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THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

(A Presentation of the Views of Josiah Royce, Henri Bergson, William James and H.G. Wells)

H. A. Basilius

The two concepts, religion and philosophy, are two opposite poles of reasoning: The one clings to revelation for its source and authority while the other finds its basis in speculation, sometimes preceded by observation. When speaking of the conception of God in philosophy, we must, therefore, dissociate from our minds the popular religious connotations of the term. In religion the conception of God is usually the starting point while in philosophy it is, at best, a primary means. The difference is very well carried out in the words of Prof. Wright, who in his STUDENT'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION writes the following:

"The conception of God is employed, not for the purpose of sentiment and devotion, but in the endeavor to understand the universe, and man's relation to it. The symbols of physics are justifiable, because through them man is enabled to some extent to understand and control physical conditions. The symbol of God is justifiable in philosophy, provided that through it man is better able to understand and adapt himself to the world in which he lives; otherwise not."

We see, therefore, that to philosophy God is merely a symbol of expression which might be compared to the algebraic "x"; and, as the "x" varies according to the equation in which it is employed, so also the symbol of God varies according to the system of philosophy in which it is included. Scholasticism sought and succeeded for a long time in standardizing the symbol, but with its overthrow the wildest vagaries became current. Prof. C.A. Beckwith of Chicago describes and accounts for this variance with the words:

"From a condition of almost complete rigidity the idea of God is becoming to a high degree plastic. Many innovating conceptions of God are not only put forth, but are receiving wide and serious consideration. In this it simply shares the movement which has overtaken all ideas. Various causes have conspired to this result.....and perhaps more influential than all....interests (is) the desire to find some interpretation of reality which shall approximately express the reaction of experience to the infinite mystery of the world." (p.64)

If the above mentioned flux is characteristic of all philosophy, then it is particularly true of modern philosophy, which

we may arbitrarily define as philosophy since 1860, the year in which Schopenhauer, the last of the Kantians, died and upon whose death began the great struggle between idealism and naturalism, which characterizes modern philosophic thought. From these two major divisions innumerable variations arose in the course of time. We cannot trace all of these in our paper, not even the most prominent. We do, however, touch upon a leading thinker of both England and the Continent as well as two friendly enemies in American philosophy, namely H.G. Wells, Henri Bergson, Josiah Royce and William James.

In defining the scope of our paper, we have tried to hold before us several very general objectives. In accordance with our thesis we shall, of course, treat the religious speculations of the above named philosophers. We shall nevertheless also show the roots of the respective systems from which these speculations take their source. We shall also attempt to show the endeavors of harmonizing--if the expression may be pardoned--religio-philosophic thought with the substanta of revealed religion together with the fact of and cause for the inevitable failure of such attempts. And finally, we hope to point out on the basis of our study a definite and constructive value accruing from philosophico-religious study. We shall, however, despite objectives, endeavor to assume an entirely objective attitude in the presentation of the subject matter, leaving the facts in the case to speak for themselves.

Harvard University was for a long time the seat of the great American philosophers, and practically every ^{major} branch of modern thought was represented by one or the other of the luminaries occupying Harvard's chairs of philosophy among whom were numbered Santayana, Perry, Royce and Wm. James. It is Prof. Ralph Barton Perry, who has assumed the role of historiographer for this famous group, and we shall have occasion to refer to his writings from time to time.

In speaking of his colleague Royce, who is regarded as being

America's foremost exponent of Absolute Idealism, Prof. Perry recounts a "second wave of Kantian influence" which "came in America, as in England, in the form of the introduction of Hegel". And Hegel, he says, marks the beginning of American idealism of which Josiah Royce was the leading proponent. Royce's philosophy always retained, according to Perry, a "naturalistic and empirical flavor", which fact, blended with subsequent influences abroad, is easily accounted for in Royce's ultimate conclusions. Josiah Royce was born in California in 1855 and was educated at the University of California before going to Germany, where he came under the influence of Lotze, Schopenhauer, Kant and Schelling. He spent the remainder of his life, teaching philosophy at Harvard from 1882 till 1916, the year of his demise.

It is interesting to note from our point of view that, among various objectives, Royce sought for a philosophical interpretation of Christianity, which was prompted by intense social interests as well as early religious training. When meeting this thought, we immediately hearken back to Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics, for they sought the same goal which motivated Royce's speculations; and we find that both have much in common from the fact that their methods were alike idealistic. Royce's efforts in the religious field are well attested to by such prominent works as THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF PHILOSOPHY (1885), THE CONCEPTION OF GOD (1897), and THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY (1913).

As was previously stated, Royce was idealistically inclined, and that trend of thought assumes that "the word 'idea' means simply an adequate grasp of reality". Royce, however, blended his naturalistic and empirical tendencies with his major inclinations by stressing the reality of ideas. He came to regard reality as "the fulfilment of ideas", and from this premise he proceeded to evolve the Absolute whose name his system bears.

We have stated that Royce had strong social leanings, and Prof. Wright of Dartmouth sees in them the starting point for the development of his system. Wright writes:

"The fact of the mental isolation and moral uniqueness of every human being on the one hand, with the fact that his knowledge and his duties bring him into organic relationship with other human beings, and with the physical universe on the other, lead to the conclusion that the universe as a whole must be an organic whole, unified in the knowledge and will of an Absolute Mind." (p.382)

In looking about him, Royce noticed that, although we all partake of the same reality, observing the same phenomena with the same sensory organs and synthesizing our sensations with the same mental process, yet no man can know the thoughts of another. We are very similar; still we are distinctly and inviolably separate.

Assuming then that 1) "reality must fulfill all ideas", and 2) "there can be no facts that are not experienced", Royce reasoned the following from his observations noted above: Reality is a completely rational ordered whole, no part of which can exist alone. We mortals know only parts of reality. Could we ever secure complete knowledge of reality, then idea and its object would be identical. Since, however, reality is a completely rational ordered whole, there must be a point somewhere which serves as the junction for complete knowledge and complete reality. This point or juncture Royce termed the Absolute. And this Absolute was his conception of God.

The conception of God as was advocated by Royce is best presented in the book by that title which contains the addresses of Profs. Royce, Le Conte, Howison and Mezes delivered before the Philosophical Union at the University of California in 1895 (THE CONCEPTION OF GOD).

In the address noted above, Royce first sets out to lay down a definition of God, and the result is the following:

God is "a being who is conceived as possessing to the full all logically possible knowledge, insight, wisdom.... This conceived attribute of Omniscience.... would involve.... what is rationally meant by Omnipotence, by Self-Consciousness, by Self-Possession----- yes, I should unhesitatingly add, by Goodness, by Perfection, by Peace."

(p. 78) He next attempts to verify the truth of his definitions.

