# TYPICAL MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

# Typical Modern Conceptions of God

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*NOTE*

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# MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

## CHAPTER I.

### FICHTE'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

#### 1. *Introductory.*

Fichte's utterances on the philosophy of religion extend over almost the entire period of his philosophical activity. They mark the development of his thought from 1790 (he was born in 1762) until 1813, a year before his death. His views on the nature of God contain the core of his philosophy, for, in common with the other great post-Kantians, Schelling and Hegel, the goal of Fichte's philosophy is the discovery of an absolute first principle which shall for the philosophic thinker fill the place that, in common unreasoned thought and in popular theology, is occupied by the doctrine of an anthropomorphically conceived God. Fichte gave repeated expression to his doctrine of God and of religion, but it was not until the year 1806, in *The Way to the Blessed Life* (*Anweisungen*

*zum seligen Leben oder auch die Religionslehre*), that he developed his doctrine with systematic fulness. The difference in tone and in expression between this work and his earlier essays and fugitive remarks on the same subject, together with his repeated esoteric and exoteric expositions of the *Science of Knowledge*, have given rise to the view that Fichte's earlier and later philosophies are radically different. I hope to show that, notwithstanding certain variations of expression and a shifting of emphasis, Fichte's doctrine of God is nevertheless a unity in which the change is a development. In order to exhibit this unity we must follow the historical order of his writings.

### 2. *Fichte's First Period.*

The earliest expression of Fichte's views on the nature of God is contained in his *Aphorisms on Religion and Deism* (1790), written before he had made the acquaintance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. In these he says that it seems to be a universal need of the heart to seek in God attributes which speculation must deny to him. If one follow one's reflection (*Nachdenken*) one can reach only the bare conclusion that there is a necessary Being through whose thought the world arises. The first cause of every change in the world is the original or creative thought of God. Therefore every feeling and thinking being *necessarily* exists

just as it is.[1] But there are moments when the inexorable God of speculation fails to satisfy the heart. There arises intensest longing for something more than this abstract principle. Head and heart are in contradiction. One cannot resolve the contradiction speculatively. One would be saved from it if one could only cut off deterministic speculation where it crosses the boundary line between theoretical thought and the desires of the heart. But how can one do this?[2]

With this interrogation the record of Fichte's early religious difficulties closes. Very soon afterwards he began the study of Kant's philosophy, and we know, from his letters to his fiancée, written at this time, with what enthusiasm he embraced Kant's doctrine.[3] No one, he said, had refuted his determinism, but it had failed to satisfy his heart, and the Kantian criticism seemed to him to leave a place for the needs of the individual in the determination of the nature of God. His *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, written in 1791, two years earlier than Kant's corresponding work on religion, and submitted to Kant for examination, although wholly Fichte's own in method and style, is a criticism of the possibility, nature, and limits of a divine revelation based on Kant's practical philosophy.

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, V., p. 8.

[3] J. G. Fichte's *Leben u. Briefwechsel*, by his son, J. H. Fichte, I., p. 81 ff., especially the letter of September 5, 1790.

In this work Fichte begins with a theory of the moral will, on which he says the deduction of the nature of religion must be based. The *material* of moral action is given by *impulse*. But an act of will is the determination of one's self, with the consciousness of one's own spontaneous activity; so that the primal impulse must be carried out spontaneously if there is to result *free* and hence *moral* action. The higher faculty of desire, the source of the highest impulse to action, is the idea of the *Absolutely Right*.[1] If the moral impulse is to be satisfied the *moral law* must govern *nature*. This can happen only in a Being in which moral necessity and absolute physical freedom are united. Consequently the existence of God is to be assumed with the same certainty as the moral law. In God the moral law alone rules, and without limitation. It follows that God is *holy*, *blessed*, and, in relation to the sense-world, *all-powerful*.[2] Moreover, he must be *just*, for he must bring about a full congruence between morality and the happiness of finite, natural beings. Further, since, into the concept of existence, nothing can be thought beyond the series of causes and effects in the sense-world *and* the free decisions of moral beings, God must know *both*: the former since he is its author, the latter since it is the meas-

[1] *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung*. *Werke*, V., pp. 24, 25.

[2] *Werke*, V., p. 40.

ure according to which he distributes happiness to men; therefore he must be *all-knowing*. Moreover, the moral law has eternal validity. Eternity is required for God to establish the balance between morality and happiness; therefore God must be *eternal?*[1] These principles are postulates of reason, subjective but universally valid, and the assumption on which they are based is an act of *faith*. Religion is founded on the idea of God as the determiner of nature to moral ends.[2] Our obligation to the will of God is our obligation to the laws of the practical reason.[3] The highest good is the only unconditioned absolute *end* we know. The highest good is the supreme practical law of reason; and if reason in us lacks power in the conflict with natural inclination, by regarding the law of reason as a divine command, we are able to feel ourselves *answerable* to a Being who demands our deepest reverence. But to disobey the command then becomes a sin against the Absolute Reason. In this way the thought of God strengthens our reason. So, while in general reason must determine us to obey the will of God, in particular cases the will of God may determine us to obey reason.[4] We may regard the proclamation of the moral law through self-consciousness as God's proclamation of his own nature.[5]

[1] *Werke*, V., pp. 40, 41.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 53.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

This is his supernatural proclamation within us. He may also reveal himself in the sense-world. Indeed the entire system of phenomena *may* appear as a revelation,[1] and, further, when a man or humanity has sunk so low that the moral laws given by pure reason have lost their power, a particular fact in the world of sense may give sanction to the moral law. The pure moral impulse may be specially revealed to man, when he has sunk into a degenerate state, through the medium of sense-phenomena.[2] There may be cases where a revelation is necessary to *produce* moral feeling in a race.[3] But in any case the *authority* of a revelation must not compel obedience, but only draw attention to the moral law.[4] The criterion of a revelation is the correspondence of its principles with the moral law given *independently* by practical reason.

