, nor any of its synonyms."

[1] A. J. Ayer: *Language, Truth and Logic*, pp. 66-69.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 68.

Bearing this distinction in mind we may agree at once with Mr. Ayer in his denial (p. 120) that our task is to answer the question "What is truth?" or "What is error?" We have not to explain the *nature* of that which we call "truth" or of that which we call "error", or the nature of a quality called "true" or of a quality called "false." We have not, that is, to find a word or a group of words which constitute a *synonym* for "error" or for "truth" in the sense just explained. We are only concerned with definitions *in use*; we are perfectly free, that is, to recast the whole form of sentences if necessary. For instance, I agree entirely with Mr. Ayer's assertion (p. 123) that to say "p is true" is only another way of affirming p. This, it will be noticed, is not to give an "explicit definition" of "true", but a "definition in use"; i.e., we deal with the whole sentence in which "true" occurs. Our task, then, is not to analyse the "nature" of truth or of error, but to analyse the situations which have induced us to make that fundamental distinction within our experience which is the basis of the use of terms like truth, true, real, error, illusion, false.

We have swept aside as irrelevant to our purpose all distinctions in the forms of propositions. We are concerned with the total affirmation of a living thinker, not with its expression in words. Whether propositions expressing a person's mental attitude are categorical or hypothetical or disjunctive; universal or particular or singular; positive or negative; whether he is arguing or musing, believing or doubting or denying—all these questions we leave aside. For our purpose he is affirming his universe—the real-for-him, and there is only one distinction which interests us, a distinction which is vital to the Absolutist theory of truth and error. It is the distinction, fundamentally, between partial and complete knowledge; less fundamentally it is the distinction between less and more knowledge, between vaguer and more definite knowledge. This, according to the Absolutist, is at the heart of the problem of error and truth.

Stated broadly, the view which we are to consider is the view that the true "definition in use" of "error" is arrived at by recasting the sentences in which words like false, illusory, and so on, occur in such a way that they become statements as to the incompleteness of the "erroneous" beliefs. An "error" is actually a part of the truth, in the sense that its correction is not a matter of cancellation but of supplementation.

We must make it clear, before we proceed farther, that in saying this we are only dealing with the epistemological aspects of error. Error often has an ethical aspect. Absolutism does not ignore this last, but it is really a part of the general problem of moral evil with which we are not here concerned. Joachim rightly draws a distinction[1] between on the one hand the attitude of a man whose judgment that the sun rises is accompanied by a reservation that astronomy may correct this way of putting it—the attitude, that is, of a man who makes a statement with a reservation that it may not be the final truth about the matter, and on the other hand the confident dogmatism of a man who insists

[1] H. H. Joachim: *The Nature of Truth*, pp. 141-2.

that his statement about the rising of the sun is final and complete truth, and who is prepared to burn a Galileo for denying it. There is no doubt that the "error" of the second man is evil in a sense in which that of the first man is not. But this distinction is chiefly of interest to the moralist; my purpose here is to seek a purely epistemological distinction between truth and error.

It is important to notice that the view that error is part of the truth is essential to the Absolutist position. A dualistic or pluralistic philosophy may be content to treat error as an ultimate indefinable, but a spiritual monism simply cannot do this. It clearly cannot accept any theory which leaves error as a quality which refuses to be included in the Absolute experience. For the Absolute is by definition the All, and the piece of experience which we call erroneous must therefore be accepted entire by the Absolute without the subtraction of one jot or one tittle. The "transformation" which it undergoes in the Absolute must be a transformation *by addition*, by insertion in a *new context*, and not by subtraction in any way whatever.

The fundamental doctrine is that everything that belongs to appearance belongs to reality; every distinction in appearance must be found in reality. Bradley and Bosanquet insist repeatedly on this. For instance, in *Appearance and Reality* (second edition, p. 114) we have the statement ". . . appearances exist. . . . And whatever exists must belong to Reality". . . . "Our appearances no doubt may be a beggarly show, and their nature to an unknown extent may be something which, as it is, is *not true* of reality. That is one thing, and it is quite another thing to speak as if these facts had no actual existence, or as if there could be anything but reality to which they might belong. And I must venture to repeat that such an idea would be sheer nonsense." Again, on p. 161, Bradley tells us that "the differences are not lost, but are all contained in the whole." In short, there cannot be *two* realms, the realm of appearance and the realm of reality, that of phenomena and that of noumena. Appearances are appearances *of* the real; they do not exist *alongside* of it. We must, if Bradley is right, avoid the notion that there is some *realm* of not-being which is "not fully real" and yet which is not nothing. T. H. Green explicitly rejects[1] the Platonic notion of τὰ μεταξύ and I think he had in mind the passage in the fifth book of *The Republic* (p. 477 in Stephens's edition) in which Plato argued that since knowledge is correlative to that which is and ignorance to that which is not, some form of cognition intermediate between these (μεταξύ τι) must be sought correlative to this *intermediate realm of being* (ἐπὶ τῷ μεταξὺ τούτῳ).

The problem is stated by Bradley as follows:[2]

> "Error is without any question a dangerous subject, and the chief difficulty is as follows. We cannot, on the one hand, accept anything between non-existence and reality, while on the other hand error

[1] T. H. Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book 1, chapter i, section 22.

[2] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, second edition, p. 164.

obstinately refuses to be either. It persistently attempts to maintain a third position, which appears nowhere to exist, and yet somehow is occupied."

His solution of the problem, in bare outline, is as follows:[1]

> "Error *is* truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete. The Absolute *has* without subtraction all those qualities, and it has every arrangement which we seem to confer upon it by our mere mistake. The only mistake lies in our failure to give also *the complement.*"

Bosanquet's doctrine is similar:[2]

> "It is a mistake to treat the finite world, or pain, or evil as an illusion . . . everything is real, so long as you do not take it for more than it is."

The Absolutist sees clearly that any so-called philosophy, any religion or cult which characterises any aspect of the Universe of which it disapproves as "illusion," and leaves it at that, is only playing with the problem.

The view of error, then, which we have to consider is the view that when we are meditating on any aspect of our experience[3] and saying to ourselves "This must be erroneous," what we mean, or rather what we ought to mean, is (1) that the bit of experience in question is a bit of the real, for the unreal is nothing at all and therefore could not be experienced: (2) that there is no positive quality attaching to the bit of experience *by itself* which makes it erroneous, but (3) its falsity is due to the fact that it is taken out of its context.

As the Absolutist treats the contrast between error and truth and the contrast between appearance and reality, they both seem connected with the contrast between the incompleteness of finite experience and the completeness of Absolute experience. Does this mean that all appearance contains error? This is a question of which I know of no satisfactory treatment in any Absolutist writing, and this must be my excuse for venturing on this difficult path. Bradley certainly gave the impression that he regarded all appearances as necessarily containing elements of falsity. For instance, in discussing our finite experience of time (p. 184, *Appearance and Reality*) and arguing that this is not reality, he says "We are forced once more to see in it the false appearance of a timeless reality." He appears to preface the word "false" to "appearance" as a matter of course. And in the passage which I have already quoted (p. 169) he tells us that "Error is . . . partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete." Now to say that error is false, i.e., that error is error, "only because partial and left incomplete,"

[1] *Ibid*, p. 169.

[2] B. Bosanquet: *Principle of Individuality and Value*, chapter vi, p. 240.

[3] For Idealism, a discussion about error and truth, appearance and reality, is a discussion about *experiences*.

is to suggest that its partiality or incompleteness *alone* is sufficient justification for its being designated "false."

I find it difficult to accept the doctrine that an incomplete experience *must* contain error. Even if we agree that our experience of time is "appearance" and not reality, it does not follow that the appearance is false. One cannot infer from the proposition "error is incompleteness of experience" the proposition that all incomplete experiences contain error. It may well be the case that although all error is incomplete experience of reality, only a *special kind* of incompleteness of experience of reality ought to be called error. Let us for the present use "appearance" and "incompleteness of experience of reality" as synonyms, and let us see if we can hold that although all error is mere appearance, not all appearance contains error. Surely there can be true as well as false appearances. Our awareness of a world in time and space, the awareness of our everyday unreflective life, is appearance and not reality. But it is not on that account necessarily false. What we have to seek is an intelligible "definition in use" of falsity or error. It is incompleteness, but what special kind of incompleteness?

For Bradley to denounce appearance as false or illusory was mere tautology if he did not distinguish error from appearance. But if, on the other hand, we *do* distinguish between error and appearance, we cannot without more ado denounce an appearance as false simply because it *is* an appearance.

It will be noticed that we are now facing the problem which emerged at the close of the last chapter—the problem whether propositions which are "true as far as they go" are necessarily illusory.

Our first task is to examine the view that error is part of the truth. Our second is to examine the view that error is a *special kind* of partiality. In other words, we must first ask in what sense we can hold it true that error is a part of the truth, and we must then ask what, if any, characteristic additional to being a part and not the whole of the truth is the real ground for the ascription of error to a piece of experience. And since we have agreed, at any rate provisionally, to regard "appearance" as synonymous with "part but not the whole" we shall then have a clear idea of the scope of the terms error and appearance.

The best way to justify the proposition that error is a part of the truth will be to take as difficult an instance as possible, an instance in which a statement which we all now agree to call false has been firmly believed to be the whole truth on a particular point. In what sense, for instance, can it be said that the statement "six times seven make forty-eight" is part of the truth? There appears, on the face of it, to be something here for which nothing short of cancellation will be adequate for the purpose of passing from error to truth. How can *this* error be retained as part of the truth?

We will suppose that a child has been asked by his teacher what is the product of six and seven, and that he answers "forty-eight." The first thing which we have to remember is that we are not, as with certain schools of philosophy, considering error as a quality attaching to the

isolated proposition "six times seven make forty-eight"; nor are we considering the relation between the isolated proposition and the atomic fact that six sevens make forty-two. We are, since we are putting ourselves at the Idealist's standpoint, considering truth as a whole, and as a growth or as a structure; and we are considering it from the standpoint of the person who is judging, who is making the structure. Once this is clear, it becomes equally clear that we are only concerned with false beliefs which are serious and sincere. If the child says "six sevens make forty-eight" just for fun, or if, as might well be the case in a class of small children, the child is merely guessing and is not interested in what he is saying, then we are not concerned here with his state of mind. We are concerned with sincere *beliefs*, not with statements or propositions. Nor need we go at all deeply into the question of the sincerity of a belief. It would probably be conceded at once that a false belief due to faulty memory or fallacious reasoning may be sincere, but the matter becomes a little more complicated when we take the case of a false belief due to a past refusal to face unpleasant truth. I think we must stretch the meaning of "sincere," for our purpose to include the meaning "not consciously insincere." Whatever the degree of past moral responsibility for the present error, we must say that if at the present moment there is no conscious insincerity, if in other words the real is at this moment presenting itself, as it were, to the person in this "false" way, then his error concerns us and we have to ask ourselves whether, and if so in what way, it can be said to be a part of the truth. Even what the psychoanalyst calls a rationalisation must, I think, be treated as a sincere belief for our purpose, for the rationalisation has taken place outside the full glare of consciousness; it is not a consciously insincere belief.