Royce is a dualist in the question of epistemology: He holds that knowledge is comprised of thinking and experience. By thinking we merely visualize a possible experience, and thinking is, therefore, only the questioning concerning the nature of a certain experience. From this we must conclude that questioning is characterized by the divorce of idea from its object.

The answer to our questioning represents the experience which verifies the idea, whose essence we defined as mere questioning; and it is God who, by virtue of His Omniscience, answers. All ideas with God are verified by experience. This does not, however, mean that God merely views an external world of foreign truth. No, He comprehends all thought and experience in Himself; He thinks and experiences with us; and then He answers our questioning. Hence, Royce concludes, God's Omniscience must involve, besides Omniscience, all the other divine attributes mentioned above. Technically expressed, He possesses "Absolute Experience" and "Absolute Thought", i. e., a wholly complete and self-contained Experience and Thought needing no comment, supplement or correction. Moreover, these Absolutes are not disjointed, but completely organized as to their connections, so that a perfect whole, a single system of ideas results. It is, indeed, God who is this Absolute Mind (Logos, Problem Solver, World Interpreter, All-Inclusive Self). "Through Him we share in the understanding and appreciation of the meaning and purposes of a common world." He is in time and eternal, perceiving events as they follow in our consciousness and also the entire succession as a totum simul.

Having verified the posited definition, Prof. Royce determines to prove it. When we speak of our experience, he says, we attribute it to reality, and it follows that, by recognizing our experience as fragmentary, we imply "an absolutely organized experience, in which every fragment finds its place". We might categorize this argument as one by implication.

Royce admits, however, that in speaking of reality and an Absolute Experience we are talking of mere conceptual objects---- Platonic ideas, as it were, and the question now arises, is the Absolute Experience real? The opposition claims that it is not real, because it cannot be experienced. Royce, however, proves himself equal to the occasion by exhibiting a dialectical adroitness worthy of a Master of Novices of the Society of Jesus; for he maintains that "every effort to deny an Absolute Experience involves, then, the actual assertion of such an Absolute Experience". His complete argument is best presented by direct quoting:

"If every reality has to exist, just in so far as there is experience of its existence, then the determination of the world of experience to be this world and no other, the fact that reality contains no other facts than these, is, as the supposed final reality, itself the object of one experience, for which the fragmentariness of the finite world appears as a presented and absolute fact, beyond which no reality is to be viewed as even genuinely possible. For this final experience, the conception of any possible experience beyond is known as an ungrounded conception, as an actual impossibility. But so, this final experience is by hypothesis forthwith defined as One, as all-inclusive, as determined by nothing beyond itself, as assured of the complete fulfilment of its own ideas concerning what is, ---in brief, it becomes an absolute experience." (p.43)

The relation of this Absolute Experience to our own experience, which is finite, is regarded by Prof. Royce as the relation of "an organic whole to its own fragments".

This conception of God was believed by the Harvard idealist to be the true philosophic conception, a fact obvious from the terminology which he applied to God. With the term "Absolute Experience" he uses interchangeably the expressions "Absolute Self", "Absolute Thought", holding that they are merely different aspects of the same truth, for, he says, "God is known as Thought Fulfilled; as Experience absolutely organized, so as to have an ideal unity of meaning; as Truth transparent to itself; as Life in absolute accordance with idea; as Selfhood eternally obtained". (p.45f.)

But Josiah Royce, as all idealistic philosophers, had also to solve the problem of evil and harmonize it with his system. This *he does very nicely by stating that every* finite incompleteness

and struggle (the various infirmities of life) appears as a part of a whole in whose wholeness the fragments find their true place, the ideas their realization, the seeking its fulfilment, and our whole life its truth, and so its ^eternal rest-----that peace which transcends the storm of its agony and its restlessness." (p.47) It is, according to this theory our very finiteness, the bitterness and infirmity and incompleteness of life which manifest the glory and existence of God, in that these fragments of the Absolute imply its reality. In fact, evil is not merely something to be born with regret; it is absolutely necessary in this world, in order that God may triumph. Thus, for instance, some idealists find a substantiating parallel in the history of the Church, in so far as they maintain that the passion of Christ was essential, in order that the spiritualization of the Church might follow. They regard the apparently evil world as harmonious to God in His infinity, or, more candidly, God even enjoys our suffering. A logical conclusion would be that we in immortality shall also partake of this seemingly unjust joy. And, although Royce does not openly profess belief in this immortality, many scholars claim that it is consistent with his thought and hence pronounce his system complete.

As an aftermath, Prof. Royce presents an apology for his conception of God to Christians. He identifies his speculatively conceived deity with the one vaguely defined by Aristotle in an equally speculative manner. The Christian God, i.e., Fulfilled Thought or Self-possessed Experience, he states, has long been placed in opposition to his concept of God, the Absolute Experience. But it remained for Christian mysticism to harmonize the two, defining and correlating them as "the God of practical faith" (Christian) and "the God of philosophic definition" (Idealistic). And he passes the palm to St. Thomas Aquinas in whose work he believes the reconciliation to

have been culminated. Although expressing himself as impatient with what he calls "the unessential accidents of religious tradition as

represented in the historical faith", Royce stoutly maintains that he is not a pantheist but distinctly theistic, and that all Biblical attributes of God may exactly be predicated also of his conception of God as the Absolute.

Nor is Royce alone in the last stated position. Representative of the agreement which a number of other philosophical scholars accord to him in the matter is the following statement of Prof. Wright:

"The conception of God advocated by Royce.....satisfactorily validates prayer and other forms of religious experience..... In these experiences, if we accept Royce's conception of God, we can say that the individual identifies himself with the thought and will of God. If it is in some degree through gaining the viewpoint of God, the universal Self, that we are able to communicate with each other and know a common world, and if it is through our identity with Him that we can unite in common loyalties, and if it is through our common social experience in the Church that we have learned to know and appreciate Christ, then surely we must conclude that it is through God that we gain the spiritual reinforcement and other benefits afforded us in our religious experience." (p.386)

As a concluding remark to our comment on Josiah Royce's conception of God, we might add that his conception is quite generally regarded as the most brilliant and typical of the absolute idealists. It is, in line with the same thought, likewise considered the sharpest challenge to the conceptions of a finite God which are advocated by other European and American philosophers, as we shall have occasion to observe with the development of our thesis.

In the man Royce we saw the social psychologist, theorizer and dialectician. In Henri Bergson, the French Jew, we have an opposite type, and, as we shall see, his philosophy is also characteristically opposite. Bergson was born in Paris in 1859 and began his career as a mathematician and physicist. As is often the case, however, with one who studies the "cold sciences", Bergson was piqued by the insoluble mystery underlying material nature. He could not resist the lure of metaphysics and eventually became a student ~~and~~ and teacher of philosophy. After having published several books in this field (TIME AND FREE WILL; MATTER AND MEMORY), he became professor at the College de France in 1900. Seven years later his chef-d'oeuvre

appeared---CREATIVE EVOLUTION, which is regarded by many as "our century's first philosophic masterpiece".