It is clear that the *Critique of All Revelation* is essentially Kantian, in that it derives the existence and attributes of God from the necessity of finding in the universe a sure footing for the realization of the moral law in finite beings and for the consummation of the union in such beings of happiness with virtue. On the other hand, Fichte, in this work, does not conceive God after the fashion of Kant's moral *Deus ex Machina.* We find throughout the *Critique* suggestions of the

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 70.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 91–94.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

doctrine, soon to be developed by Fichte, that the only reality in human experience is to be found in the system of interacting and morally free centres of self-consciousness. Already morality is identified with the completely free action of these individual *I*'s, and God is the *immanent*, unifying principle of the moral universe which is constituted by the *I*'s. The step is already taken from Kant's doctrine of a transcendent ethical Being to an *immanent principle* of ethical life. God may transcend the sense-world, but not the moral world.

For the next six years Fichte busied himself with the development of the groundwork of his system in its general theoretical and practical aspects. In 1792 he lays down in his *Review of Æenesidemus* (published in the Jena *Literatur-Zeitung* for 1794) a *deed-act* (*That-handlung*) as the fundamental principle of philosophy.[1] This deed-act is the self-creating intellectual intuition by the *I* of itself.[2] The philosophical ultimate is the *action* whereby the *I* intuits and so posits itself. To be self-conscious is to posit one's self; *i.e.*, to exist.[3] The primal fact in being *is action. Im Anfang war die That.* Starting from this primi-

[1] *Werke*, I., p. 8. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 22.

[3] Professor Everett (Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*, p. 71) holds that positing (*Setzen*) does not primarily mean for Fichte creation. But the *I is* only by virtue of its activity as *positing*. Is not this self-creation?

tive deed-act of self-consciousness, by which and in which the latter alone *is*, Fichte builds up his *Wissenschaftslehre* of the year 1794. To this first systematic form of his philosophy belong likewise the two Introductions of 1797.

The primitive act of consciousness is the assertion of its own identity. This is expressed in the formal proposition A *is* A, or A = A. The empirical connection asserted in a given form of this proposition may be false; but the form of the proposition is always valid, and the bare assertion of any identity whatsoever depends on the identity of the *I*. The *act* of assertion itself constitutes the identity of the *I*.[1] But the proposition A is A is only possible through the proposition A is not not-A. In the latter proposition there is involved the assertion of the existence of a *not-I*, which excludes the self-identical *I*. To the *I* there is absolutely opposed a *not-I*. Nevertheless in this difference the *I* maintains the identity of its own consciousness,[2] which latter indeed is possible only through the consciousness at the same time of a difference. The *I* is produced by its return into itself.[3] This return is an *intellectual intuition* of its own free act.[4] The *not-I* is posited by the *I*. It is the *limit* set up by the *I*, in opposition and relation to which the

[1] *Werke*, I., pp. 91–98.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 106 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 458.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 459 ff.

*I* may exercise its own conscious activity.[1] The absolute *I* can be determined by nothing else.[2] The *I* sets up a check or limit (*Anstoss*) to its own activity. Without this check there could be no self-determination; without self-determination there could be no check, nothing objective.[3] The check exists because the *I* must posit itself at once as finite and as infinite. Without the infinite there can be no limitation (finitude), and *vice versa*. Infinity and limitation are united in one and the same synthetic terms. The *I* distinguishes itself from its own unlimited activity. This activity consists in so positing itself without limitation. This play of the absolute *I* with itself, by which the *I* strives to unite opposites (the finite and the infinite), is the faculty of *imagination* (*Einbildungskraft*).[4] This continual play of opposites is the condition of the possibility of knowledge. Reality is the product of the imagination, which presents these opposites, the finite-subjective and the infinite-objective, for contemplation.[5]

The unceasing *activity* of intelligence is for Fichte the absolute principle of things. He says "Intelligence is a constant action" (*Thun*).[6]

Objectivity is nothing more than the intuition by intelligence of its own action.[7] But how can

[1] *Werke*, I., p. 110 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 227.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 440.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 492.

we be sure that this intellectual intuition is ultimate? *Faith* in it, says Fichte, can be based only on the conviction that reason[1] is the end, personality a means.