Now if the belief is sincere, the person is in a very real sense passive with regard to that belief. The question of what I would call epistemic passivity is a very important one, and I shall have to deal with it more fully later, but for the present we must be content to note that in the case of sincere error the real presents itself to the person in such a way that he as it were receives it with the error in it. When we say that the real presents itself, we are not merely thinking of sense-data; we are including *a priori* thought-forms and the results of past thinking; all these combine into a totality which presses on the mind in the here and now.[1]

Now when we have discovered that we have made a mistake we do not feel satisfied until we see *why* we made it. A mistake is a natural phenomenon, although an extraordinary one. There must be a reason for it, as there must be a reason for everything else in the Universe. I refuse, and rightly refuse, when I discover my error, to admit that I was creating it out of nothing. My sincerity was, in a sense, passivity; the real actually was presenting itself to me in that way. And therefore the process of passing from an error to the corresponding truth will not be complete until the truth includes the reason for the error—until, that

[1] There is an obvious difficulty here. Judging is an activity and yet I have just spoken as though what is judged is given to us and even forced upon us. I shall try to deal with this later. (*See* chapter vi.)

is, the truth contains the truth about the error. And this means that the final truth will contain the error *in a certain context;* the data of the error will not be banished from reality; they will be given their proper place *in* reality.

For instance, the child's belief that six sevens make forty-eight, if sincere in our sense of the word, is probably based on a reproduction of something committed to memory. We all discover sooner or later that our memories play us tricks in this way. Did the poet write "A little knowledge" or was it "A little learning," that was a dangerous thing? If we base our beliefs on the evidence of our memories we are relying, whether explicitly or implicitly, on the generalisation that a vivid and persistent memory image is a guide to what really did happen in the past. The child we are considering is probably relying on just such an image; he regards himself as hearing over again what his teacher said when teaching him his multiplication table. But now suppose that in after years he is looking back on the incident and that he is in possession of *all* the truth about his error. He will know that he relied on a vivid and persistent memory image, and that this is usually a safe thing to do. He will also know that there are laws of the association and reproduction of images—laws which are just as much facts, just as much parts of reality, as the laws of electro-magnetism. And he will know that as the result of the working of some of these laws, laws which we do not fully understand but which, like the laws of electro-magnetism, do not depend for their reality on their being thought of by finite beings like ourselves, the teacher's statement that six sevens are forty-two turned up in his childish consciousness as "six sevens are forty-eight." In other words, *the proposition "six sevens make forty-eight" would still appear in the complete statement of the truth,* but would appear *in a peculiar context.*

It will now be clear in what sense it is possible to claim that the child's error was part of a larger truth. What the child was grasping *was* truth, *was* reality, after all. For the real, which included the laws of mental reproduction and the details of the child's complex make-up and environment, including the way he was taught and, shall we say, the momentary interruption which caused him to learn his line in the way he did, did so present itself to the child that one aspect of it which got into the focus of his consciousness for a moment was "six sevens make forty-eight." When the man thus grasps the fuller truth about his childish error "six sevens make forty-eight" will not be cancelled, will not be banished into nothingness or into a mythological realm midway between reality and nothing. The process of correcting his error will be seen to be not one of cancellation but of preserving in a new context. He will see how it was that he made that particular mistake; he will see that the real, which includes himself, is such that that mistake was as much a natural phenomenon as was anything else. What was "false" was his just grasping "six sevens make forty-eight" *by itself,* asserting it by itself. What was "false" was his omitting to assert it in that peculiar context which we may call the error-context.

But here the following objection may be made. You are claiming, it may be said, that the error was preserved in reality in a certain context, and that therefore the error was a revelation of the real, albeit "torn from its context" as Bradley put it. But what you are doing simply amounts to taking the words "six sevens make forty-eight," prefixing to them the words "I used to believe that" and a few words more explaining why you used to believe it, and then claiming that you have "preserved" your error, added fresh truth to it, and obtained a whole which is true. But this is unscrupulous logic-chopping. You can call it preservation if you like, but I should call it cancellation.

I would reply that it does not matter much what term we use, so long as we see the essential point. Our problem, it will be remembered, was this. If the Absolute includes all experiences, and if a large element in human experience is falsity or error, is not Absolutism faced with an insuperable difficulty when it claims that the Absolute is free from error? Now in the light of this difficulty, it is surely no trivial observation to point out that error may be preserved in a certain context and yet that the whole may be true. Mr. Jones is in error if he believes the proposition "p" while—to put it crudely—the Absolute believes "not-p." What we are insisting is that for the Absolute the whole truth is not *only* "not-p" but a complex proposition " 'not-p' and 'Mr. Jones believes 'p'." The point is that "p" appears in the complete truth, in a certain context.[1] But what a peculiar context! Granted; but in the final analysis is not *every* context, every relation, every distinction, a member of a class with a unique differentia?

So much, then, for the proposition that error is a part of the truth. We have now to discuss our further point. We have to show that not *all* parts of the truth, not all appearances, contain error; we have to show that we cannot simply convert the proposition "error is appearance" and say that all appearance—every partial view of the universe—is as such erroneous.

If I say, "Mr. Jones is dead," and then at a later moment say, "There is a rumour going round, a rumour which I have discovered to be unfounded, that Mr. Jones is dead," then, assuming that each of these statements represents my belief at the time it is made, it is clear that the additional context which the second statement contains is of such a nature that the word "error" can properly be used to describe the first statement. But suppose that after having made the statement "Mr. Jones is dead" I repeat it later in the day in the following form: "Mr. Jones is dead. This is a great loss to the town. I ought to write to his widow." Surely no one, unless he were trying to justify an epistemological theory, would say that the first statement by itself was an error—

[1] The above argument will not carry conviction to anyone who forgets that we are talking of experiences, not abstract propositions. Such a one may retort that to say that the fact that Mr. Jones errs is part of the truth is not to say that his error is part of the truth. The point however is that Mr. Jones's false experience occurs entire in the Absolute.

an error which was shown to be an error by the fact that it was "torn" from the fuller context which the second statement gives.

But this is just what certain exponents of Absolutism have thought it necessary to maintain. A statement by itself, without the whole of its context—and in the last resort this context is the Whole—must, they believe, be false or erroneous because it is not the whole truth. Now we can, of course, use words as we wish, if we define them first. And if we *define* error as part of the truth, we must say that every part of the truth, as part, is false. But the Absolutist is not merely playing thus with words. He really means that there is no essential difference *in kind* between the processes of adding a context in the two instances which I have given. At least, if he does not mean this I cannot understand what he does mean. This is the view that to believe that Mr. Jones is dead without having in mind that his death will be a loss, is an error in the same way that it is an error to think that Mr. Jones is dead without having in mind that it is only a rumour. One feels impelled to ask whether there is any need to adopt what is on the face of it such a fantastic view.

Joachim discusses the doctrine,[1] and tells us that the judgment "Cæsar crossed the Rubicon," if torn from its context, is not wholly or absolutely true. The passage is worth quoting.

> " 'Well,' I shall be told, 'the brute fact remains. Cæsar *did* cross the Rubicon. You cannot get over that.' But I am not maintaining that the judgment of fact, even when taken at its lowest, is wholly false. It is not wholly false, even when it is as nearly 'isolated' as may be, i.e., when its implied and appropriate context is as little developed as possible. I am only denying that, as thus taken, it is wholly or absolutely true. In the context of a biography of Cæsar, the judgment would express a fact revealing Cæsar's character; in a history of the decline of the Roman Republic, it would express the death-knell of republican institutions. In either context the judgment would have a determinate meaning; and in that determinate meaning the 'brute fact'—the supposed meaning of the 'isolated judgment'—would not linger side by side with additional elements of fact. Such truth as the 'isolated' judgment involves, and every judgment involves *some* truth—'persists' in the fuller truth of the biography or the history, not as a pebble persists in a heap of pebbles, but as the first rough hypothesis survives in the established scientific theory."

This is clear enough. On this view no statement of fact is wholly false and no statement is wholly true. The smaller the fragment the larger the proportion of error in it and the smaller the proportion of truth. As we said, we should not be able to quarrel with this if it were only a matter of definitions, only a matter of the use of words. But the Idealist logician is here not merely using words in a special sense; if he were, his statement that partial truth, to the extent that it is partial, is to that

[1] H. H. Joachim: *The Nature of Truth*, p. 108.

extent false, would be the mere tautology that partial truth is partial truth. What he means is that the Universe is a unity of such a nature that the process of passing from the apprehension of a bit of it to the apprehension of the context of the bit is *always* of such a nature that the bit itself is set in a new light by the context. As against this, it seems to me that only a *special kind* of context sets the original bit in such a new light that the word "error" ought to be used. I do not deny, of course, that there is a sense in which even a brute fact like "Cæsar crossed the Rubicon" or "six sevens make forty-two" can take on a new meaning, can be charged with fresh interest and significance, when viewed in its full context. The multiplication table is far more significant and thrilling to a Dedekind or a Russell than to Jones minor. But there is surely a real distinction in kind between the relationships of bits of experience to their settings which justifies the use of the word "error" in certain cases but not in others.

Joachim states in this passage, as though it were obvious, that the truth of an isolated judgment survives not as a pebble in a heap of pebbles, but as the first rough hypothesis survives in the established theory. This seems to me to be far from obvious. Take the sentence "Mr. Jones is dead; this is a great loss to the town; a successor will have to be appointed." I admit that there is a much closer relationship between the three short sentences than that of mere aggregation; the analogy of a heap of pebbles would clearly be inadequate. But I cannot see that the relationship between each of these three sentences and the whole statement is similar to that between a first rough hypothesis and an established theory. Take the rough generalisation "All material bodies tend to fall downwards." This is a statement which might well have been made by anybody before the discovery that the earth was a globe. It must represent the assumptions made by ancient atomists who thought that the atoms were eternally "falling" because, presumably, there was nothing to hold them "up." Now let us compare it with Newton's generalisation that material bodies attract each other with a force which varies inversely as the square of the distance between them and directly as the product of their masses. I should agree with Joachim that Newton's statement does not leave the first rough generalisation standing, does not merely add something to it. On the other hand, however, it does seem to me that our additional statements about the death of Mr. Jones leave entirely unaltered the statement that he is dead.

In certain departments of thought, of which Physics is perhaps the best example, progressively adequate hypotheses frequently modify the meaning which the simplest statements bore before the new hypotheses were accepted. To say that a body "falls" or moves "downwards" means to a person who has a Newtonian background something quite different from what it did to the ancients with their flat earth and absolute direction. To say that a body is "heavy" means one thing to a savage, another to a Newton, and yet another to an Einstein. In these cases the fresh experience through which the scientific discoverer has passed

has introduced a real modification into the old meanings and the simplest propositions. But this is only because the subject matter of Physics is so closely integrated. The world as we experience it, however, exhibits to a great extent what William James called a merely strung-along unity, and facts often appear to be more of a heap than a system. The Idealist theory of knowledge, following Kant, has perhaps been too greatly influenced by analogies from Physics.[1] In arguing for a strung-along unity James was of course contending for Pluralism against Monism. The reason why Idealist logicians have insisted that *all* texts are affected by their contexts to the extent of not being completely true *without* their contexts—without, in the last resort, the Whole Context—is that unless this were the case we might seem to be in for Pluralism. "This with this with this" is Pluralism; "this, which must be seen in the light of this, which must be seen in the light of this," and so on, is Monism. Our first attempt, then, to maintain that not all parts of the truth necessarily contain error may seem to depend for its success on the rejection of Absolutism itself.