We have previously pointed out that modern philosophic thought is characterized by the bitter struggle between idealism and naturalism, and at the beginning of the present century the time was ripe for the deciding struggle, in which Bergson was destined to play an important role. Physicist and metaphysician, Bergson constituted what in the American political parlance would be termed an ideal "compromise candidate". Nor was the French Jew missing from the front line of battle. He threw himself into the thick of the fray, but his position was unique in that he took no side but instead attacked both combatants, and that successfully. The Elan Vital proved fatal to the gross materialism as well as the intellectualism of the age. Bergson has often been likened to Kant, who fought the intellectualism which began with Locke and ended with Hume. Darwin had revived the ancient dragons whom Kant had slain, and Bergson now appeared on the scene to repeat the lethal mission of Kant.

Henri Bergson is generally classed as a French spiritualist, viz., one who holds the fundamental reality of the creative will; but he also had naturalistic leanings. The failure of intellect to grasp reality, he says, is a total failure, and he, therefore, repudiates all conceptual thought in favor of instinct and intuition. We note here the influence of and similarity to Kant which we alluded to earlier, and in this connection Seth Pringle-Pattison quotes Bergson as saying, "if you read THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON, you see that Kant has criticized not reason in general, but a reason fashioned to the habits and exigencies of the Cartesian or Newtonian physics". (p.48) Bergson held that the intellect distorts reality, because reality is not ordered and rational to fit the concepts of the intellect, but is rather fluid, mobile, continuous, novel and perpetual. As such it can be grasped only in the flux of life . Seth Pringle-Pattison sums up this

idea with the words: "The intimate appreciation of living experience forms the basis of the whole Weltanschauung which he (Bergson) offers us". (p.69) And Will Durant contrasts Bergson's idea of finding reality only in the flux of life to the action of the moving picture camera, which "divides into static poses the vivid current of reality". "We see matter and miss energy" (p.494), writes Durant, and in these words he has summed up Bergson's criticism of the intellect in favor of intuition.

Bergson, however, is constructive and explains that the function of the intellect is dictated by the needs of practical life. "To try to fit a concept on an object is simply to ask what we can do with the object, and what it can do with us. To label a certain object with a certain concept is to mark in precise terms the kind of action or attitude the object should suggest to us". (INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS, trans., p.41). He holds that we conceptualize by means of perception and memory, this dualism aiding us ^{to} decide what is best under the circumstances. And our decision is based upon and ultimately effected by our practical needs in life. X

The remedy for losing ourselves from what we might call the standardizing effect of the intellect is, according to Bergson, very obvious and simple, namely the putting aside of our practical needs, which needs Ralph Barton Perry describes as "objectifying ourselves and so bringing ourselves under the spatializing, decomposing and deterministic categories of science". Only in this way can we attain the metaphysical insight of intuition, thus immediately becoming aware of that "duration wherein we act" and wherein "our states melt into each other". (MATTER AND MEMORY, trans., pp.241, 243-4)

Intellect and intuition are, however, reconciled by the fact that intellect does not falsify reality by contrariness but rather by distortion in so far as intellect selects, in the making of concepts, from reality according to its practical needs, leaving what

remains because it is not required for action. Intuition on the other hand experiences reality as a totum simul.

Having deduced from the fact of the failure of intellect properly to perceive reality the further fact that reality is not a constant but a flux, and having also reconciled the dualism of intellect and intuition, Bergson now proceeds to explain reality with still another of the dualisms with which his system abounds. Reality for him consists of life and matter, a premise deducible from the idea of flux. Both are, however, mere aspects of the same reality provided that we consider reality as "a movement or activity which has different degrees of intensity". Life, he holds, represents reality as "gathered all at once into a moment of creation, or focussed to a point of pure activity"; matter is the aspect of reality when "it tends to relax and dissolve, and then become more repetitive, homogeneous and stagnant". It is the reconciliation of these two aspects of reality, so apparent in natural evolution, which lead to that famous invention of Bergson, the *Elan Vital*, which he describes as a vital impulse representing the fight of creative life against the inertia of matter. From the struggle between the effort of life to maintain and increase itself amidst the drag and inertia of materiality, everything has and still does evolve. Life becomes victor in the struggle by storing up energy which can be explosively released. This is, for instance, a very obvious phenomenon in the evolution of plant life. The storage of energy culminates in animals in "instinct" and in human beings in "intelligence". Thus in the endless struggle of the *Elan Vital* everything evolves. This is, briefly, the conception of creative evolution as it was understood by Bergson.

Bergson's cosmogeny is now complete with the exception of a God. But his God follows, or rather precedes, according to the point of view, his entire thought. The persistently creative life from the *Elan Vital* to intelligence is God! Will Durant happily phrases

Bergson's deity as follows:

"This persistently creative life, of which every individual and every species is an experiment, is what we mean by God; God and Life are one. But this God is finite, not omnipotent, --- limited by matter, and overcoming its inertia painfully, step by step; and not omniscient, but groping gradually towards knowledge and consciousness and 'more light'." (p.502)

Durant continues by quoting from CREATIVE EVOLUTION, p.248: "God, thus defined, has nothing of the ready-made; He is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely."

Durant's method of drawing an apparently correct conclusion of Bergson's conception of God on the basis of several seemingly clear sentences from the works of the philosopher himself is very characteristic of a legion of scholars in attempting to determine an inevitable conclusion to which Bergson's philosophy might lead. Durant finds in Bergson's thought a finite God, much akin to Wm. James' conception as we shall see later, and utterly irreconcilable with the God of Christianity. We find, however, in the extensive literature covering Bergson's thought, an even more extensive variation of opinion as to his conception of God. The subject is perhaps best presented in the book BERGSON AND RELIGION by Lucius Hopkins Miller, assistant professor of Biblical instruction in Princeton University. Miller covers this range of differing opinion by professing the belief that Bergson's conception of God is consistent even with the Christian conception, somewhat modified.

In reviewing the widely divergent opinions, we note that Bergson has been accused of pantheism. Charles Corbiere, for example, in the REVUE DE THEOLOGIE, 1910, writes the following:

"Bergson ascribes to God consciousness and liberty but only in a vague way. . . . Life alone is clear and God is hardly more than the central hearth of the universe's energy. . . . He is entirely immanent. . . . Bergson's conception leads to pantheism."