The absolute *I* is thus the one universal activity of intelligence underlying the system of finite conscious *I*'s. The finite *I* is a form of the manifestation of the free activity of the Eternal Reason.[2] In his *Foundation of Natural Rights* (1796) and the *System of Ethics* Fichte deduces the rights and duties of finite individuals from the general principles of the *Science of Knowledge*. In the *Science of Rights* he says that if a rational being is to posit itself it must be wholly self-determined, *i.e.*, free, and, if free, it must posit a sensuous world on which to exercise this freedom. It must ascribe a like freedom to others; hence it must posit other rational beings. Therefore it is really the universal or absolute *I* which posits itself in this whole system of related finite *I*'s. In the *System of Ethics* Fichte defines Reason, or the quality of being an *I*, as the union of subject and object.[3] In itself the *I* is pure will.[4] Volition is the absolute tendency towards the Absolute.[5] It is pure activity.[6] Impulse (*Trieb*) is this activity determined in a definite direction and objectified.[7] The deter-

[1] *Werke*, I., p. 466.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 505.
[3] *Werke*, IV., p. 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 26.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

mination is a limitation of the *I*, and gives rise to *feeling*. Nature is the organic whole of impulses;[1] *i.e.*, of the series of determinations of the universal activity of intelligence. There is no *Nature-in-itself*. My own nature and all other natures that are posited to explain the first nature constitute only a particular way of observing myself.[2]

The last statement, taken by itself, might convey the impression that the finite individual *I* and the absolute *I* are the same. But it is abundantly evident from a consideration of the *Science of Knowledge*, the *Science of Rights*, and the *System of Ethics* that the absolute *I* is the *impersonal and universal Intelligence* which is immanent in and gives reality to the entire activity of the finite *I*'s in all their relations, active and passive. Moreover, this universal *I* is ceaseless activity, *actus purus, absolute rational will*. It is the only reality, for the sense-world has no reality in itself. Fichte's system is not *solipsistic*, but *acosmistic*. The idea of the absolute *I* is, when viewed from the practical standpoint, the idea of God.[3] The pure *I* is posited outside ourselves, and called God.

Now there follows a series of essays which deal directly with the idea of God from the standpoint of the *Science of Knowledge*. The first of these is entitled *On the Ground of Our Faith in a Divine*

[1] *Werke*, IV., p. 114. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[3] Fichte to Jacobi, August 30, 1795. *Leben u. Briefwechsel*, II., p. 169. See also the *Review of Æenesidemus*, *op. cit.*

*Government of the World.* This is a brief statement prefixed to an article by Forberg *On the Definition of the Idea of Religion,* in the *Philosophical Journal* (1798), edited by Fichte and Niethammer. Forberg in this article identified religion and morality. Fichte agreed with him so far as he went, but found it necessary to explain his own views, because Forberg stopped short and failed to draw out the implications of his position. Philosophy, our author urged, produces no facts; it only explains them. The philosopher presupposes the fact of faith in God, and "deduces this fact from the necessary procedure of every reasoning being."[1] Faith is not arbitrarily assumed, but is necessary. Two standpoints are possible, namely, the transcendental and that which is occupied by common consciousness and natural science alike. From the latter standpoint the sense-world is viewed as an absolutely self-existent whole, and every event in it proceeds according to its own immanent laws. To argue from the existence of this sense-world to an Intelligence who is the author of it, is to cheat us with empty words. All the determinations of this intelligence are conceptions, and how can these either create matter *ex nihilo* or modify an eternal matter? From the transcendental point of view, there is no self-existent world, and what we see is only the reappearance of our own inner activity. From the sense-world we cannot reach in any way

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 178.

the moral World-Order. One must seek the latter in the region of the supersensuous. Now, I have the absolute conviction or faith that I can determine my own moral nature, which is supersensuous, to act in a certain way.[1] I am free to set before myself a moral end, and "I posit this end as realized in some future time." I am convinced that this end *will* be realized. I must do this, or deny my own being. But it does not lie within my power to realize any moral end in the world. I can only determine myself to make the choice. The end is achieved only as a consequence of a higher law, a moral World-Order. The living and working moral order is God himself, and we can conceive no other.[2] This moral World-Order can be deduced from nothing else. It is the basis of all objective knowledge, the ground of all certainty. We must not assume a particular being as cause of it. If we assume a particular being (*Seyn*) it must be distinguished from ourselves and the world, and personality and consciousness will be attributed to it. It will be a finite being, a multiplication of the individual, and no God, and will explain nothing.[3] The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. In this moral World-Order every rational being has a determined place, and its fate, so far as it results directly from its own actions, is the result of the World-Order. The true atheism is that one refuses to hearken to the voice of his

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 183. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 186. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

conscience.[1] Fichte closes his article with two quotations, which he says express his own views. The first of these is the well-known passage in *Faust*, beginning

> " Who dare express Him ?
> And who profess Him,
> Saying, I believe in Him !
> Who, feeling, seeing,
> Deny His Being," etc.[2]

The second, from Schiller's *Worte des Glaubens*, is as follows :

> " And God is !—a holy Will that abides,
> Though the human will may falter ;
> High over both Space and Time it rides,
> The high Thought that will never alter :
> And while all things in change eternal roll,
> It endures, through change, a motionless soul."[3]

This statement of his position brought against him the accusation of atheism. In the *Appeal to the Public against the Charge of Atheism*, and the *Judicial Answer to the Charge of Atheism*, he further develops his own doctrine in contrast with that of his accusers. He contends that his opponents regard God as a particular substance. Substance means with them " a sensible being existing in time and space." This God, extended in time and space, they deduce from the sense-world. Fichte claims that extension or corporeality cannot be predi-

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 185. [2] *Faust*, part I., scene xvi.
[3] Merivale's translation, quoted in Smith's *Memoir*, p. 96.