As I see it, we have two questions to consider. (1) Is our comment on the passage from Joachim, and our insistence on the loosely connected character of the events surrounding the death of Mr. Jones, fatal to Absolutism? (2) In those cases where the subject-matter, as in the case of Physics and Metaphysics, is closely integrated and where wider experience *does* modify the significance of earlier statements, are the earlier statements necessarily false in any degree? (This is the question which confronted us on p. 119.) Is it possible, that is, to distinguish between cases where an original belief was "true as far as it went" and where it contained an element of error?

To take the first question. It must be conceded that the Universe often presents far more the appearance of an aggregate or a juxtaposition of parts than of a system with a close unity. It often appears to be the case that proposition p and proposition q are true independently of each other and have exactly the same respective meanings whether they are affirmed separately or as a conjunctive proposition "'p' and 'q'." It is hard to reconcile this state of affairs with the Absolutist demand that the Universe shall be such a systematic unity that there is complete implication between whole and part and between part and part when seen from the Absolute standpoint.[2]

It is important to see what is involved in this doctrine of systematic unity. Would it be the case, if the Universe were what the Absolutist holds, that from the fact that a certain batsman hit a three off the fourth ball of a certain over one ought to be able to infer the colour of the bowler's hair or the truth of a metaphysical doctrine? It seems absurd, but let us examine the matter a little closer. The Absolutist would, I think, argue thus. It would surely be conceded that before we can draw

[1] Compare C. R. Morris: *Idealistic Logic*, pp. 141-2.

[2] The question of the various types or degrees of systematic unity has been thoroughly discussed, and I only propose here to pursue a line of thought relevant to our immediate purpose. *See* A. E. Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, Book 2, chapter ii, section 5.

out *all* the implications of a statement we must understand the statement fully. If, then, we wish to understand the statement about the batsman, we must know what a batsman is. But we cannot know what a batsman is unless we know what a man is. But to know what a man is we need to know his "place in nature." Can we plumb the depths of human personality unless we know man's relation to the whole Divine economy, unless we know the deepest truths about the Whole? Can we know man if we do not know the All? So with "bat." We cannot understand the impact of bat on ball unless we grasp the widest generalisations of mechanics, unless, finally, we know how and why the physical Universe is what it is. Once we start on the process of completely understanding a statement so that we can see *all* that it implies we start a process which we could only complete by becoming the Absolute. Start with a batsman and you end with a Whole and therefore with all that the Whole implies or necessitates, including the colour of the bowler's hair and the truth or falsity of certain metaphysical doctrines.

But the objection may be urged that this kind of reasoning, even if valid at all, is only valid as applied to the interrelationship of general concepts. It may be true that to obtain a full understanding of any concept one would need to explore the Whole and that a successful accomplishment of *this* task would enable us to understand any other concept. But even if true of concepts it may not be true of events. The hitting of a three and the growing of some particular hair are events, and there is no reason to think that by any process of thought starting from one of these one could, even in principle, arrive at the other. But the Absolutist, I think, would reply with the kind of reasoning which McTaggart used in *The Nature of Existence*, Vol. I, chapter xii, section 110. Applying his argument to our own instance, we might say that if Jones had *not* hit a three off the fourth ball, the Universe would have been a different Universe from the one with which we are concerned, and therefore there is no ground whatever for holding that any fact or event, including the growing of the bowler's hair, would have been what it is in *this* Universe. Certainly if we adopted the hypothesis of psycho-physical parallelism and also held that the material side of the parallel is a deterministic system, we should have to hold that the motions of matter which constitute the cricket match are in the very same system as the microscopic motions which are parallel to the colour of the bowler's hair.

McTaggart was, of course, assuming that every event in the Universe is what it is because the Whole is what it is, and that therefore to argue[1] from any fact to any other fact involves reference to the nature of the Whole.

I do not think that if we admit this reasoning as applied to concepts we need boggle at applying it to events. We shall admit it or reject it according to our views as to the degree of systematic unity which must

[1] I have not discussed the question whether the implications on which the arguing would depend are strict "entailments" or only implications in the sense of *Principia Mathematica*. But I think that both Absolutism and McTaggart's view require strict entailment.

be attributed to the Real—to the Universe as it really is. My immediate task is not to try to settle *that* question, but to ask whether those of us who do hold high doctrine on the subject of systematic unity must hold that all the propositions which we finite mortals characterise as true should, in principle, entail one another and in general have such close relevance that no one proposition by itself, without the light thrown on it by others, could be true. And I think our line of inquiry has suggested that even if Absolutism is accepted we need not, indeed we must not, say that the hitting of a three off a certain ball entails *by itself* any other particular event. The connexion of these apparently unconnected events, like the connexion of apparently unconnected concepts, could be seen only from the standpoint of the Whole experience, only, that is, by the Absolute. For us, who have to look at the parts because we cannot intuit the Whole, the universe is bound to seem loosely connected, to consist of parts just existing side by side.

The answer, then, to the first of the questions proposed on page 120 is that it is not impossible for the Universe, even if it is of the nature demanded by the Absolutist position, to present to finite beings an appearance of merely "strung-along" unity. *For us* it may well be that (*a*) Truth is not completely integrated but consists of truths; (*b*) These truths cannot all be seen to imply or entail one another; (*c*) Not all propositions take on fresh meanings when seen in the light of other truths; (*d*) Some "atomic" propositions are true, with no admixture of falsehood, even if not considered in their full contexts.

It would seem, indeed, that "truth" is a conception needed by *finite* beings, necessitated, that is, by their very finitude. There can, if this is the case, never be One completely integrated Truth; there must always be truths. The complete integration, coherence, unity of the Real is grasped by the Absolute but not grasped *as Truth*. The Absolute grasps the Whole by *being* the Whole, not by thinking truths *about* it. Coherence, although an ideal for truth-seekers, and although capable of being reached to a considerable degree in the process of building one's thought-world, is only complete in the Absolute which has so to speak transcended truth.

We have now perhaps dealt sufficiently with the first of the two questions propounded on page 120, and we must pass to the second, namely the question whether, in cases where fresh experience or knowledge does not merely add to, but to some extent re-interprets, or "throws fresh light on," an earlier statement, the earlier statement is thereby *always* convicted of some degree of falsehood. The question is important for our inquiry because it leads us to the heart of the nature of the human experience of error and because we may be able to draw certain tentative conclusions from it.

Can we sharply distinguish between cases where an earlier statement is held to have been true "as far as it went" and cases where it must be said that it contained error? Or is partial knowledge, partial grasp of reality, bound, in cases of closely integrated truth-wholes like the truth of Physics, to contain *some* measure of falsehood? My view is that in

this kind of experience, just as in the more loosely knit experience which we recount in history and everyday reports of passing events, partiality as such need not be falsity.

Let us take the proposition "All material bodies fall down if they are not held up." Is this shown to be in any degree false, is it shown to contain some measure of error, when compared with Newton's or with Einstein's generalisations respecting gravitation? In discussing this, it will be remembered (*see* p. 110) that our purpose is not to consider the meaning of the proposition in itself; indeed, from the Absolutist's standpoint it is not to be assumed that a proposition *can* have a definite meaning by itself. We are concerned not with a definite "meaning" thought of as residing in the proposition objectively, but with the total content of the belief, the affirmation, of the person whose judgment the proposition is supposed to express. This being the case, the question of the truth of the proposition before us is more difficult than appears at first sight. It appears possible to make out cases for two conflicting views. In the first place one might say that the state of mind of a person who, before the time of Galileo and Newton, believed that in affirming this proposition he was stating an obvious fact, was one in which we cannot fail to see sheer error. The person believed that there were absolute directions in space and that all motions of the character which we, with our greater knowledge, attribute to gravity, took place in one of those fixed, absolute directions, namely from "up" to "down." This was definitely a false belief.

On the other hand it might be argued that although the person was, owing to the limitations of his physical knowledge, *in danger* of being in error, he was not bound to fall into error. If someone had said to him "Do you believe in absolute directions?" and he had replied "Of course," his state of mind would thereby have become one in which there was error. He would have had before his mind two contradictory alternatives, namely that "down" *was* an absolute and that it was *not* an absolute direction, and since he chose to judge the one which will not cohere with *our* thought-world we are bound to say that he was "wrong." But suppose he had pondered on the question and had then replied "I see what you mean; I was not considering *that* point; all that I meant when I said that material bodies fall, was that they move towards the earth's surface. I should not care, now that you raise the question, to commit myself on the subject of *absolute* directions." Are we not justified in saying that he was not in error although his knowledge was partial? If so, we are committing ourselves to the view that an error is committed only if a person has had the two contradictory possibilities clearly in his consciousness—the "wrong" one and the "right" one—and has chosen to affirm the former. This view, as I have just stated it, does not tell us how the wrong is to be distinguished from the right—of that more in a moment; the immediate point is that if one is not consciously thinking about an antithesis or pair of contradictory possibilities, one cannot be held to be in error about it. To take the instance we have just mentioned, the man was not thinking about the

antithesis between absolute and relative direction, and was not therefore in error about it; the pair of contradictories he had in mind was "All unsupported bodies tend to fall (i.e., bodies near the earth tend to fall to the earth) and "Some unsupported bodies do not tend to fall"; of these, as the law of contradiction tells us, one must be true and the other false; he chose the first and was therefore not in error.

Which of these two ways of looking at the matter is the correct one? Is it correct to say that the partial knowledge contained error, in spite of the man's caution and open-mindedness? Or are we right in our view that by his caution he avoided error? We can, within reason, define our terms as we like, and we can so *define* error as to enable us to take either view. All that I am concerned to emphasise is that there is a fairly clear distinction in kind between states of partial knowledge such that we can reasonably use the term error to describe one class of cases and not the other. A primitive man who first consciously arrived at the generalisation "All material bodies tend to fall if they are not held up" was stating what was true as far as it went. His state of mind was quite different from that of a modern flat-earthist who consciously rejects modern views of the solar system.