And Prof. Miller, in meeting the attack, confesses that much of Bergson's writing is ambiguous, and, therefore, of a quality easily

adaptable to pantheism. He cites as an example of ambiguity, adaptable to pantheism, the following from CREATIVE EVOLUTION:

"Life as a whole, from the initial impulse that thrust it into the world, will appear as a wave which rises. . . . This rising wave is consciousness. . . . On flows the current, running through human generations, subdividing itself into individuals. . . . Thus souls. . . . are nothing else than the little rills into which the great river of life divides itself, flowing through the body of humanity."

We see that it certainly would not be unjust to maintain that the sub-lined words contain pantheism. Prof. Miller, however, recalls Muirhead's caution regarding "driving Bergson's language too hard". Miller maintains that one must read CREATIVE EVOLUTION "in the light of its material and aim", remembering that Bergson waged war also against certain dogmatics of theistic religion, which, together with the natural difficulty of penning a description of his unique Vital Impulse without the use of theological terminology, made the avoidance of absolute ambiguity almost impossible.

Bergson has also been called pluralist because of the many dualisms which are to be found in his system, particularly the dualism of mind and matter although Bergson traces these latter two to a common origin. Sir Oliver Lodge takes this point of view when, writing in CURRENT LITERATURE, April, 1912, he says:

"I am impressed with two things----first, with the reality and activity of powerful but not almighty helpers, to whom we owe guidance and management and reasonable control: and next, with the fearful majesty of still higher aspects of the Universe, infinitely beyond our utmost possibility of thought."

On the basis of the facts noted by the Englishman, one must admit that the charge of pluralism against Bergson is also tenable.

There are several writers, however, who exonerate the French-Jewish thinker not only of pantheism, but also of pluralism, and some even categorize his system as monistic. Thus, for instance, H. C. Corrance in the HIBBERT JOURNAL of January, 1914 writes that "Bergson's Creator is immanent in nature, but not, like the god of pantheism, identical with it". Prof. Miller is heartily in accord with this opinion. Muirhead, whom we mentioned before, likewise writing in the HIBBERT JOURNAL,

this time of July, 1911, takes a more definite stand in the matter, as follows:

"So far from resting in any facile pluralism, he (Bergson) is led by the very depths of his own monism to reject the current statements of it. His philosophy may be said to be in reality an appeal from a shallower to a deeper form of unity."

Le Roy, the Catholic modernist defender of Bergson, even finds a personal God in Bergson's philosophy. Referring to Bergson in the REVUE NEO-SCOLASTIQUE (cf. N. Balthasar), November, 1907 and February, 1908, he states his opinion thus:

"We cannot regard the source of our life otherwise than personal. We cannot regard Him as impersonal. We seek in Him our personality. God is personal in that He is the source of our personality. He is immanent in us but also transcends us and also the world."

And in a letter by Bergson in ANNALS OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY, also quoted by Le Roy in A NEW PHILOSOPHY: HENRI BERGSON, monistic and personal inclinations may be found although the statement on which this opinion is based is vague and indefinite. Bergson writes:

"The considerations set forth in my ESSAY ON THE IMMEDIATE FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS (Time and Free Will) are intended to bring to light the fact of liberty; those in MATTER AND MEMORY touch upon the reality of spirit; those in CREATIVE EVOLUTION present creation as a fact. From all this we derive a clear idea of a free and creating God, producing matter and life at once, whose creative effort is continued, in a vital direction, by the evolution of species and the construction of human personalities."

Much more definite evidence that Bergson considered himself a monist is presented in an interview with Bergson by Louis Levine, published in the NEW YORK TIMES, February 22, 1914, and also very widely quoted:

"This source of Life (God) is undoubtedly spiritual. Is it personal? Probably. There are not sufficient data to answer this question, but Professor Bergson is inclined to think that it is personal. It seems to him that personality is in the very intention of the evolution of Life, and that the human personality is just one mode in which this intention is realized.

"It is, therefore, very probable that the spiritual source of life whence our personality springs should be personal in itself. Of course, personal in a different way, without all those accidental traits which in our mind form part of personality and which are bound up with the existence of body. But personal in a larger sense of the term----a spiritual unity expressing itself in the creative process of evolution."

On the basis of the evidence cited above, Prof. Miller seeks to prove the monism of Bergson's view. He first makes the Kantian distinction between deist and theist, quoting the Sage of Koenigsberg as saying that "the deist believes that there is a God; the theist that there is a living God" (the former is purely rational, but the latter is connected with revelation). He also recalls that Baldwin's DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY defines theist as one who thinks of God "as a Being who, by intelligence and freedom, as originator of the cosmos, contains within Himself the ground of all things. He thinks of God as entering into personal relations with men; as the Controller of the World whose course He directly affects". Hence, Prof. Miller would maintain that Bergson is a theist. He goes even further than that, for he believes that Bergson's position is compatible with Christian ~~anixx~~ theism although he admits that certain difficulties present themselves in the reconciliation, e.g., the fact that Bergson rules out "theological finalism".

Whether Miller's conviction is tenable or not remains, of course, a moot question; on the other hand, however, it must also be admitted that his position cannot be disproven. The line of least resistance, in this case even more tempting than usual, would be to assume with Prof. Horace Meyer Kallen of the University of Wisconsin that in the philosophy of Bergson may be found the finite God of James, the Christian God of the Old and New Testaments and the Absolute God of the philosophers.

It seems, however, that the general indefiniteness of Bergson's system makes it practically impossible definitely to establish his actual conception of God. He himself, it seems, professes a monistic and even theistic belief. As regards his writings, however, it might be best to admit the possibility of all tenable implications and await further word from Bergson or one of his disciples which will eliminate the flexibility.

We have so far in our thesis treated the systems of a prominent Frenchman and an equally prominent American, Let us add to these the philosophy of William James, and we shall have a completed triangle; for James was the antithesis of Royce and at the same time the American complement of Bergson whom he admired and from whom he received a direct stimulus for much of his thought.

Wm. James was born in New York in 1842 and was the brother of the slightly less prominent Henry James. Durant mentions the well known saying which, I think, originated with the American literary critic John Macy to the effect that while Henry James wrote stories in psychology, his brother William wrote psychology in stories. The fact remains that both of the boys were devoted to psychology, which fact may perhaps be regarded as either the direct result or, on the other hand, the reaction to the Swedenborgian mysticism to which their father was addicted. The brothers studied first in this country and then in France whereupon William returned to America and took his M.D. degree at Harvard in 1870. He remained at Harvard as a teacher till his death in 1910. He, as did Bergson, began his work with the physical sciences but could not resist the Circean lure of Metaphysics, and he successively taught classes in anatomy, physiology, psychology and finally philosophy. He wrote and published a number of widely known books among which the most widely read are THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY (1890)---this is regarded as his masterpiece and is a standard work in the pragmatic field---THE WILL TO BELIEVE (1897), VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE (1902), PRAGMATISM (1907) and A PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE (1909).