cated of the Deity.[1] The sensuous world is only the reappearance of the supersensuous or moral world through our attempt to grasp the latter by means of our sensuous faculty of presentation. The sensuous is mere appearance, and can furnish no ground for the existence of God. The Deity is not to be understood as the underlying ground of phenomena, for, so conceived, he is made a corporeal substrate.[2] He is an order of events, not a substance. The sensuous predicate of existence is not to be applied to him, for the supersensuous God alone is. He is not dead Being (*Seyn*), but rather pure action, the life and principle of the supersensuous World-Order.[3] His opponents, continue Fichte, deduce all relations of the Godhead to us from a knowledge of God got independently of these relations. Our author denies the validity of their procedure, and maintains that the relation of the Godhead to us as moral beings is immediately given.[4] He repeats the statement that God as moral World-Order is postulated as guaranteeing the realization of the end which the man of good disposition sets before himself. He regards God, taken in such a sense, as being quite as immediately certain as our own existence. Duty cannot be done absolutely without reference to an end, for in that case it would be without content. Man must act with regard to

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 258.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 261.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

an end, and this end is blessedness, not enjoyment. God as moral World-Order makes it possible that this end be realized. On the other hand, the end which his opponents set before themselves is enjoyment. Their God who dispenses enjoyment is a material existence, a prince of this world.[1] Eudæmonism in morals is allied with dogmatism in speculation. To characterize God as a spirit is of negative value in distinguishing him from things material.[2] It gives us no positive information, for we know as little wherein the being of a spirit consists as wherein the being of God consists. Inasmuch as all our thinking is limiting, God is inconceivable.[3] To determine him is to make him finite. If personality and consciousness are to be denied of God, it is only in the sense in which we conceive ourselves as personal and conscious.[4] God is a wider consciousness than we are, a pure intelligence, spiritual life and actuality. He is neither one nor many, neither man nor spirit. Such predicates belong only to finite beings. Again, God's existence cannot be proved. Not from the sense-world, for Fichte's system is *acosmistic*. Not from the supersensuous world, for proof implies *mediation*. The supersensuous World-Order *is* God, and is immediately perceived through the inner sense.[5]

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 218.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 265.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 266.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

In *Reminiscences, Answers, and Questions*, written in 1799, but not published until after his death, Fichte emphatically asserts that speculation does not produce the idea of God. Life is higher than knowledge.[1] Speculation is only the means of knowing Life.[2] All certainty is based on *immediate feeling*, and God exists in the immediacy of our felt life.[3] Philosophy has to do only with a concept of the *idea* of God.[4] The expression "*order* of a supersensuous world" has been misapprehended. It is not to be understood "as if the supersensuous world were, before it had order, and as if order were thus but an accident of that world. On the contrary, that world only becomes a world by being ordered."[5] The philosopher is not concerned with the actual significance of God for religion, but only with the logical significance for philosophy. Faith in the moral World-Order is belief in a "principle by virtue of which every determination of the will through duty assuredly effects the promotion of the object of reason in the universal connection of things."[6] This involves the presupposition that the world of reason is created, maintained, and governed by this principle.[7] This principle or World-Order is Activity, not dead Permanency. It is a living being,

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 352.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 348, 356.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 348.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 363–4.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

"creating, maintaining, governing." Inasmuch as these predicates are asserted of one principle, when we reflect we must think a permanent substrate to which these belong and which unites the different predicates. The oneness is mediate; the predicates arise immediately. The one principle can only be thought of "as a, for itself, existing and working principle," [1] as pure *Spirit*, as *Creator*, *Maintainer*, and *Governor*. But this thinking is an abstraction Abstractly the principle of the world is a logical subject. Concrete thinking gives us God as Activity, as the Creating, Maintaining, Governing, etc. "The conception of God cannot be determined by categories of existence, but only by predicates of an activity." [2]

In the *Vocation of Man*, published in 1800, God is characterized as the living holy Will in whom we live and move and have our being. He reveals himself in the heart, and is comprehended by faith. He is best known to the simple child-like mind. Faith in duty is faith in God. My will is a part of two orders, the spiritual and the sensuous. The law or order of the supersensuous world is the Infinite Will. I unite myself with this by making my will conform to it. The voice of conscience, of freedom, in my breast commands me to do this. The Infinite Will unites me with all other finite wills in a world or system of many individuals. The union and direct reciprocal action of many

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 368. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

separate and independent wills is the world. What the Infinite is in himself, no finite being can say. As the finite mind conceives it, he is self-existing, self-manifesting Will.

It had been asserted that Fichte's doctrine of God was pantheism, that in his theory finite beings are the constituent parts of the moral world, and that our relation to one another is the World-Order. Fichte deals with this charge in "From a private letter," published in the *Philosophical Journal* in 1800. His opponents, he says, understand by order something dead, fixed, and ready-made. Their order consists of a manifold of things lying beside and following one another (*Ordo ordinatus*). He, on the contrary, understands by order an active, working principle (*Ordo ordinans*). In all human actions, two things are reckoned, a determination of the individual's will and something independent of his will, by which a consequence follows his willing. So in morality, if A stand for the determination of the will to an end, and B for that principle through which there comes about a consequence necessarily connected with A, then the law of the connection of A and B in the moral order of things is the moral World-Order, and is outside of, and independent of, finite moral beings.