We have not, however, quite finished with the point at issue, for we have not dealt with the question which of the two contradictory possibilities is to be decided to be the "right" and which the "wrong." Here again we must remind ourselves that the Idealist Logic bases itself on a frank acceptance of the limitations under which men seek for truth. There can be no transcendent, no external, test for truth; the true is always the true as I see it now or as you see it now, although you and I must each insist that truth is *objective* truth, truth as men *ought* to see it. If I remember that on a former occasion I had before my mind two contradictory propositions p and q and that I affirmed p, and if I *now* affirm q, I am bound to hold that in affirming p I was in error. There is, of course, the possibility that I was then judging truly and am *now* in error, but this is one of the risks which we have to take if we are to use our reason at all. As we saw on page 108, the Idealist logic looks at the thing from the point of view of the man who is judging, not from the point of view of a second intelligence which stands aside and, with complete knowledge of the truth, tests the results of the man's thinking against the finished whole which the man is trying to copy. The Idealist logician regards the correspondence theory not as false but as inappropriate to his standpoint. The *test* for error, from his standpoint, is immanent; it is one which the man who is doing the thinking must apply for himself. Whatever contradicts what I now take to be true I take to be false, and what I take to be true I take to be *objective* truth—not my private creation—truth as other men will see it if they think correctly. This is not intellectual arrogance; a man may be the humblest creature imaginable, but so long as he honestly holds to "p" he must regard people holding to "non-p" as mistaken. The process of knowing one's universe and oneself is in a sense subjective, yet by its very nature it must claim to be a process of arriving at objective truth. For the Absolutist this

blending of subjective with objective is inherent in the union of the finite and the Absolute. So far as our present inquiry goes we must say that the false is what contradicts what we now believe, and remind ourselves that the task which we set ourselves (p. 111) was not to give an "explicit definition" of truth but a "definition in use"—to try to analyse the state of mind in which we use words like "error" or "falsity."

The process of deciding between two contradictory propositions is often, of course, a practical one. The Pragmatist can claim a certain support for his thesis from the fact that the words "error" and "mistake" do carry with them a suggestion of frustration or defeat. In everyday life, and over the whole range of inductive science, the crucial test between "p" and "non-p" is a practical one. If "p" is true certain results follow, on certain conditions, and if "non-p" is true certain different results follow, on the same conditions. If we at one time really believe "p" and later find that the results are such as could only follow if "non-p" were true, we have to admit that we have been in error. If we base our action on "p," the discovery that our purpose has been frustrated may lead to the discovery of the truth of "non-p." We may not agree with the Pragmatist that the *meaning* of the terms "truth" and "error" as applied to propositions is this success or non-success in action, but we can agree that the *test* for truth is often this practical one. Now I think it true to say that in the case of those states of mind which we have refused to call mistaken or erroneous and which we have described as true beliefs as far as they went, a further reason for our decision is that in such cases the belief does not lead to the frustration of the purpose of the believer. The reason why "material bodies fall down if not held up" may be held to be true is, in short, twofold. In the first place, the person making the statement may not be intending to contradict the more adequate statement of Newton; secondly, it is a perfectly sound guide to practice, so far as the person whose state of mind it is expressing is concerned—it will never "let him down."

Bradley lays emphasis on this practical test for error, but since he regards all partial experience, as such, as necessarily containing elements of error, he has to distinguish between errors which are illusions and errors which are not!

> "Everything is error, but everything is not illusion. It is error where, and in so far as, our ideas are not the same as reality. It is illusion where, and in so far as, this difference turns to a conflict in our nature. Where experience, inward or outward, clashes with our views, where there arises thus disorder, confusion and pain, we may speak of illusion."

My conclusion about the matter is that if a belief does not turn out to be in this sense an "illusion," and if it is not contradicted in the strict sense by any belief which we may later come to hold, it is not an "error."

If we restrict our use of the terms "error" and "falsity" in the way I have suggested, it would seem that in principle a finite being could entirely avoid error by carrying sincerity and caution to their utmost

limits, although I am far from suggesting that an ordinary human being could in practice be entirely successful in this. If only we made a sustained effort to limit our judgments to what we actually observed, and became aware of the assumptions which we so often confuse with perceptions, and if only we refrained from denying anything but what is clearly contradicted by what is "given," we might, in principle, avoid error. A more practical rule for the avoidance of error by finite beings is to make a subjective reference, explicit or implicit, in our judgments. For instance, if I say "Next Tuesday will be a fine day," and if there proves to be prolonged rain when Tuesday comes, there will be nothing for it but to admit an error. But if I say "So far as the indications and my knowledge of meteorology go, next Tuesday will be fine," my judgment stands unchallenged whatever the weather turns out to be.

The position which we have now reached is that while all error (all sincere or not consciously insincere error) is part of the truth, not all partial truth, not all appearance, contains error. There is true appearance as well as false. For the process of passing from lesser to greater knowledge, of inserting an old belief in a new context, does not always involve the discovery that some part of some former explicit judgment is contradicted by what is now judged.

It might be well to add a word here as to the use of the term "appearance" as synonymous with "part of the truth." This rather special use of the word "appearance" is for the purpose of metaphysical discussion. We should not, in ordinary conversation, describe the tree at which we are looking as an "appearance" merely because it is only part of the landscape or only one of the many trees in the world. What we usually have in mind when we refer to part of the truth as "appearance" is that it is an *aspect* of the *Universe as a whole.* For instance, the physicist is concerned with the whole universe, but he is concerned with only one aspect of the whole; the chemist and the biologist, again, are each concerned with a partial view of the whole universe. Even the mathematician can be said to be dealing with the whole universe in his own way for, as Pythagoras dimly saw, numerical relations are the basis of the physical world. Now one of the purposes of my elaboration of the relationship between error and appearance is to establish that a view of the Universe *as a whole* can be abstract or partial, and yet need not be in the least false; it can be an appearance of the whole, and yet a true appearance. As a matter of fact, common sense is perfectly justified in distinguishing truth from falsehood *within the framework of any of these partial views of the universe.* There can be true as well as false appearance, true as well as false statements in a system which takes ordinary space and time and causality for granted. The fact that, as an Idealist, I should not believe that "matter" can exist out of relation to the transcendental ego need not prevent my recognising that when I discuss physics with an exponent of the crudest materialism I can agree with him that the statement "This is a force of x dynes" is true and "This is a force of y dynes" is false. This is not merely a "manner of speaking." It really is the case that the one judgment is true and the other false. We can

have before us "appearances" of varying orders of abstractness; we can pass upwards through pure mathematics to physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, getting less abstract as we go; but none of these partial views of the Whole is, as such, false. For within any one of them I can in principle make judgments with the clear reservation, or under the condition, that the whole point of view, the whole science, is to some degree an abstraction from the concreteness of experience. As in the case of our prediction of rain on Tuesday, I can introduce into my judgment a condition which avoids error.

There is one possible criticism, however, which ought to be met here, of the view that not all appearance, as such, is necessarily erroneous. For it may be said that in criticising Bradley for not distinguishing between error and appearance, I have overlooked the fact that not only for Bradley but for all forms of Absolutism, wholeness involves consistency whereas partiality involves internal inconsistency. Every part, as part, must, when analysed, contradict itself, for contradictions are only removed in proportion as experience expands to wholeness, to the Absolute. For Absolutism, therefore, every appearance must be false. I may be asked, therefore, whether in declining to admit that all partiality involves falsity I am not challenging the view which I previously favoured that contradiction in thought and conflict in conduct arise from the fact that human experience is only a fragment of the Whole. If appearances, as partial aspects of the Real, are contradictory, must they not be false? Let us consider this.

There is a passage in Professor Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity* (Vol. I, p. 207) which is of interest here. He has been discussing the possibility that the categories might be shown to be internally inconsistent, and he comes to the conclusion that "As a matter of fact what has been done is to show that these conceptions present great difficulties and an appearance of inconsistency to the understanding. But perhaps it is their inconsistency that is apparent and not they themselves." He prefaces this by remarking that if the categories *were* convicted of inconsistency, they would not have even possessed secondary reality, but would be false.

Now when Bradley criticised the idea of space, or the notion of terms-in-relation, as inconsistent, what did he mean? Did he mean that the whole realm of things-in-space or of terms-in-relation was utterly non-existent? Clearly not; "everything that belongs to appearance belongs to reality." Did he mean that these realms had "secondary reality"? I think he and Bosanquet would have repudiated the suggestion. Bosanquet held that there is only one Real and every tiny bit of appearance is in it. "Everything is real so long as you do not take it for more than it is." And Bradley explicitly rejects the realm which is "between non-existence and reality" (*see* p. 112). Did he mean that reality *was* self-contradictory? The basis of his whole system was that it was not. What did he mean, then? So far as I can see, he meant precisely what Professor Alexander says, i.e., the world as seen by means of the categories has an "appearance of inconsistency." If you look at

part of the real the real *looks* inconsistent, but is not really so. You are confronted with an internal inconsistency in the part which is resolved as soon as you expand (if you can !) your view to the Whole. Internal inconsistency is a form which partiality takes.

But it surely follows that if you keep in mind that a particular aspect of the Universe *is* only an aspect, and that the internal inconsistency is reconciled in the full experience, then your state of mind is not error ; it is merely partial knowledge. You are not predicating your part without reservations, and therefore the part, though self-contradictory, is not false.

This is where, it seems to me, certain critics of the first part of *Appearance and Reality* have missed the point, although this is really due to Bradley's eccentric habit of speaking as though "appearances" were somehow a realm of false entities. The position, if I may put it in my own way, is as follows. Take the question of Euclidian space as the background of motion—the question of the antinomies of the "Achilles and the tortoise" type. Bradley would have been the very last to contend that these problems are *inherently* insoluble, for that would have been the irrationalism of which Absolutism is the very antithesis. What he meant, I think, is this. *If* you imagine an infinitely divisible space—imagine it, as crudely realistic common sense does, as "just there" *apart from any experience* ; and *if* you imagine a particle of only point-size which is a "thing-in-itself" and "in" the space ; and *if* you postulate a state of things in which the particle occupies successively one after another of the series of points intermediate between one point and another ; if, in short, you take an extremely thin abstraction from the concrete wealth of experience and, forgetting that it *is* an abstraction, predicate it of the real all by itself, then you are in effect setting yourself the problem of showing how the last term in the series can be reached by a process in which every term of the series must be passed in its turn. This is a task which is impossible[1] by the very definition of the space as infinitely divisible. But the self-contradiction in the idea of motion through continuous space is only inherent in the idea that this space is concrete or existing by itself—in the idea that the things in the space are "there" in the crudely realistic sense. Once admit the abstractness, once admit that the space by itself is abstract, and in reality exists for an ego and becomes concrete only *with* the ego, and the problem of motion becomes the problem of how we can be *conscious* of motion ; and at once this particular contradiction ceases to present itself. For instance (although I do not suggest that this is the final solution) one can conceive of the motion as a rapid discontinuous series of appearances ; there may be a visual sensum at point A followed by another at point B, and so on, without any intermediate point being occupied, and the explanation of the appearance of continuous motion may be the same in real life as on

[1] It is mere confusion of thought to raise the question whether the task could be performed in an "infinite" time—whatever that means. The point is that if you take the points in succession you cannot reach the last. That is what "infinitely divisible" means.

the cinematograph film. Such an explanation is impossible if, as in the case of crude realism, we have hypostatised our particles, for then we cannot admit that our continuously self-existent particle can become nothing at all in its passage from A to B; we cannot admit, that is, that it is first at A and then vanishes into nothingness and turns up again at B without occupying the intermediate points.