Some of the titles of James' works have become termini technici in the philosophic system which he built; thus, for example, pragmatism and pluralism, with radical empiricism inserted, might be said to cover, in a general way, the philosophic thought of James. Durant defines pragmatism thus:

"Instead of asking whence an idea is derived, or what are its premises, pragmatism examines its results; it 'shifts the emphasis and looks forward'; it is 'the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, categories, supposed necessities, and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts'." (p.558)

Prof. Wright explains the idea similarly by defining the so-called 'pragmatic test' with these words:

"The simple test of the truth of a proposition is the observation of the practical consequences that logically follow from its acceptance; it is verified, if action upon it is followed by the consequences that could reasonably be expected to follow".

The idea of pragmatism is considered uniquely American because of its passion for "results"; and, although its roots may be found in Kant's CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON, in Schopenhauer, in Darwin's survival of the fittest, in the utilitarianism of Spencer and Mill, it may well be said to be mostly the suggestion of "the American scene".

By radical empiricism is meant the attempt to fathom the flux and continuity of life as this was advocated by Henri Bergson, and which is known only by sensory experience.

Sensory experience, according to James, postulates a pluralism, i. e., that the world is an unfinished product in which we must continue to fight for the good. "Compromise and mediation are inseparable from the pluralistic philosophy", says James, and on the basis of these words he seeks to develop a God who meets the pragmatic test most successfully, viz., a God who fits best into the world-picture, or who "is at once most probable on theoretical grounds, and most rational in the broader sense of making a 'direct appeal to all those powers of our nature which we hold in high esteem'." (Perry, PRESENT PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES, p.370f.)

James claims a vague affinity with Luther and, before him, St. Paul in his pluralistic speculation, for he holds that they were the first to realize that "you are strong only by being weak. . . . You cannot live on pride or self-sufficingness. There is a light in which all the naturally founded and currently accepted distinctions, excellences

and safe-guards of our characters appear as utter childishness. Sincerely to give up one's own conceit or hope of being good in one's own right is the only door to the universe's deeper reaches." (A PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE, p.304). Man, according to James, must acknowledge something greater outside of him, a tacit reply to intuition, as it were; and this something he calls "religious consciousness". He places it beyond the world of logical understanding, invoking thereby the shadow of Immanuel Kant, and also beyond the world of logical experience and even psychological experience. "In a word", he writes, "the believer is continuous, to his own consciousness, at any rate, with a wider self from which saving experiences flow in." (Op.cit., p.307)

In defining this wider self, James first of all repudiates the Christian conception of God, and also the conception of God that is advocated by the idealistic pantheists. He refers to the Christian conception as the God of Scholasticism and says that it is "a pretentious sham.....It means less than nothing, in its pompous robe of adjectives, exemplified in the definition, "Deus est Ens, a se, extra et supra omne genus, necessarium, unum, infinite perfectum, simplex, immutabile, immensum, aeternum, intelligens", etc.. (PRAGMATISM, p.121). Durant says that Scholasticism asks, what is a thing? and loses itself in "quiddities", and likewise James maintains that it pictures God and his creation "as entities distinct from each other" and "still leaves the human subject outside of the deepest reality in the universe". (THEISTIC CONCEPTION OF GOD, p.25)

The conception of God which was held by his colleague Royce, and which we developed earlier, he regarded as the culmination of the views of Spinoza, Fichte and Hegel; he condemned this view, which he held to be pantheistic, on intellectual and moral grounds. In the first place, by professing a Perfect Absolute, he said, one cannot account for the obvious ignorance, misery and sin in the world except by the poor

evasion that they are only limitations, privations and non-existent. He regarded its exponents as being so drunk with abstractions as to be impervious to concrete realities. And in the second place, he believed "the moral holidays" which a pantheistic God "whose universal immanence will infallibly insure, regardless of their own failures and shortcomings, the salvation of the whole universe" to be a confession of indolence. Philosophers must choose between religious pantheism and anti-pantheistic moralism in order satisfactorily to solve the problem of evil, and James chose moralism, holding that no monism could solve the problem of evil and that "any absolute moralism is pluralism; any absolute religion is monism". (LITERARY REMAINS OF THE LATE HENRY JAMES, p. 118). James believed that everywhere choice was exercised in life, and hence absolute moralism is pluralism. It might in this connection be recalled that Durant distinguished between "tender-minded" (religiously inclined) temperaments and "tough-minded" (materialistic; insistent upon facts). James was both of these, and he regarded pluralism as the only solution over and against the monism of absolute religion.

Discarding both the Scholastic (Christian) and the pantheistic (Absolute) ideas of God, James conceived a finite God who is a part of the universe and whom Theo. Flournoy, his interpreter, describes according to our mortal needs, as follows:

"What we need is a God who really exists, who is a personality lying outside our own, and other than us, --- a power not ourselves and more powerful than we are; not a God of whom we speak in the neuter gender and in the third person, as of some general law, but a God whom we address directly and intimately as 'Thou'; not a distant God enthroned, majestic and impassive, on high, but a God who will descend into the dust and degradation, to suffer and to labor there, to join us in our daily struggle against the powers of evil and all the obstacles arising in our path, a God who knows and appreciates our ideals, and who collaborates with us and we with Him to bring about their realization. Now it is not monism, however idealistic it may be, which can furnish us with such a God; but only pluralism." (pp. 146f.)

James held that experience reveals to us a world unfinished and imperfect, one which is being painfully created through the cooperation of its members. Only such a universe could offer opportunity for moral action, and only in such a universe could we hope to meet that Helper and Companion whom we need as God. And God must be finite, for He is just another of those "each forms" who fights with us. Thus James also sought to solve the problem of evil by proving evil to be, with the good, an intrinsic part of the universe, and an element which man and God coordinately combat. Here we find both the pragmatistic and the pluralistic ideas in full sway.

And James' radical empiricism answered that such a God, finite, personal and striving, could be found here. He writes:

"The line of least resistance, the, as it seems to me, both in theology and philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that He is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once." (A PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE, p. 311) *ledy,*

And he now goes on to prove this contention from a peculiar bit of experience. Religious phenomena, he held, which intellect and science cannot explain, attest to a superhuman intervention in human affairs which is the finger of God. His studies of various forms of religious experience, e.g., "healthy-mindedness" (continuous growth), conversion, saintliness and mysticism, led him to regard the above conclusion as inevitable. It is, of course, based upon the testimony of pantheistic mystics, but James accepted it nevertheless because of its universal character and also because it fitted so perfectly with his pragmatic tendencies despite much criticism from the "ultra-knowing". He held that it was through the sub-conscious, so distasteful to modern materialistic psychology, that religious experience reaches the soul, and he was supported in this view by a thinker, otherwise independent of him, the Genevese theologian, Césaire Malan, who considered the sub-conscious the basis of "all individual religious experience from the simple feeling of moral obligation to the most esoteric experiences of Christian

life." (cf. G. Fulliquet: LA PENSEE THEOLOGIQUE DE CESAR MALAN, Robert, Geneva, 1902, p. 286). James argued that, although science cannot explain the ultimate source of these experiences, the fact that they are experience removes the possibility of their being anti-scientific. That they do not recur according to "laws" is also concurrent with James' pluralism (although it eliminates the concept of the Absolute) since to the empiricist "the perennial laws of science.....are nothing more than abstract formulae, save in the concrete instances where they find themselves realized".