Fichte now found it necessary to correct the misunderstanding that his absolute *I* was the same as the finite individual *I*. In the *Sun-Clear Report*

*to the Larger Public* (1801) he makes plain the distinction.[1] It may have been this misinterpretation which led him, in the *Exposition of the Science of Knowledge* of the year 1801, to change his terminology. In place of the absolute *I* there now appears the absolute *Act of Knowing* (*Wissen*) as the starting-point for the deduction of the theoretical and practical worlds. This *Absolute Knowing* is characterized in the same manner as the absolute *I*. Knowing is a *being* in and for itself and a dwelling in and disposing of itself.[2] It is the absolute interpenetration of *Being* and *Freedom*.[3] It is the fusion of the unifying and the dispersive tendencies of thought into an identity.[4] Knowing is the intellectual intuition of the Absolute, and this is Spirit. In the universe there is no death, no lifeless material, but rather only Life, Spirit, Intelligence.[5] In this exposition the word *being* (*Seyn*) is used to designate absolute knowing. In the *Science of Knowledge* of 1804[6] being and thought are identified. Fichte had formerly denied the applicability of the predicate being (*Seyn*) to God on the ground that it was a sensuous concept and denoted something dead and fixed, whereas God is pure activity. It has been maintained by some that the introduction of the word *being* into these

[1] *Werke*, II., p. 382.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[6] *Nachgelassene Werke*, II.

later expositions marks the change to an entirely new view on Fichte's part—to an Eleatic conception of the Absolute as a motionless, inactive Unity. But this interpretation overlooks the fact that Fichte describes *knowing* in the exposition of 1801 and *thinking* (*Denken*) in that of 1804 alike in terms of *activity*. In a letter to Schelling, dated August 7, 1801, he says that *being* is not compression, but is through and through alertness (*Agilität*), pellucidity, light.[1] God is this pure being. He is the inconceivable real ground of the separateness of individuals and the ideal bond of all.[2] He is inconceivable in himself, and we can only say that the Absolute *is* the Absolute.[3] The *Science of Knowledge* expounds the *universal consciousness* of the whole spiritual world. Every individual is the rational square of an irrational root, and the whole spiritual world is the rational square of an irrational root — the immanent Light or God.[4] The essence of philosophy lies in conceiving the inconceivable.[5]

We have traced through the preceding works the gradual clarification of Fichte's thought on the nature of God and his relation to the world of appearance. It becomes evident in the later utterances that the absolute *Act of Knowing* or

[1] *Leben u. Briefwechsel*, II., p. 345. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 344–5.
[3] To Schelling, January 15, 1802. *Leben u. Briefwechsel*, II., p. 367.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 345. [5] *Ibid.*, I., p. 181.

the *Universal Consciousness*, which is identical with the absolute *I* of the earlier *Science of Knowledge*, is *not* the Divine Being in his fulness, but a never-ceasing *expression* of his Being. God manifests himself, but he is not exhausted in his manifestations.

### 3. *Fichte's Later Views.*

In his writings between the years 1806 and 1813 Fichte gives, from various starting-points, his doctrine of the Divine Nature *in itself* and in its relation to the phenomenal world.

In the *Characteristics of the Present Age* (1806) he says that Humanity is the one, outer, forceful, living, and self-dependent Existence (*Daseyn*) of God, or the "one utterance and outflow of the same." "Humanity is an eternal ray, that divides itself into individuals, not in very truth, but only in the earthly appearance."[1] The true destiny of humanity is to return to God, and universal history is divided into five epochs which mark the five great stages of the progress of humanity towards its goal.[2] In a corresponding manner, Fichte gives, in the *Way to the Blessed Life* (1806), the five possible ways of viewing the infinite. These mark the stages in the progress of the individual soul Godwards.[3] The *first* and lowest is when the world is seen through the outer senses and this

[1] *Werke*, VII., p. 188. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 11 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, V., pp. 465 ff.

world is held to be the true world. In the *second* the world is comprehended as a law of order and equality existing in a system of rational beings. The practical reason of Kant represents this view. The *third* view is that from the standpoint of the higher morality. Here the highest plane of being is a *law* for the spirit, but a *creative* law whose end is to make men revelations of the inner divine Being.[1] Here the truly Real is the Holy, Good, and Beautiful. The *fourth* view is that of religion. This is the clear knowledge that the Holy, Good, and Beautiful are the manifestations in us of the inner Being of God.[2] It is seen that in whatever the holy man does, lives, and loves, God appears in his own immediate forceful Life. The *fifth* and highest view is the standpoint of pure knowledge.[3] To point the way to the pure knowledge of the one Absolute Being which is complete in itself is the purpose of the *Way to the Blessed Life.*

The Absolute is Being.[4] The fundamental Being of Life is an unchangeable intuition. Being necessarily appears as "existence," which is, hence, the phenomenal form of the inner essence of Being.[5] Existence is Life—the absolute concept which breaks itself up into finite *I*'s.[6] The absolute concept *appears* only in the individual consciousness.[7]

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 469.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 470.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 472.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 508; II., p. 682.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 510 ff.
[6] *Nachgelassene Werke*, III., p. 36.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 69 ff.