But if the contradiction lies not in the abstract aspect itself, but merely in forgetting that the abstraction *is* an abstraction, "in taking it for more than it is," then I can clearly avoid error by *not* taking the abstraction for more than it is. And Bradley is surely wrong in describing "appearance," or abstract aspect, *as such*, as false, even though all appearance is self-contradictory.

In the same way Bradley's criticism of the notion of terms in relation has, I think, often been misunderstood. It is perfectly true that he treats a relation as if it were a sort of entity standing between two other entities in the shape of "terms." And on this view, if there is something in a term which is unaffected by the relation and something which "enters into" the relation, then these two aspects of the term must themselves be terms in relation and we are in for a spurious infinite regress. It is no answer to Bradley to say that this view of the matter is a vicious abstraction, and that in real life we do not feel the slightest difficulty in seeing a book on a table; Bradley knew that as well as anyone else, and indeed *that was his very point.* What he was criticising, and criticising by a *reductio ad absurdum*, was the crudely realistic taking of terms-in-relation seriously as though it were an adequate way of describing the living interpenetrating universe and not—what it really is—a useful abstraction for certain purposes. Alexander[1] criticises Bradley thus:

> "Qualities, terms and relations are alleged to be 'infected' with the evil of the so-called infinite regress. But this allegation appears once more to depend on the abstraction of the relation from its business of relating, so that we have the ironical result that relations whose externality Mr. Bradley strenuously denies are treated in effect as if they were external. The relation, it is urged, is itself related to the qualities."

As I read Bradley, he was fully conscious of the "irony." He did not himself believe his premise. The argument was a *reductio ad absurdum.* His point was that any view of the universe which took terms-in-relation so realistically as to forget that it was an abstraction was *bound* to involve "the abstraction of the relation from its business of relating," and that since this leads to absurd results we must not regard any statement in the terms-and-relation form as more than a useful device—"most necessary but in the end most indefensible." The stock refutation of Bradley's argument takes the form of a denial that the antinomy, as he set it out, represents the reality of the situation, and insists that his problem was an artificial one because it involved an arbitrary abstraction from the

[1] S. Alexander: *Space, Time and Deity*, p. 256.

interpenetrating living reality. But this was Bradley's own point, and I think he was right in his contention that a realism which regards term and relation as objective reals inevitably hypostatises them both into crudely realistic "things" and that this leads to an infinite regress. My own purpose at the moment, however, is to maintain that Bradley, while right in maintaining that "appearances" contained these infinite regresses and inner contradictions, was wrong in his suggestion that this rendered the whole realm of appearance false. The term-relation abstraction, as far as it goes, is useful and is, for us, inevitable, both for everyday life and for Physics. It is only when we regard statements about terms and relations as *ontologically* adequate, when, that is, we think that the ultimate constituents of the real are terms and relations, that we get involved in self-contradiction. The self-contradiction, the error, lies in taking the abstraction for more than it is, and we can avoid the mistake if we wish.

CHAPTER VI

ABSOLUTE ACTIVITY AND FINITE PASSIVITY

MY purpose has been to suggest that whether Absolutism is accepted or rejected on other grounds, we cannot reject it with confidence on the ground that the notion of an Absolute experience is clearly contradicted by human experience of individual isolation or separation, of freedom or of error. I propose to offer a few observations on a final contrast between finite and Absolute experience which has emerged in the preceding discussion.

There is not, I think, anywhere in Philosophy a more difficult subject than that of the relation between what may perhaps be called the active and the passive aspects respectively of human thought. No one will, I imagine, object to the statement that in some sense thinking is an activity. But it is not an unlimited activity ; we cannot believe what we like. If our thinking is to be true thinking, if it is to reveal to us the nature of things, we must make it comply with certain conditions. It is this "being forced to comply" that I have in mind when I speak of the *passive* aspect of thinking. I think the term "passive" is justified. Common sense certainly holds that we in some sense *receive* truth, and even have it forced upon us ; and this means more than that we receive a "given" sense element which we actively elaborate by active thinking, for even the propositions which record the results of the most active thought processes are not thought of as our free creations. When we say that they are true, we feel that in some way they were "there" all the time waiting to be received.

Objective Idealism insists on this receptive or passive element in our thinking—or at any rate in our thought—as firmly as does any form of Realism, and the task is therefore laid on it to show how this insistence fits its fundamental doctrine that the real is experience.

Idealist and Realist alike have, I think, to make certain basic assumptions which have been well expressed as follows :

(1) "The end of every knowing activity is to apprehend the nature of things as they are ;

(2) the end is equally to achieve a certain ideal set by the mind's own character ;

(3) in the long run these ends coincide ; we must believe that thought discloses reality in the degree to which it achieves its own ideal."[1]

[1] Brand Blanshard: *The Nature of Thought*, Vol. 1, p. 488.

The Idealist is surely on very firm ground when he contends that these three assumptions taken together are best explained by the view that the real is experience. It is beyond my scope to discuss this in all its aspects, but it may be of interest to consider whether any light is thrown on it by our preceding discussions. How then can Objective Idealism account for what is assumed in (3)? And how can it, in this connexion, explain the aspect of passivity in active thinking?

In essence, I think, modern Idealism's explanation of the coincidence referred to in (3) is that the "nature of things" referred to in (1) is to be thought of as a Mind which eternally[1] achieves the ideal referred to in (2). In proportion as I achieve my own ideal of completed thought, completed experience, I become similar to, and therefore—in this view—identical with, this "nature of things" or Mind, and this is the very meaning of "apprehending" the nature of things. If this standpoint is provisionally adopted it will be necessary to interpret "passivity" in accordance with it. Just as we tried to see a possible explanation of moral obligation and of freedom in terms of immanence or identity-in-difference, so we must try to deal with the paradox that thinking is both active construction and passive reception. To me, the appeal of the kind of logical approach which I have outlined in this book is not that in itself, as pure logic or pure epistemology, it is capable of convincing demonstration, but rather that if one accepts it provisionally, even as an ultimate mystery or ultimate paradox, the difficulties in the study of morality, of freedom and of knowledge do not seem quite so intractable.

For Absolute Idealism the Real is not a complex of static objective universals. If it were so, the Absolute Idealist could more easily come to terms with certain forms of Critical Realism. The Absolutist is not merely a philosopher who chooses to use the words "universal" and "thought" interchangeably so that he can pass lightly from the objective to the subjective point of view. For him, thoughts are really thinkings; there is the notion of activity in that of thought, and this he regards as true even of the Absolute experience. This is why, I think, he has an important comment to offer on the following words of Dr. Brand Blanshard.[2]

> "Knowledge, then, is an end. . . . And when we go on to reflect upon this end it seems clear that it is a state, not an activity or process. To be sure a process is necessary if we are to arrive at it; to attain knowledge is always to do so through some kind of mental activity, such as judgment or inference. But it will not do to *identify* knowledge with the process of coming to know. We must distinguish knowing as the process by which knowledge is realised from knowledge itself as *that which* the process realises in various degrees."

[1] The notion of "eternal" raises, of course, a large problem. I can only refer here to my distinction of the two meanings of "timeless" and the passage relating to the timelessness of the Absolute experience. *See* p. 99.

[2] *The Nature of Thought*, p. 487.

This distinction between the process of knowing and the state of knowledge is of course a natural one so far as human thought is concerned, but an Idealist philosophy which holds that the Real is an active Absolute —active in the sense mentioned on page 105—an Absolute whose very being is active creative experiencing, must hold that in so far as knowledge is a "state, not an activity or process" it is not adequate to the real, for the real is the eternal outgoing energy of creative thinking. Strictly speaking the Idealist cannot afford to admit a *state* of knowledge even in the case of finite thinkers. When a man has achieved a piece of new knowledge it does not remain in a continuous state. Either he is not attending to it, in which case it is for him non-existent and even non-subsistent, or else he recalls it to mind and *actively* thinks it again. When he is not thinking about it it exists, so Absolutism must hold, within the living, active Absolute experience.

In trying, then, to interpret the "passive" aspect of thinking, the Absolutist cannot adopt the notion of a static real which is the end to which active thinking is the means. Passivity, in the sense in which I have used the word, is not due to the conditioning of the active by the static; it is the conditioning of one activity by another which yet is not another; it is the conditioning of human cognitive activity by the eternal activity of the immanent Whole.

There is a parallel here to the phenomena of conscience and of moral freedom. The uniqueness of the sense of moral obligation, as I tried to argue on page 62, is due to the fact that on the one hand it is not the awareness of an external law which ignores one's desires, and that on the other hand it is not to be identified with any of the desires of an "atomic" or separate individual. The uniqueness of my sense of moral obligation is due to its being, in a sense, of the nature of both at once, of both in synthesis—to its being both the awareness of the will, immanent in me, of a Mind vaster than mine, and also my own deepest desire, the two being in union. Moral conflict is due to the tension between subjective desires and this unique "desire" which is neither exclusively mine nor exclusively other. The uniqueness of moral freedom we tried to see as due to its satisfying two apparently conflicting requirements, namely that one's voluntary actions should be grounded in the systematic unity of the Whole and should yet be the free expression of one's own nature. Here again the proposed solution of the problem was the fact of immanence—that one is most oneself when one's action most fully expresses the immanent will of the Whole. Now the problem before us is another apparent clash of requirements. My thinking must be my own activity and must satisfy my own conditions, achieve my own ideals as thinker. I must "see for myself," must "put it in my own way." And yet if it is valid thinking it must not be merely my private possession; it must so reveal the nature of things that other men will not be able to deny it without being in error. So much is this public or objective aspect to the fore that we frequently think of knowledge as being passively received, and even forced on us by the facts. Can the identity-in-difference view of the relation of soul to soul and soul to Whole help us here also? And

can we, since we have rejected a static real, see how the appearance of passivity is due to the conditioning of finite cognitive activity by the creative activity of the Absolute? And when I am in one sense passively receiving truth, can I be said to be in a deeper sense actively constructing it?

At first sight the parallel to the case of moral obligation seems close. Moral conflict is the clash, not between internal desire and a purely external law, but between a desire which is only mine[1] and a volition which is both mine and yet vastly more. At bottom I identify myself with the larger or objective will. So, it may be reasoned, is it with the clash between idle fancy and the objective fact, between the merely entertained hypothesis and the finally believed truth. I entertain the fancy, and suspend judgment on the hypothesis; they are "merely mine" or merely the property, so to speak, of a number of other fallible mortals. But if I finally reject them as the result of a process of reasoning, then, although the rejection may cause me pain since I *desire* them to be true, the judgment that the truth is otherwise is my own free judgment as a rational being; if it is being forced on me it is being forced on me by myself, my deepest or realest self. As rational, as occupying that standpoint of dispassionate cognition which is the common standpoint of all men when they are rational, that standpoint of the immanent universal thought which is the standpoint of the transcendental ego and the Absolute, I will only freely judge the consistent and the coherent, and will freely refuse, at whatever pain to my empirical self with its "passions" and desires, to affirm what does not satisfy my ideals as thinker. That which, therefore, is in one sense forced upon me—that which I passively receive and which limits my activity, is in a deeper sense my own activity, my own none the less for being the "eternal activity of the immanent Whole."