As to whether God Himself is a monism or a pluralism, James left an open question. He seems, however, to tend to a polytheistic conception, a sort of spiritual hierarchy, although absolutely unlike the pagan pantheon of old; for he says:

"Meanwhile the practical needs and experiences of religion seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a large power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more god-like self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realized in it at all. Thus would a sort of polytheism return upon us,.....which, by the way, has always been the real religion of common people, and is so still today." (THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, pp. 524-6).

In summing up his interpretation of James' God, Flournoy makes the startling statement that he confidently regards "James' personality and philosophy as freely Christian in spirit"; and, although James never professed any of the orthodox creeds "because of an innate dislike of theological formulae", he often referred to "we Christians" and was in great sympathy with the "deeper emotions of the great figures of Christianity". Flournoy, however, regards James' philosophic ideas as being in accord even with the Scriptures, stating that Christ was really the first pragmatist when he declared that "by your fruits ye shall know them"; that Christ treated the problem of evil pluralisti-

cally, as does James; and that Christ did not teach an "Absolute" God but rather the "Father", the great Ally who desires our welfare and who demands only our cooperation in resisting and casting out all evil. Flournoy believes that "James' theism remains true in fundamentals to evangelical theism" and concludes his treatise, as follows:

"In leaving this subject I would point out once more that the great idea which dominates James' religious moralism,----that human effort and divine power must collaborate for the salvation of the world,----is after all no more than a development of the thought of the Apostle: 'we are laborers together with God'." (p.165)

Thus, as is often the case in philosophy, and as we saw particularly in the case of Bergson, we again meet with perplexity also in defining the Jamesian conception of God. Only in one general point can we be sure, and that is the fact that James, as was consistent with his pluralistic doctrine, developed a finite God who was virtually little more than a demi-god in opposition to the absolute qualities attributed to the Gods of both pantheism and Christianity.

We shall next in our study turn to what may be called the practical application of philosophic "truths" to religion by a quasi-philosopher, in this case the very excellent writer of fiction, Mr. H. G. Wells of England.

Mr. Wells describes his religious convictions in GOD, THE INVISIBLE KING, which book, we presume, was supposed to be epoch-making as a synthesis of modern religious thought. In his preface he warns the "orthodox" against being shocked, for his work proceeds from the basis that the Council of Nicea was insincere and that it foisted a figment of Alexandrian thought upon mankind in the creed named after it, in so far as it attempted a compromise between God the Creator and God the Redeemer by manufacturing the Trinity. This compromise Wells regards as a feature of all religions, and to him the relation of the Father to the Son is nothing more than "a mystical metaphor". He confesses a complete agnosticism of God the Creator, but complete faith in God the Redeemer; both of these professions, however, are to be understood

in a peculiar Wellsian sense which we shall develop as we proceed.

We cannot help but ascribe to Mr. Wells the stigma of Unitarianism, traces of which seem very apparent in his writings. And certainly he is guilty of the basic principle of Unitarianism, for he teaches a complete repudiation of all creeds, albeit a faith in God, whom he defines as a whimsical fancy dictates, and who runs the gamut of rationalism and religious sentimentality from Schleiermacher to Harry Emerson Fosdick.

This English thinker, who would meddle with theology, forcibly rejects the Christian conception of God as it was formulated at Nicea. He believes that the Emperor Constantine's desire for the unity of the realm together with the political opportunities for the Church were at the root of the Nicean "compromise". The Christians were forced into the Trinitarian controversy, according to Mr. Wells, for the following reasons:

"The Christians would neither admit that they worshipped more gods than one because of the Greeks, nor deny the divinity of Christ because of the Jews. They dreaded to be polytheistic; equally did they dread the least apparent detraction from the power and importance of their Saviour. They were forced into the idea of the Trinity by the necessity of those contrary assertions, and they had to make it a mystery protected by curses to save it from a reductio ad absurdum." (p.10)

Our frothing friend takes a final dig at all of the great doctrines of Christianity by saying that they were the products of "theology by committees".

Following his apostasy, he introduces the new "revelation". Wells has come to a realization of the true God through experience, a statement which sounds familiar to those of us who are acquainted with the history of rationalism. And this experience is, upon the basis of comparison with a wide circle of acquaintances and in its general aspects, universal. Experience tells him that God is 1) finite, and not infinite; 2) Not the Life Force, Will to Live, or Struggle for Existence; 3) an emanation from within and not from without man. Wells calls this the "new religion", which he regards as having no

founder and no beginning, but being rather a proved universal experience, the consensus gentium, as it were. And he finds that man has come to a knowledge of this universal God by first feeling the "need of God" (an experience much akin to Christian contrition) whereupon the "realization of God" follows (much as does Christian conversion).

This somewhat arbitrary God the Britisher defines thus:

"God comes we know not whence, into the conflict of life. He works in men and through men. He is a spirit, a single spirit, and a single person; he has begun and he will never end. He is the immortal part and leader of mankind. He has motives, he has characteristics, he has an aim. He is by our poor scales of measurement boundless love, boundless courage, boundless generosity. He is thought and a steadfast will. He is our friend and brother and the light of the world. That briefly is the belief of the modern mind with regard to God. There is no very novel idea about this God, unless it be the idea that he had a beginning. This is the God that men have sought and found in all ages, as God or as the Messiah or the Saviour. The finding of him is salvation from the purposelessness of life." (p.18)

We are led by this and other statements to recognize the influence of Gnostic lore and also of the philosophy of Wm. James upon Mr. Wells' thought. It appears that the Englishman searched the history of the early Church with some assiduity and was influenced by the Gnostic heresy with regard to the idea of the demi-urge, for his conception of God resembles somewhat the demi-urge in its finiteness especially when Wells acknowledges an infinite which he calls the Veiled Being and describes, as follows:

"At the back of all things there is an impenetrable curtain; the ultimate of existence is a Veiled Being, which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill. Of that Being, whether it is simple or complex or divine, we know nothing; to us it is no more than the limit of understanding, the unknown beyond. It may be of practically limitless intricacy and possibility." (p.14)

The indebtedness to Wm. James and his idea of a finite God Mr. Wells freely and even proudly acknowledges when he boasts that James was his great teacher. It appears that James' solution of the problem of evil by means of a finite God appealed most to his pupil Wells.