The absolute concept itself is the *appearance* of God as the latter comprehends itself.[1] This self-comprehension posits life.[2] Life comes to consciousness in individuals as absolute *thinking* (*Denken*).[3] This appearance is the accident of which God is the substance. The self-intuition of Being in its own manifestation brings forth, as a free act, a process. Through this process the manifold *I*'s arise.[4] The universal and absolute thought brings forth, by thinking, a community of individuals.[5] But in this manifold appearance existence is still *One Spirit*, which intuits and understands itself as a system of many.[6] The purpose of the infinite manifoldness of existence is to express Being in Becoming.[7] This process of expression is eternal. The power of the absolute Life to create individuals is never exhausted in the forms of individuality. To all eternity Being continues to be broken up into individuals.[8] Hence the ethical purpose in the manifestation of the Divine Being in individuals is never fully revealed.[9] Perhaps, in the Moral Order, one world-age is conditioned by another, and so there takes place in greater purity a progressive revelation of the goal. The *individuals* arise through

[1] *Nachgelassene Werke* I., p. 408.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 412.
[3] *Werke*, II., pp. 608–10.
[4] *Nachgelassene Werke*, I., p. 548.
[5] *Werke*, II., pp. 603, 608.
[6] *Nachgelassene Werke*, p. 526.
[7] *Werke*, II., p. 683.
[8] *Ibid.*, V., p. 530.
[9] *Ibid.*, II., pp. 666, 667.

thinking, but *God* does not. On the contrary, through his Being thinking first arises.[1] The individuals are but pictures of the Absolute. Beyond his appearance God exists in the absolute form of *Being*.[2]

The reflection or splitting up of the Divine Being brings forth *free* and *self-dependent I*'s. Freedom is the root of existence and the sole organic point of unity for the various forms of the Absolute Being.[3] Through freedom the individual rises to those higher stages on the road to union with the Absolute which have already been mentioned. To become *one* with God the finite individual must freely deny his own existence, and then he sinks in God.[4] The inner being of an individual as it appears in his actions will have value only in so far as it is the appearance of God in this individual.[5]

Fichte had repeatedly said that the Absolute-in-himself was the inconceivable. But with the lapse of years his religious feelings had enlarged and deepened, and while in the *Way to the Blessed Life* the highest standpoint is still that of knowledge (*Wissen*), this offers a direct relation to God in the form of an *intellectual intuition* (*intellectuelle Anschauung*), an experience which is deeper than conception (*Begreifen*). This direct relation-

[1] *Nachgelassene Werke*, I., p. 563.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Werke*, V., p. 513.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 517, 518.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 536.

ship is love. The love of God causes Being and existence, God and man, to melt and flow together.[1]

Love is the fountain of all certainty and all truth and all reality. Love is higher than reason. It furnishes the primal element for the creation of the world.[2] In reflection that has become Divine Love, and denied itself in God there is attained the standpoint of knowledge.[3] In the beginning, higher than all time, and absolute creator of Time is Love, and the Love is in God, for it is God's self-maintenance of himself in existence.[4]

"In so far as man is the love of God he *is* and *continues to be* God."[5] In a letter to Jacobi (of May 8, 1806) Fichte says: "Raise thyself by Love above the concept, then by so doing thou art immediately within formless and pure Being."[6]

Fichte expresses very clearly the final outcome of his thought in two sonnets,[7] from which we quote:

"The perennial One
Lives in my life and seeth in my sight."

"Naught is but God—and God is only life!
And yet thou seest and I see with thee,
How then could such a thing as seeing be
Were it not a knowing of God's own Life?

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 540.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 541.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 542.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 543.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 543.
[6] *Leben u. Briefwechsel*, II., p. 179.
[7] *Nachgelassene Werke*, III., pp. 347–8.

'How gladly to *His* would I *my* life resign!
But oh! how find it? Whensoe'er it flow
Into my knowing, transformed to empty show,
'Tis mixed with other semblance, in this hull of mine.'
'Tis clear, what hath the hindrance been.
It is thyself! Whate'er can die, resign!
And in thy life shall God live evermore.
Note well what in this dying shall live o'er,
Then shall the hull as naught but hull be seen,
And thou shalt see unveiled the life divine!"

### 4. *Conclusion.*

When we put together what Fichte said at different times and from various points of view his doctrine becomes a unity and his thought exhibits a consistent development. He always conceived God as *immanent* in the *moral universe* —the only universe which he recognized. He consistently held that the human mind could not *conceive* God in his *transcendence*. But he did not deny that transcendence, and indeed in his later writings he emphasized it by his doctrine of the Absolute Being. While in his innermost nature he is beyond the reach of thought, God manifests himself eternally as Active Intelligence or Will, and by the free act of his own intelligence man can rise to an *intuitive* knowledge of God and enter into union with him. In the earlier form of the *Science of Knowledge* the Absolute *I* is the expression of God. In the final form which his philosophy assumes Fichte emphasizes the

doctrine that God is more than the Absolute *I*. The idea of God is more fully defined. Beyond his *manifestation* of himself he exists as Absolute Being. He alone is. But this Being is not an abstract motionless *One*. Fichte says again and again in the *Way to the Blessed Life* that the nature of Being is to manifest itself, that it is ever active, ever living and loving. "Being and Life are one and the same." "The Divine is thinking and living in one organic unity." Being becomes conscious of itself in *Existence* (*Daseyn*). The universal form in which the Divine Essence appears is *Knowing* (*Wissen*), the *Concept*, *Freedom*, and these are all equivalent expressions. Knowing is the *first* image or schema of the Divine Being.[1] We have not yet reached *self-consciousness*. But free Knowing or the Concept *understands* or becomes conscious of itself in *Life*, and Life appears in the multiplicity of finite, self-conscious individuals. Consciousness in these is the reflex of real Being.[2] We humans are thus *appearances*, *images*[3] of God's true being. In us his ceaselessly outflowing, living Will concentrates

[1] *Werke*, IV., pp. 386, 387, etc., and *Nachgelassene Werke*, I., p. 413 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, III., p. 35.