Unfortunately, however, an important reservation must be made. The success of our argument has depended on our selecting a favourable instance, namely the case where the rejection of the "entertained" hypothesis turns on a process of reasoning. When it turns on observation or experiment, we have to do with the sheer "given-ness" of sense-data, and an attempt to explain epistemic passivity as a clash of activities is the more difficult. In the former case my union, as rational, with the Whole is sufficient to ensure that I *freely* demand consistency, coherence, unity and "sufficient reason." But in the latter case, as we saw at the beginning of our discussion (p. 8) the human thinker is forced to accept brute fact so far as sense data are concerned, and this imposes a limit to the success of our argument. We are trying to see how the aspect of human thought which appears as passive reception of truth can be explained as a clash with the activity of the immanent Thinker, an activity which

[1] Even this desire which is "only mine" is, of course, included in the Absolute experience, since the latter is the Whole. But with evil as with error it is included in a special context—that of being Mr. Jones's volition or belief. Mr. Jones's "good" decisions and true beliefs do not, however, occur in the Absolute as *merely* Mr. Jones's decisions and beliefs.

we know to *be* an activity because, after all, we are so in union with it that it is *our* activity. But the reception of sense-data is not a free activity on the part of even our deepest, rational self, and we can therefore have no experience of union with the Whole so far as its experience of the sensible world is concerned. We are *bound* to *postulate* that the Absolute can be confronted with no brute facts, no "given" sense-data, and we are bound therefore to postulate a type of experience of sense-data which *we* never share, an experience in which the sensible world is freely and actively willed, and not received.

The existence of "matter" or sense-data has perhaps been the greatest difficulty of rationalist philosophers from Plato onwards. The only way in which we can here achieve an appearance of formal completeness for our construction is by asserting that the passivity of our sense-experience is bound up with our very finitude. This leaves us, of course, with a final difficulty. The Absolutist can think of the Real as an Absolute *experience*; he can hold that human personality is the key to the greatest truth about the Whole which we finite beings can know. But he is forced to concede at the last that in one feature the word "experience" cannot mean the same when applied to the Absolute as it does when applied to us; for *our* experience contains that sense element which is not our free ideal construction but which is given to us and even forced upon us. We are thus left with a final contrast between finite and Absolute experience—a contrast of such a nature that some will hold it a fatal objection to the Idealist's identification of Reality with Experience.

The Idealist can, however, reasonably appeal here to the principle of analogical predication. As we have seen, there are certain concepts which we may validly apply, and indeed must apply if we are to think at all, to the Whole, the Absolute, the Divine Being, but which cannot mean exactly the same in this connexion as they do when applied to men. For example, we saw that the Whole must be active, and yet the word "activity" presupposes in its human setting conditions which cannot obtain in the Divine. These conceptions, we saw good reason to maintain, are not false, although they are inadequate; it is their contradictories which are false. To say that God is active may be inadequate, but to say that he is static or passive would certainly be false. So with the concept "experience." We know that experience somehow *is*, and by "experience" we mean that concrete whole from which both subject and object are abstractions. To say that Reality is experience is admittedly inadequate, for the only experience which we know is passive with regard to sense data, which Reality cannot be. But to say that reality is abstract object, as the materialist in effect does, is plainly false. We must be far nearer the truth when our conception of Reality contains both subject and object, as "experience" does. A conscious experience, holding in unity one subject and many objects, is the most concrete thing, the most adequate type of complex unity, the most perfect example of the reconciliation of the contradiction of the many and the one, that we know.

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIAN THEISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABSOLUTE

THE first question which calls for consideration is clearly that of the goodness of God. Is the Philosophy of the Absolute consistent with the Christian belief that God is good?

In constructing a Philosophy of the Absolute there comes a moment when we are at the parting of the ways. We can either so stress the inadequacy of our conception of the Absolute Experience as to leave us in a state of religious agnosticism, or else base our further procedure on the doctrine of the "degrees of reality," the doctrine that various human conceptions can be arranged in a series exhibiting progressively greater adequacy as analogical predicates of the Real or the Absolute. It will be clear from the preceding discussion that the second of these alternatives is the one which we have already chosen.

It will also be clear, from our discussion of the Absolutist's conception of the moral ideal, that we can analogically predicate formal goodness of the Absolute. For we saw that the experience of the good man, to a much greater degree than that of the bad or the morally indifferent man, possessed that systematic and teleological unity, that inclusiveness and inner harmony, that self-determination or freedom, which must be conceived to characterise the Absolute Experience in full perfection. But such an approach to the problem in itself, and apart from mystical or religious experience, leaves us with something far less than the Christian conception of the actively redemptive love of God. But in the outline of a metaphysical ethic which I have given, I have laid less stress on this neo-Hegelian conception of the moral *ideal* than on the Kantian conception of moral *obligation*, although to this latter I gave a neo-Hegelian emphasis by insisting that in the experience of moral obligation we are in a special sense one with the Absolute experience. Now if this is so, we clearly have a much more important clue to the solution of our problem than the purely formal consideration which I have just mentioned. For here we have something material and concrete; here we see, as it were, the Absolute purpose in this world of sin and pain and mystery. In the determination of the good man to work unselfishly for the good of mankind we see the Absolute at work, so to speak. In the lives of the best of men, and in a unique degree in the life and death of Jesus Christ, we see as it were the Absolute clothed in flesh, and we naturally drop the term "Absolute" and speak of "God." As the author of the fourth Gospel believed, he that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father.

What it comes to is this. The vast amount of unmerited suffering in the world renders impossible any short and easy appeal to the Argument from Design to demonstrate the goodness of God. But if we have reason to think that the most adequate analogue of the mind and purpose of God is the mind and purpose of a man who is unselfishly striving for the greatest good, then our faith has a solid foundation. We have seen, I think, that we have sound reasons for such a belief. Faith in the goodness of God is therefore rational. We have also a simple answer to a very old objection to this faith, the objection that the Creator of this world cannot be both good and omnipotent, for if good he would have wished to achieve his purpose without bringing into being so much unmerited suffering, and if omnipotent he could have done so. The answer is that when we say that God is good we mean that in the good man we have the most adequate picture, the truest appearance, that we can have of God at work in time. And when we say that God is omnipotent we mean that in time his purpose will be fulfilled. But this conception of time as a straight line drawn in Euclidian space stretching indefinitely in two opposite directions, past and future, is only appearance, albeit true appearance, and this applies also to the notion of a "purpose" needing such a "time" in which to work itself out. If we are to think of God as working in time as *we* know time, then we are forced to think of his omnipotence as expressing itself in a time process, i.e., gradually. The answer, therefore, to the historic objection is that, seen in the form of time, which, though not reality, is true appearance, there is no contradiction between the concept of the omnipotence of God and the notion of his creating good men, i.e., bringing into being that supreme value—moral character, by a gradual process in time.

From the point of view of finite beings like ourselves who have to grasp Reality under the time-form it may be held with confidence, as a true appearance, that real goodness, as distinct from innocence, could not have been brought into being except in such a world as this. Only in a world where men are tempted to sin, and tempted to despair by the injustice of things and by the fact that there is no obvious "proof" that we survive death and are rewarded or punished in the hereafter—only in such a world can real character, i.e., a real love of goodness for its own sake and not for the sake of reward, be produced by even an omnipotent purpose.

Our justification, then, for affirming the goodness of God is our reasoned conviction that in the human passion for abolishing suffering and bringing in a better human society, using no man as merely a means but recognising that he is an end in himself, we see the Divine "will" under the form of time. Now this leads to a very important conclusion, as Kant saw. That great philosopher has often been criticised on the ground that he brought in God, as it were by an afterthought, to support his contention that men survive death. But that was not his real intention. His point was subjective, not objective. He was not asking what is God's business and answering "To guarantee man's immortality and

future reward." He was asking what ground *we* have for belief in God, and he replied that in moral experience we go deeper into the heart of reality than in any other form of experience, and our passionate conviction that there must be One who will see justice done is therefore the basis of a rational faith in God and immortality. At any rate Kant was certainly right in his insistence that one's belief in the survival of human personality after death has its surest foundation in one's belief in God.

The point is that if God is good and omnipotent in the sense in which we are using these terms, it is impossible that the good man and the evil man are alike exterminated by death. The argument may be put in two ways. In the first place we may argue that since the essence of human goodness is a refusal to use other people as a means to one's private ends, and since our only clue to the goodness of God is the goodness of men, we could not call God good if we had to think of him, in the time-form appearance, as bringing men into the world for some purpose the fruition of which they are not to enjoy since they pass out of existence when he has finished with them. A God who acted thus would be akin to the gods at whom Hardy sneered at the conclusion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He would not be merely non-moral; he would be evil.

It would be no answer to this argument to urge that we are only applying the word "good" to God analogically. The doctrine of analogical predication, we must remember, is that although the forms of human speech, when in our philosophical thinking we apply them to God, cannot mean as so applied exactly what they mean when applied to men, nevertheless they may be applied analogically to God if there is good reason for thinking that they are the nearest to the complete truth that we can attain and that their contradictories, as applied to God, are clearly false. In the present instance it seems clear that to say that God is good must mean that he is good in his treatment of men, i.e., that he treats them as a good *man* would. Mill was right in his famous protest on this point, and Kant was right in his conviction that a world in which the distribution among men of happiness and suffering appears arbitrary and even unjust can only be regarded as the creation of a good God if this life is not all and if there is some ground for believing that the suffering of the righteous is a means to a greater good of which they themselves will not be denied a share.

It is easy, of course, to criticise the form of this argument, and I do not myself think that it is the best way of stating the ethical case for a belief in human immortality. But fundamentally I think it is sound. If you raise the question whether man has any rights against God, I can only reply in the words of Abraham: "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

One can point out, of course, that a good man does not bargain for a reward, even a reward in heaven. But this only increases one's conviction that a good God would see that he gets it. That is how a good *man* would act. It can be readily conceded that the reward of goodness is not something *added* to the man; it is organically connected with the goodness; it is really the richer spiritual experience, the clearer insight

which inevitably accompany true moral elevation. But the doctrine that with purity of heart comes the vision of God is a mockery if we have to allow that at the moment when the purity and the vision are reached the soul may pass into nothingness for ever.