The defining process of Wells' God, however, involves also a long list of negations, directed, for the most part, against what their

author regards as Christian misconceptions and delusions. The denials are, briefly stated, these: God is not "something magic serving the ends of men", viz., God cannot be conceived as One in whom "we live and move and have our being"; furthermore, God is not Providence, nor does He punish; He also does not revenge the onslaughts against the believers as one might expect from the words "whoso shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone be hanged about his neck", etc.; nor does God "clamour for the attention of children"; and finally, God is not "sexual", viz., imposing detailed sexual inhibitions à la Leviticus, making marriage a mystical sacrament and chastity supererogatory (sic!). We see that this God of the "new religion" is nothing but a bitterly executed polemic against orthodox Christianity.

The positive attributes which Mr. Wells ascribes to his God are, to say the least, vague. We shall enumerate them with some little comment according to the author's whim: God is Courage, and to this assertion the novelist does not see fit to add. Courage, however, is implied in the definition of God as a Person, the second attribute. Wells writes:

"God is a person who can be known as one knows a friend, who can be served and who receives service, who partakes of our nature; who is, like us, a being in conflict with the unknown and the limitless and the forces of death; who values much that we value and is against much that we are pitted against. He is our king to whom we must be poyal; he is our captain, and to know him is to have a direction in our lives. He feels us and knows us; he is helped and gladdened by us. He hopes and attempts.....God is no abstraction nor trick of words, no Infinite. He is as real as a bayonet thrust or an embrace." (pp.55f.)

God is further described as being immaterial and without body; "his nature is of the nature of thought and will". God has nothing to do with matter and space, but he exists in time even as a current of thought does. God also changes, for "all our truth, all our intentions and achievements, he gathers to himself. He is the undying human memory, the increasing human will". (p.61)

Modern religionists deny, however, that God is the "collective mind and purpose of the human race". He is not an aggregate, but a synthesis, much as a Temple is more than a mere aggregate of stones,

or a regiment a mere aggregate of soldiers. The third attribute of God is Youth. He "began and is always beginning. He looks forever into the future". God is not a patriarch, past his prime, as per the conventional Christian representation (sic!); He grows with us. Last of all, God is Love. And Wells calls God's love an "austere love", for it is as the love of a captain to his soldiers, "who are so foolish, so helpless in themselves, so confiding, and yet whose faith alone makes Him possible".

We note that Wells uses theological terminology after the accepted fashion with premeditated and telling effect. His God nevertheless leaves us with a sense of unsatisfied vagueness. We have, it seems, been listening to a ^Λgod of abstractions and metaphysical hypotheses and know nothing of the essence of the Britisher's God other than that his maker wishes him to be non-Christian. Let us, therefore, view this God as a cog in the cosmogony which Wells outlines in the chapter entitled THE INVISIBLE KING, this being the keystone chapter of the book. We are tempted to say in advance that the author here describes a Utopia utterly incompatible with human experience. Wells' dream has been the dream of every false religion, for he presents the world as it should be ideally, but as it never can be practically. He hopes, however, that "modern religion" will make it such since all others have failed; and in reviewing his ^oposition he unwittingly falls into the bias of the millennialists. He dreams anew what, to some extent, Plato, Confucius, Brahma, Origin, Tauler and Spener dreamed before him in vain. The outline of his cosmogony, however, helps us to view his God a bit more realistically.

As we observed above, God is finite in this world. He "faces the blackness of the unknown and the blind joys and confusions and cruelties of life, as one who leads mankind through a dark jungle to a great conquest". Man, that is, of course, the believer, is God's servant who completely renounces himself in the service of God. The Great Conquest is that of Death, death in every form, viz., "death of

the race,....the petty death of indolence,insufficiency,bareness,mis-conception,and perversion". God fights (Wells stresses the incongruity between God Militant and the non-resisting Crucified Christ),and he fights to effect a kingdom which is to be "a peaceful and coordinated activity of all mankind upon certain divine ends". These divine ends are the following:

"These,we conceive,are first,the maintenance of the racial life; secondly,the exploration of the external being of nature as it is and as it has been,that is to say history and science; thirdly,that exploration of inherent human possibility which is art; fourthly,that clarification of thought and knowledge which is philosophy; and finally,the progressive enlargement and developement of the racial life under these lights, so that God may work through a continually better body of humanity and through better and better equipped minds, that he and our race may increase for ever,working unendingly upon the developement of the powers of life and the mastery of the blind forces of matter throughout the deeps of space. He sets out with us,we are persuaded,to conquer ourselves and our world and the stars." (pp.107f.)

The part which the believer plays as the servant of God is summed up in the words: "Service,and service alone,is the criterion that the quickened conscience shall recognize". And,since God is open to all men,the quickened conscience of man must reach to the noble work which the militant God wishes to effect in his theocracy. And,as was noted previously,the "finding of Him is salvation from the purposelessness of life".

In this connection,as a conclusion,we wish to present Wells' justification for the repudiation of creeds. It is consistent with his entire theogony,smacking as it does of harsh utilitarianism. He states,namely.that "the service of God is not to achieve a delicate consistency of statemnt (sic!); it is to do as much as one can of God's work". (p.126).

As was indicated earlier,Wells can hardly be reckoned as a philosopher,and in his conception of God one might almost accuse him of being a religious charlatan. GOD,THE INVISIBLE KING is a hodge-podge of sectarian new revelation and religious experience combined with the finite God of Wm.James and a work righteousness

which is balm to the hearts of the Babitts. Wells' God was invented as a convenience for the man-about-town of the 20th Century, and its depth and sincerity are commensurate with its origin. In shelving the "philosopher Wells", we are reminded of the caustic comment of Edward Shanks, who, in contrasting the relative merits of Galsworthy and Wells as contemporary English men-of-letters, said: "Mr. Galsworthy is a creative artist who, however hard he has tried to be something else, has failed; Mr. Wells was a creative artist who tried to become something else and did so."

In bringing to a close our discussion of the conception of God in modern philosophy, we must confess that we feel that we have not attained the goal of our thesis; for the conception of God in modern philosophy does not exist, as such. The variety of the conceptions of God among philosophers is so diversified as to admit of no synthesis except a few generalities. The treatment of the specific philosophers in our paper verifies this statement, for the width of the world lies between the sharply dialectic conception of Royce, the pluralistic conceptions of Bergson and James, and the purely fictive deity of Wells.

We might, however, divide the philosophies which we have considered under two heads, namely, the a priori type of which Royce is an able exponent, and the a posteriori type which includes Bergson, James and Wells. A number of general objections have been levelled against both, which, in conclusion, we should like to discuss.