[3] There are thus three stages in the process of God's imaging (*Bilden*) or schematizing himself: (1) Appearance (*Erscheinung*), Knowing (*Wissen*), or the Concept which is Freedom; (2) Life or Thinking (*Denken*); (3) the Self-understanding of Life (*Sichverstehen*), *i.e.*, the individual *I*'s.

itself into innumerable centres of consciousness. But all individuals are enclosed in the one great unity of the pure Spirit.[1] The real and true appearance, like God, whose appearance it is, is above the actual (*Überwirklich*).[2]

Consciousness involves a limit, and hence is a *reflex* of real Being, not God himself. Deeper than all finite life, higher than all conscious thought, there abides at the heart of things the pure superconscious Intelligence, the absolutely realized Will which is the rest of absolute motion, the fruition of absolute, self-centred activity. God is the intelligent Will that is ever active in forming itself into finite self-conscious wills. But in this eternal manifestation he never exists in his fulness. He is beyond the limits which human will and intelligence involve. In himself he cannot be a self-conscious being such as we are, for he transcends the limitations and eternally overcomes the oppositions through which in us self-consciousness arises. But he is accessible to us as the goal of our *free striving*. In the immediacy of ethical feeling or love, we penetrate, by way of that self-renunciation which is the realization of freedom, the shell of outward conscious existence and touch the Divine Being himself. For this Divine Being is *above*, not below, our conscious life. God remains in the last period of Fichte's thought the ethical Absolute, the *source* and the *end* of the moral life.

[1] *Werke*, I., p. 416. [2] *Nachgelassene Werke*, I., p. 423.

The free ethical will still is, for him, the key to our own existence. God is still held up as the goal of the active life. But at this period Fichte emphasizes the doctrine that the ethical Absolute is not a mere moral ideal, "a far-off Divine Event," but *now* and *ever is* in all its fulness, and can be experienced directly by him who wills to, in the ethically determined feeling or intuition of love.

Fichte does not theoretically deduce the finite *I* from the Absolute. Nor is there on the purely theoretical side of his philosophy any path that leads *inevitably* from the finite *I* to God. The *I* is active through impulse (*Trieb*) and against an obstacle or limit (*Anstoss*). Fichte makes a show of deducing the *not-I* from the *I*, but what he really does is, by an analysis of the activity of the *I*, to reveal the *not-I* as the indispensable condition of this activity. Theoretically, God is simply the hypostatized abstraction of *cognition in general.* It is in the practical or ethical life that Fichte finds the point of closest contact and union of the finite *I* with the Absolute. The ultimate reason for the existence of a limit to the *I* is the development of free ethical activity by the finite self. Through the action of freedom the finite *I* strives to overcome this limit, and finally, having through opposition found its own vocation, it transcends the limit and becomes one with God. The finite self has then discovered, beneath the antitheses of itself and its world, the

unifying principle of the Divine Life. The consciousness of this Divine Life, interpenetrating the lives of finite selves, grows more inclusive and pervading with the growth of Fichte's thought. He asserts in many of his earlier writings the absolute power of man as a free being to raise himself to God, but later he assumes the powerlessness of the human will to unite with God without the aid and presence of the Divine Will. "Through himself man can do nothing. He can not make himself moral, but he must wait until the divine image breaks forth in him."[1] Fichte never specifically faces the problem of evil and offers no explanation of its place in his system.

In the system Being and Becoming are perhaps not fully reconciled. But can they ever be wholly reconciled by other than the way of poetic metaphor? It is my opinion that no profounder contribution to the solution of this eternal problem, and none that meets better the *ethical* demands of human nature, has been made than by Fichte in his doctrine that the ceaseless activity of finite wills, considered as a system, is the manifestation in the world of time and space of the infinite Life of God, and that in their spontaneous, self-determined activity the world-system of finite *I*'s expresses and realizes, each one fragmentarily but not the less truly and unceasingly, the completion and perfection of the Absolute Life.

[1] *Nachgelassene Werke*, III., pp. 45, 114, etc.

Fichte prepared the way for Hegel's *Logic* by his analysis of the dialectic movement of self-consciousness and for the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* by his doctrine of the five stages of individual and racial consciousness. But in his own conception of the movement of self-consciousness he failed to get beyond the Spinozistic principle that all determination is limitation, and therefore involves finitude. He cannot conceive *any* self-consciousness as arising without an external *limit* or check which the *I* strikes against and recoils from, and so kindles into self-consciousness. He ceaselessly pursues the *limit* and tries to get it into his Absolute. But he only succeeds in so doing by expelling self-consciousness from the Absolute. He cannot avoid doing this, for there clings to his thinking the ancient prejudice of the abstract reason that the Absolute and Infinite must be abstract and indeterminate if it is to be all-inclusive and self-sufficient, and of course self-consciousness must be determinate. Again and again, in trying to conceive the unity of God in relation to the manifoldness of finite *I*'s, Fichte speaks of the Absolute as going out of itself into the finite individuals in order to return into its own being. In his later writings, indeed, he emphasizes the repose of the Absolute or God in his own nature. But the return of the Divine Being from the multiplicity of his finite manifestations is no true return, and has no unity unless there is in

God a self-consciousness which knows and feels itself as such in relation to finite individuals. The ceaseless play of the Absolute Intelligence in its outgoing into the universe of free men is meaningless, and the existence of such a universe is meaningless, too, unless there is in God an immediate and absolute consciousness of himself as a unity in relation to the manifold forms of his manifestation. Fichte's own strong sense of the ethical significance of the universe of moral selves and his conception of love as the meeting-point of man and God involve necessarily the self-consciousness of God in himself. There is no real unity in the universe outside the unity of the Divine Consciousness. Fichte failed to see that self-consciousness is essentially a unity that differentiates itself, but does not lose itself in these differences. On the contrary, it maintains and expresses in differences, in a multiplicity of finite selves, the concrete fulness of its own life. This is precisely the sort of unity that Fichte has in mind in his later writings, but he does not see clearly in what way it is shadowed forth in consciousness. It is true that this unity is not felt by ourselves in all its fulness. It remains an ideal, but an ideal which is implicated in every fibre of the actual life of the human self.