A stronger objection to the argument is that it treats God and man as separate "substances" externally related—the doctrine against which we have reasoned in our discussion of identity-in-difference. But the principle of identity-in-difference must be interpreted in the light of the principle of analogical predication and of our insistence that there is true as well as false appearance. As we have seen, the view that God is working out a purpose in what we call "time" is a true appearance although not reality. Similarly there is no doubt that we are only dealing with appearance when we think of men and God as "separate" beings in such wise that Peter and Paul lived their lives in atomic separation from each other and survived death with the same individual separateness, standing all the time in such external relation with God as is implied by the notion that God's justice necessitated their individual vindication in the hereafter. But it does not follow that this is *false* appearance. After all, the doctrine that similarity, as applied to spirits, is identity, has the inevitable corollary that dissimilarity must in some sense be "separateness." All the facts to which philosophers appeal when arguing for separate soul "substances" must be, and can be, accounted for by the principle of identity-in-difference. The fact that Peter's and Paul's lives flowed along "separately" is not denied; what is denied is the interpretation of this fact by the doctrine of soul substances. The reason for this denial is that such a view would leave us with a pluralism; the Absolute would not unify the Universe but be merely *monas inter monadum*. The "separation," however, is a fact and is not to be explained away. The finite beings are, as we insisted, not merged or lost in the Absolute. All that belongs to appearance belongs to reality. The "separate existence" of Peter and Paul is interpreted in terms of the dissimilarity of their experiences and therefore of their memory-chains, and in principle there is no metaphysical reason why a separateness of this nature, which we know can continue for three score years and ten, should not continue indefinitely. If a "body" is necessary for such continuance, this only means, in Idealist language, that a man's continued awareness of his personal existence after death would, as now, centre around a unique spatial perspective and "common sensibility." This corresponds to the common-sense notion of a spiritual body continuous with the material body.

It is interesting here to notice that although Bradley had, so far as I know, no personal faith in individual survival after death, he did not deny that a belief in such survival is consistent with his system so far as the logical and metaphysical aspects of the latter are concerned. One statement of his on the subject of a future life is relevant to our discussion, because it connects the notion of personal identity with the notion that similarity is identity-in-difference. He says:[1]

[1] F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 445.

> "A future life is possible even on the ground of common crude materialism. After an interval, no matter how long, another nervous system sufficiently like our own might be developed, and in this case memory and a personal identity might arise."

He here clearly implies that the similarity between the consciousness which, from the point of view of the materialist, is epiphenomenal to the future organism and the consciousness which is epiphenomenal to the present one, is identity, and that as the similarity extends to memory this gives all the continuity which is needed.

The orthodox Christian view, then, that the individual soul survives death is quite compatible with Absolutism. Indeed, to insist that survival must mean the continuity of a "separate" memory-chain over the gap of death is much more practically satisfactory than a doctrine of mere indestructibility of a simple soul-substance. That a soul-substance shall continue in being is not necessarily survival in any real sense, for since such continuance is clearly compatible with temporary unconsciousness as in sleep, it can presumably be compatible with an endless sleep.

The greatest difficulty in arriving at a clear conception of the "hereafter" is the fact that time as we know it is, as we have seen, appearance and not reality, for it is certain that the Absolute is not confronted by that spurious infinite, that succession without beginning and ending, which is to us so inscrutable a mystery. The very notion of a whole of time is to us a self-contradiction, and yet God's awareness is of the Whole. But the Absolute Experience is, as we saw, not timeless in the sense that abstractions are timeless, and our time is therefore not a *false* appearance; it symbolises a concrete "time" in which God is really active. Now it is possible that at death we pass, so to speak, into an order of being of which the time-form is more akin to that of the full Absolute Experience. If this is so, the expression "life *after* death" may not give us an adequate picture of the reality. On the other hand, it may be in the nature of things that finite beings must necessarily view reality under the time-form appearance which is ours in this life, and that death does not therefore fundamentally alter our time-experience.

The second way of stating the ethical argument for survival after death ignores the notion of reward, and is in some ways more adequate. It is based on the fact that a moral character can only be said to have supreme value if it is the character of an existing person. As Professor Sorley has rightly insisted in his Gifford lectures "Moral Values and the Idea of God," there is no value in the mere *idea* of a good man. It is not really "character" that has value; only good *men* have moral value. Now the one key to the mystery of the injustice and the pain of life is that these are necessary conditions of the creation—seen under our human time-form—of good men. But if we had to concede that human life was terminated by death this key would fail us. A Universe which sets out to produce, by a gradual time-process, men and women possessing

moral value, and which destroys its finest creations equally with its failures, is neither rational nor moral, and cannot be regarded as the revelation in time of the purpose of a good God.

But it is not only our belief in the value of moral character in the narrow sense that justifies our faith in the survival of the individual consciousness. The existence in us of any of those wider and rational purposes which distinguish us from the lower animals gives us additional ground for such a faith. Any man who has felt within him that intense desire which has given birth to metaphysical thought—the desire to distinguish reality from appearances and to grasp the unity and significance of the scheme of things—feels with equal intensity that in pursuing this purpose he is being true to what is highest in human nature, and that to renounce this pursuit would be in some measure to sink towards the animal level. One fully recognises, of course, that many of the finest types of men and women are prevented by circumstances, or by the call of other spiritual vocations, from making a study of academic philosophy. But if a man is not even *interested* in ultimate problems, and is quite contented to skim the surface of thought and to acquire a number of unrelated opinions on "practical" questions with no coherence or unity of ground, then that man is false to his essential nature as a rational and spiritual being. The line of division is not necessarily between good and bad men in any obvious or superficial sense; it is rather between the serious and the frivolous, between the Jacobs and the Esaus, between those on the one hand who with all their obvious faults are fundamentally serious in their attitude to life and who do therefore have visions, and those on the other hand who sell their birthright, i.e., are not troubled by ultimate problems, and who, like animals—although perhaps splendid animals—take life as they find it. Now if one belongs to the first class, if one has a deep desire to justify the ways of God to man and to grasp the scheme of things entire—a desire which must have been implanted by that very scheme of things—then one lives life at its fullest and richest at times when one is discovering new truth. This holds, indeed, of the pursuit of all speculative truth—of all knowledge for its own sake.

Now surely any man who has such ideals of life will feel, unless his case is complicated by his being in emotional revolt against crude notions of the hereafter which he was taught in early youth, a deep desire that the process of learning shall not be arbitrarily ended by what we call death. A mathematician or physicist who loves his subject for its own sake and who has found that his increasing knowledge opens up ever fresh prospects of yet further discoveries, must surely desire to go on with his work indefinitely. In fact, anyone who is alive to the things of the spirit must desire to dwell, so to speak, in the realm of spirit, his true home. Of how many people this is true one cannot say; it would seem that only one who in some measure feels a "pilgrim and a stranger" to ordinary material interests can readily desire a spiritual heaven. Such a man is not impressed when told by fellow-men that they ask no more of life and are content to be extinguished. Such a confession is

an admission that an abiding interest in life such as only the things of the spirit can give, has never been discovered.[1]

But since this deep desire for survival is natural in the fullest sense of that word, i.e., it is rooted in that natural order which produces human nature at its highest and which must therefore never be *contrasted* with, for it includes, the rational and spiritual order, a faith that the desire will be satisfied is both natural and rational.

We now pass to the question of the relation between the Philosophy of the Absolute and the problem of human sin and human responsibility, of freedom and grace. It has been said that writers on the Christian doctrine of man can be divided into two classes—those who are primarily concerned with men's suffering and those who are primarily concerned with men's sin. Like most generalisations about human beings this cannot be pressed very far, but it is possible to see in modern writings the difference in interest and emphasis which is referred to here. On the one hand one finds an emphasis on man's own responsibility for much human suffering, a depreciation of "natural" human goodness apart from grace, an insistence on inherited human depravity and, somewhat inconsistently with this last, an insistence that sin is rebellion against God. On the other hand one finds sin regarded as in the nature of a disease or an anachronism, a consequent lack of emphasis on human responsibility, and an assumption that the problem of justifying the ways of God to man is much greater than that of justifying the ways of man to God.

The nerve centre of all these problems is the problem of human freedom. We have already insisted that freedom must not be interpreted as an irrational indeterminism. A man has not that severance from the rest of the Universe which would mean that his free volitions were completely created within him and had no roots in the Universe. Such a view would mean not merely that freedom is for us a mystery—that is admitted—but that it is dogmatically asserted to be an inherently and objectively *insoluble* mystery, i.e., not merely mysterious for us but irrational in itself.[2] But while we have thus rejected irrational indeterminism, we have insisted that a man is nevertheless capable of free volitions in the sense that they are not forced on him by anything outside himself. A rational self-conscious being cannot throw the responsibility for his voluntary or conscious choices on anything or anyone but himself. At the moment of action he acted in the way he did because he was the man he was. When struggling with a temptation to evil, or when after coming to himself he looks back with regret on his evil decision, he may, as we have seen,[3] regard the evil desires as "other" than himself and will not identify himself, his real or best self, with them, but this

[1] I must however call attention to the reservation which I have already made with regard to cases where there is a "complex" due to an unfortunate early religious environment. This may well explain cases of really spiritual men like Bosanquet who had no faith in survival.

[2] For it would have no adequate reason or ground—no ground, that is, in the systematic unity of the Whole.

[3] *See* p. 88.

does not alter the fact that *at the moment* of the evil decision, the desires or motives which were the immediate cause of it are by definition included within "himself"; indeed, this is what is meant by a voluntary action. In short, then, man is free, and is responsible for his actions, but nevertheless his actions are grounded in the whole scheme of things which is a systematic unity, and the reconciliation of this apparent contradiction is in the fact that a man is part of, is organic to, reality, and that the springs of action pass as it were through the centre of the man himself as he is at the moment.

Now in the case that he chose the right course we insisted that he was at that moment in actual, not merely metaphorical, union with God. His choice, we saw, was as it were God choosing in him and yet at that moment he was in supreme degree his real self. He is most free when most filled with Divine "grace," or—to put it more accurately—when he is possessed by "God's presence and his very self"—to quote Newman out of context. Now this view of freedom clearly supports, up to a point, the view of those Calvinistic theologians who have held that while we must accept responsibility for our bad actions, our good ones are "all of grace" so that we can claim no "merit" for them. The obvious difficulty we will consider in a moment, but let us point out that there must be truth—although not the whole truth—in this way of putting the matter. For humility could not be a virtue—which we all feel that it is—if it were not grounded in truth. If my good action were really mine in the sense that it is the creation of a metaphysically isolated soul-substance, then humility in regard to it would be hypocritical. It seems to me, however, that one of the finest emphases of Christian thought is its emphasis that the good is all of grace, and this is not peculiar to Calvinists. The view that:

> ". . . every virtue we possess,
> And every conquest won,
> And every thought of holiness,
> Are His alone"

is apparently accepted, if we judge by their hymn-books, by English Christians of all denominations.

But, we shall be asked, what of the evil choices? We surely cannot have it both ways? If moral victories are all of grace, must not moral defeats be due to the withholding of grace? We must consider this carefully. The term "grace" is, from the standpoint of this book, metaphorical, and the problem which we are now considering has already been touched on in more adequate language. We saw that from the standpoint of Absolutism the bad man is included equally with the good in the Absolute Experience, the difference being that the good man must be thought of as being in union with the deeper and larger purposes, those which do not have to be so obviously overruled in the fulfilling of the Whole Purpose. The good man is more *directly* fulfilling the Divine purpose than the bad man whose activities are frustrated and used to

bring about a result very different from what he intended. But in a very real sense they are both equally agents, or, more accurately, moments, in the Divine activity. Our study of freedom also led us to the conclusion that all human decisions must have adequate grounds or reasons even though they are the result of a breaking into the causal series by a determinant from an order higher than that of mechanical causation. All these conclusions were forced on us once we had rejected an ultimate pluralism or irrationalism. We held that moral experience demands a moral order, and that a metaphysical chaos could not be a moral cosmos.