The a priori school is, as we know, essentially deductive and reasons a cosmogony which is ideal, as Royce has done. But the sharpest thorn in the side of such a system is the problem of evil. In our discussion of the philosophy of James we treated at some length James' repudiation of Absolute Idealism because of its failure to solve the problem of evil satisfactorily; for who, says James, can

be satisfied with the explanation that the evil in this world is not really evil but merely an appearance of evil which is justified as a part of the perfect whole?² James has quite correctly stated the general objection which still offers difficulty to the exponents of the a priori school. It has also been held that God and the Absolute cannot be harmonized, because, while the Absolute alone is Reality and finite beings "appearances", man in his finitude carries over these limitations to his conception of God, who is, as a result, merely "a finite and human conception formed on the level of appearances, and is not absolutely true". For practical purposes, however, it has been agreed that such a conception of God may be logically consistent with the Absolute; and, hence, the conception of the Absolute is frequently held to be possible of harmonization with the Christian conception.

With regard to the a posteriori thinkers, a number of very serious objections have been raised, particularly because of the great divergence of this school of thought from the traditional conception of a God who is infinite and unchanging. Dr. L. Franklin Gruber of Maywood (Ill.) treats the subject quite extensively in two tracts published in the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA (Oct., 1918) and THE LUTHERAN QUARTERLY (Jan., 1921) and has very satisfactorily listed the general objections. He regards Bergson's philosophy as being the starting point for the theory of a finite God and emphasizes the fact that, although Bergson has not definitely identified his Vital Impulse with God, his disciples have done so, as for example, James and after him Wells. Assuming that the universe is developing through the process of creative evolution, Dr. Gruber asks, what has that to do with God? Experiential philosophy cannot ipso facto fathom transcendental problems, and the great fallacy of the Bergsonian view lies in the fact that it includes God in the universe and then tries to define Him à la creative evolution. No, says Gruber,

for, even assuming creative evolution to be a fact together with its concomitant, the Vital Impulse, what prevents one from regarding them as mere modi operandi of God? Evolution is finite because it works with a Nature created finite. Is it not a fact that God is included in the universe, in Nature, a priori and not aposteriori according to this system, and then proved finite? And it does not at all follow that, because the Creation is finite, the Creator is likewise finite. The very contrary is true, for a petitio principii exists in the denial of an infinite since this concept is already suggested in the concept "finite". Furthermore, according to Gruber, this school of philosophy stresses too much the evil in the world. They hold that God must be finite because of all the evil roundabout since an omnipotent, oniscient God could not include evil in his essence, but they neglect to consider the fact that limited, finite man reads limitations also into Nature. (Note the similarity between the reasoning of Dr. Gruber and Prof. Royce). And man, as an agent created morally free, is alone responsible for sin. Finally, according to Gruber, imperfection in Nature may be explained as merely evil appearances of the perfect whole according to the logic of the Absolute Idealists, and Dr. Gruber gives fresh significance to this statement, and incidentally a distinct snub to Bergsonians, by maintaining that this view is all the more tenable when considered in the ebb and flow of creative evolution. The idea of an infinite and unchangeing God is tenable from reason as well as Scripture in the opinion of this learned and scientific Lutheran apologist, and the great doctrines of redemption, incarnation and atonement are consistent with it.

Thus we see that the systems which we have treated are open to a number of serious objections from the view-point of reason. We shall also see, however, that a greater objection holds. Although differing widely in a number of points, all four systems agree per-

fectly in one point, and that is the fact that they speculate a God. And herein lies their irreconcilability with Christianity.

The Christian God is the God of revelation. He cannot be induced from the facts of nature and life; the facts of nature and life must, instead, be interpreted according to the God Who revealed the fact that He has created and still preserves them. It seems, therefore, to the writer that, no matter whether a man be an orthodox Christian or a purely materialistic pagan, he cannot fail to see that the God of Christians and the God of philosophy must, by their very origin, be incompatible. The attempt of Prof. Miller to interpret Bergson's conception, and the similar attempt of Prof. Flournoy to interpret James, as being compatible with Christian theism must, as a consequence, be termed failures.

We do not doubt that a harmonization between the two conceptions is possible in a general way. And in this connection we might urge the apologetic value of the study of philosophy. Natural man has a vague knowledge of God, according to Scriptures, and philosophy substantiates this. It does not, however, follow that ergo, the God Whom they have speculated is the Christian God. In the first place, as was stated above, their God is the God of speculation; their religion is that of experience, the inner light, character and salvation through self. And in the second place, their systems make no room for Christ the Saviour. To them He is little more than the sage Confucius. The doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction and justification they repudiate in favor of a religion of works which satisfies the guilty conscience of natural man. How then can a person who understands the Lutheran confessions, whether he be believer or unbeliever, maintain that these two opposite conceptions, that of the Christian and that of the philosopher, are compatible? There may be traces of similarity; but compatibility is utterly out of the question.

E.W.Lyman in THEOLOGY AND HUMAN PROBLEMS (p.21), in speaking of the God of one of these systems, that of the Absolute Idealists, states the problem very clearly:

"As one contemplates the idea of the timeless Absolute in its strict meaning---and especially as one regards it from the standpoint of the ethical life with its constant activity in the production of spiritual goods---it loses all power to call forth our worship, and appears like a huge, spherical aquarium encompassing within itself motion and life, but as a whole rigid, glassy and motionless. Surely the timeless Absolute is not the supreme solver of human problems, nor the God to whose worship we should summon the aspiring and struggling sons of men."

And whether God is considered as timeless or as finite is not of decisive importance in rendering the verdict against philosophy, for to the writer the Gods of all philosophic systems fit the description quoted above. Disciples of Bergson and James, and Royce and Wells themselves have attempted to identify their conceptions of God with the Christian conception, but we believe this to be logically impossible, aside from all minor difficulties in the desired harmonization process, alone from the fact that a God who is the product of speculation cannot ipso facto be compatible with the God of revelation. And as a final thought stressing the gulf between religion and philosophy, we should like to cite the words which a friend has written as a conclusion to the reading of Will Durant's THE STORY OF PHILOSOPHY. On the fly-leaf of his volume we find the following very adequate words:

"As I read tonight in old St. Louis, listening to the dripping of the rain from the eaves, I seek a picture that will give my impression of the voices of these lovers of wisdom. The picture is ready to hand, for through the open window come the harsh cries of a great flock of wild ducks flying south away from the Canadian chill. They make their way through the dreary, damp sky with no star or moon for comfort and guidance. They fly in a great V, all aiming for the genial Southern waters, as philosophers seek for truth. But the tragedy is here that the unerring instinct which guides the birds aright, and which might guide the philosophers if they would fly by faith and not by reason, has been lost to the philosophic world when it discarded the oracles of God. The wise of this world, decoyed by their own exceeding wisdom, are an easy bag for Satan's hunting."

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