But none of these considerations can alter the fact that a man is responsible for his evil choices. We have throughout insisted that although an action has its complete ground or reason in the scheme of things, it is not forced on the man, for the springs of action pass as it were through the centre of the man himself; they are part of the meaning of the phrase "the man himself at the moment of the decision." He does not stand apart from the reality of the scheme of things.

The real difference, then, between a right and a wrong decision is that in the former case there is a direct, and in the latter an indirect, participation in the Divine purpose. Now on the principle of identity-in-difference, as we have explained it, this means that there is a much greater similarity and therefore identity or union with the Divine in the good than in the bad. And since the common-sense notion of "separateness" between finite spirits and between finite spirit and God is in our view completely expressible in terms of dissimilarity of content, and does not require numerical distinctness of substance, it follows that when doing evil a man is "separate" from God in the real meaning of the word. He is responsible for his evil in the sense that his bad action has its ground in himself, and he is, as evil, separate from God. This analysis, therefore, so far supports the view that although our good choices and actions are "all of grace" so that we can claim no "merit" for them, yet our bad choices are in a real sense our own and not God's.

But we must not use these formal metaphysical considerations incautiously. So far as they go they have a decidedly Calvinistic flavour, but this is not to say that we are committed to the support of those elements in Calvinism against which the modern Christian conscience has rightly revolted. I refer of course to the doctrine of Election in its relation to the unregenerate—the doctrine that they deserve, or at any rate will receive, eternal—in the sense of everlasting—punishment. We need not discuss this here, of course, as the arguments for it are derived not from metaphysical considerations but from a theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible which few theologians hold to-day.

Most progressive thinkers in this country thirty or forty years ago were probably agreed that the only tenable theory of punishment was the theory that its purpose should be to reform the evildoer and to deter others from following his example. As part of the general reaction against liberalism which has taken place between the two world wars there has been a tendency to reinstate, cautiously and with reservations, the idea

that there is some eternal law whereby wrongdoing must bring down on the wrongdoer a "punishment," the purpose of which is not merely to reform him or deter others, but in some mysterious way to "cancel" the guilt. There is probably no subject on which there is more danger of being misled by metaphors than this. I must confess that, having made an effort to avoid metaphors or similes, I have not been able to understand how the guilt of a bad man can be "cancelled" or "removed" except by his becoming genuinely good and sincerely regretting his past, nor how, once this has taken place, there can be said to be any need of any other cancelling process. Admittedly the effects of the evil past may be such that the man now needs much moral and spiritual education, but this is an argument for the reformatory, not the retributory, theory of punishment.

A further point must be borne in mind. It is true that a man must accept responsibility for his actions in the sense that he must admit that they are *his* actions and cannot appeal to any deterministic theory of mechanical causation *a tergo*, in order to escape such responsibility. But the fact remains that he did not create himself and it was not—at any rate in the first instance—his fault that he was tempted. While therefore it may be right that he should suffer, and suffer acutely, if by such suffering he may be brought to genuine repentance and amendment of life or if others may thereby be warned against following his example, there is no reason that I can see why he should suffer for any other purpose. At all events, one must surely hold that the motive behind all punishment of evildoers *by their fellow-men*, whether this is the treatment of children by parents and teachers or of criminals by the State, should be either moral education or deterrence. We are none of us good or wise enough to administer a retributory system of punishment; we cannot be trusted to draw a line between the emotion appropriate to such activity and that degrading desire for vengeance which Christian ethics so rightly condemns.

The peculiar difficulty of this subject of human responsibility arises, I think, from the fact that in Christian countries we approach it from two different levels. From the standpoint of morality—from the practical standpoint of the legislator or the judge—we have a simple theory of merit or demerit, of rewards and punishments which "fit" the good or evil deeds, of praise or blame as incentives, of purely individual "justice." From the level of religion, however, we see deeper into the mystery. We no longer bargain for rewards; we are willing that they should be given "unto this last" even as unto us; our view of the sinner is summed up in that famous remark "there but for the grace of God goes . . ." We are even willing to allow that to know all may be to forgive all, and we realise that the prayer "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" goes to the heart of the matter.

We cannot, of course, keep these two attitudes to life distinct. Indeed, what we call the coming of the Kingdom of God is just that process whereby, more and more, human society will pass to the second attitude. The

Law, as St. Paul has it, is the schoolmaster to bring us to God, and when it has fulfilled its task we shall have left it behind and shall have reached the realm of grace. The Law must precede the Gospel, and morality is but a stage to spirituality. It may well be doubted whether we can be even moral unless we are already more than moral.

From the standpoint of this book it will be clear that what the Theologian calls "sin" is regarded as the failure of the rational being to control in the interests of the greatest possible general good and of his own highest development those impulses which are part of his inheritance from his animal ancestry, and which are directed towards the good of only the individual feeling them. Since these impulses are natural in animals, we are apt to describe them as natural in man, forgetting that it is the nature of a rational and spiritual being to act rationally and spiritually. Let us now consider a criticism of this evolutionary view of sin made in Dr. J. S. Whale's *Christian Doctrine*.[1] "The evolutionary hypothesis," he tells us, "makes pride and self-sufficiency depend as truly on our animal descent as do gluttony and sloth. Von Hugel says this single derivation will simply not work."

Dr. Whale's point is that although the view that sin is the undue lingering on, so to speak, of the tiger and the ape in us can give a plausible account of sins like gluttony and sloth, we cannot account for spiritual sins in this way. His view, and that of those theologians who are in reaction against "liberal theology," is, if I understand it rightly, that the real root of human sinfulness is self-assertion or even rebellion against God. In other words, the root of sin is not merely a shortsighted selfish desire for some form of individual satisfaction; it is not an inheritance from our animal ancestry, but something fundamentally different, namely an anti-Godward orientation of a spiritual and rational nature.

These theologians are contending for something true and important, but what they are urging is, I think, quite compatible with the metaphysical and ethical doctrine of this book. For the evolutionary hypothesis, which regards sin as the undue persistence of the animal in man, does not mean that every form of sin can be seen in the lower animals *just in that form*. The thing is much more complex than that.

The essence of the moral conflict, as I have described it, is the clash between the private or bodily self and the universal rational self, between the short and the long view, between the sensual and the spiritual. But there is more in it than that. At the stage of rationality, conceptual thought and self-consciousness, the vastly increased range of the mind in comparison with its merely animal range brings it about that selfishness, or anti-social impulse, the assertion of "me" as against "us," is no longer restricted to crude affairs such as the getting of food. The conflict breaks out whenever we have before us the possibility of obtaining some form of satisfaction at the expense of others, something which in the nature of things can be enjoyed by comparatively few persons, something which I can only enjoy if a large number of others do not. The essentially

[1] J. S. Whale: *Christian Doctrine*, p. 50.

animal impulse is projected into the realm of spirit. The will to power, which is, in spite of the anti-hedonists, the will to obtain a certain kind of pleasure, is a case in point. Clearly the measure in which one has power is the measure in which other people are in one's power. The desire for fame or prominence is much the same. Pride, in fact, is selfishness at a higher level of culture. It is the pleasure gained from contemplating, and knowing that other people are contemplating, some superiority in one's self. This is a pleasure which is not shareable, and indeed it must bring to others some degree of pain—the pain of envy, for example. The root of spiritual sins like pride and self-assertion is the same as that of those grosser sins whose animal origin is unmistakable.

But has "sin" a Godward reference? I think it has. For I do not think that the capacity for conceptual thought is all that rationality means; it is something more than the power of deductive and inductive reasoning. There is a close connexion between having the power of conceptual thought and being self-conscious. At the stage when I can form the general concept of "man" I can hold clearly in consciousness the thought that one of these men is that being which has for me certain unique features and which I call "myself." But self-consciousness is far more than this. It is Reason in its widest and deepest meaning. Hegelian and post-Hegelian Idealism have rightly insisted that the growth of consciousness is always towards self-consciousness. Indeed, self-consciousness is not a special kind of consciousness; the fact is rather that all consciousness is an abstraction, as it were, from the Absolute self-consciousness. To attain complete self-consciousness would be to attain Reality, for one would have become the Absolute. This, however, is a limiting conception; we finite beings are, and may necessarily continue, at a much lower level, and my immediate point is that reason is seen not merely in the processes of deductive and inductive reasoning, but—in a deeper sense—in being aware that one *is* so reasoning, in thinking about thought, about one's self and the universe as a whole—in short, in metaphysical thought. It is asking one's self, as Kant and Hegel did, what is the fundamental structure of one's own mind; what *must* be the essential condition of the mind's knowing the universe.

To return, then, to the question of the Godward reference of sin, we must say that even a savage who is just capable of conceptual reasoning is also capable of metaphysical thought, however rudimentary. And he actually engages in it. He knows that the class of men of whom he is one are set in a world which is, in some sort, a systematic whole, although of course he would not express himself in such terms. At the stage when he is capable of realising that he is asserting his private interests against the good of the tribe, he dimly knows that he is asserting it against the scheme of things, against that whole in which his being is grounded and on which he is dependent. To be conscious, however dimly, that one has a "duty" to society is to know that this duty is rooted in the nature of things, in the systematic unity of the Whole, the Universe. The savage does not distinguish between sin against his fellows in the tribe and sin against the tribal god. If at a higher stage of culture this

double aspect of sin is forgotten, if ethics becomes divorced from metaphysics or theology, the step is a retrograde one, as I have tried to show in discussing the metaphysical basis of ethics and in asking how the subjectivist moral philosopher is to be answered.[1] It is to be doubted whether, taking men in the bulk and history in the main, men have an acute sense of sin unless they feel like the Psalmist that "against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil." As I have tried to show in my analysis of the moral consciousness, the Impartial Spectator is no mere "*als ob*" device; he is Reality, the Absolute Mind.

All sin is therefore in a sense rebellion against God, although it is not usually *conscious* rebellion. To take an extreme case, if sin *were* conscious rebellion, a sincere atheist would be sinless, since one cannot be said to rebel against one in whom one does not believe. But the aspect of sin which the Theologian calls rebellion is a very real one, although it is difficult to find a word for it. Fundamentally it is a refusal or a failure by a man to be true to his real nature as a rational and spiritual being, a refusal, that is, to relate his conduct to the whole scheme of things, a refusal to seek for a meaning in life, to seek for the true end of man. It is the greatest sin of all, although it is perfectly respectable, for if we take a wide view of man and history it is not hard to see that it is the root of all opposition to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

It is often said that the liberal type of Christian thought with which I have identified myself takes too optimistic a view of human nature. In this book I have refrained from expressing any view as to the extent of the moral and spiritual advance which man may be expected to achieve on this earth. I simply do not know, and have no data for the formation of an opinion. But since at best this world cannot last for ever, and since the happiness of future generations cannot compensate those who have known much suffering and little joy in their earthly lives, I feel that the only Kingdom of God which can provide an Absolute End for our striving is the Kingdom which is not of this world.

THE END

[1] *See* p. 68.

INDEX