From the whole of Fichte's writings there stands out clearly the firm, unfaltering conviction that outside the world of spirits there is nothing real.

His ethical idealism develops into a mysticism which yet retains the ethical vigor and elevation that breathed through his earlier utterances. His *unio mystica* is the immanent ideal of the ethical life. The universe is a system of moral beings whose vocation is to express in individual form the transcendent Divine Life which is the immanent process of their own realization of blessedness. In his ethical idealism Fichte is the true successor of Kant. In his grasp on the immanency of the Divine Life in the ethical striving of humanity he goes beyond his master. In his union of moralism and mysticism Fichte has made a permanent contribution to the philosophy of religion, and his thought will live on in the metaphysics of the future.

## CHAPTER II.

### HEGEL'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

### 1. *Introductory General Notions.*

Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* begins with the thought of God, which is the result, he says, of the other parts of his philosophy. But God is at the same time the Prius that eternally manifests itself. He is the result only in the sense of being the goal of philosophy. There are three stages in the movement of philosophy towards truth: first, the logical, or stage of pure thinking; second, nature; third, finite spirit. From finite spirit we move upward to God, who is the last result of philosophy. "The result is the absolute truth." "The last becomes the first." [1]

God is thus at once the presupposition and the goal of all Hegel's thinking. "A reason-derived knowledge of God is the highest problem of philosophy." [2] God is for him the self-conditioning, self-centred totality of all that is, *i.e.*, the ultimate unity. But philosophy must not remain

[1] *Werke*, XI., p. 48. N.B.—The references are to the *Philosophie der Religion* in the first edition (Berlin, 1883–4).

[2] Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 73.

standing with the bare assertion that God is the ultimate unity. It must specify (*bestimmen*) this unity and exhibit it as a concrete system of differences. "Philosophy knows God essentially as concrete, spiritual, real universality, that is not grudging but communicates himself." [1] The different parts of Hegel's system are expositions of different aspects of God's existence. Taken together, they exhibit the development in that process of concretion or specification (*Bestimmung*) which it is the task of philosophy to show forth, as Hegel is always telling us.

Logic, the first part of the philosophy, is a criticism of the categories by which men interpret reality.[2] Truth, for Hegel, is not the correspondence of thought with external reality. He has no interest in, and would condemn as utterly fruitless, the attempt to determine the objective validity of thought. Truth for him is "the agreement of a thought-content with itself," [3] *i.e.*, self-consistency. This definition must constantly be borne in mind, inasmuch as the entire work of the *Logic* consists in passing in review the ascending series of categories in the light of which men interpret reality. Each succeeding category is found inadequate, because it does not square at all points with the idea of self-consistency. A given form of conceiving reality can define itself only in

[1] *Werke*, XII., pp. 287, 447.

[2] Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–59.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

relation to other forms which differ from it. The full development of their differences seem to set these forms of thought in mutual contradiction; but, on further consideration, they turn out to be complementary aspects of a more comprehensive unity of thought. For example, the Notion of Being is defined by reference to its opposite—Becoming. These notions seem absolutely incompatible. But in *determinate* Being, *i.e.*, in definite existence, we have Being which has come to be somewhat and is becoming something else. Under the three heads of "Being," "Essence," and "Notion" the inevitable movement of thought is traced from the most abstract to the most concrete conception of things. Each category bears within itself the seeds of its own decay, and in the dialectic process, which pervades the life of thought as well as the life of nature, it merges itself into a more comprehensive category. When the ultimate category of the "Notion" is reached, into it all the lower categories are received, and by it they are fulfilled. The *Logic* is an immanent criticism of categories.[1]

But these categories are not to be, for a moment, conceived as hanging in the air or merely going on in the philosopher's head. They reflect in the mirror of pure thought the true nature of the objective world. If all the categories up to the final *Idea* of the *Notion* have to deny them-

[1] A. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 91.

selves and be absorbed by their own children this is so precisely because in the world of actuality everything finite is passing away, is suffering death and rebirth in a higher form. The *Idea* which is the end of the *Notion's* life does not so pass away. It was from the beginning; without the Idea was not anything made that was made. The Hegelian *Logic* aims to reflect the ebb and flow of cosmic and human evolution—to paint in the gray colors of thought's conceptions all the struggle and the passion of historic humanity.

Inasmuch as men have always used the highest categories of their thinking to interpret and give unity to their experience, logic may be regarded as the history of the different thought-forms in which men have given expression to their conceptions of that ultimate reality which supplies the unity of experience, *i.e.*, God. "Logic is metaphysical theology, which considers the evolution of the idea of God in the ether of pure thought."[1] Hegel's philosophy is preëminently a philosophy based on experience. But experience means for him chiefly the experience of the race in thinking out the world problem. He seeks his material chiefly in the history of human thought. Categories are objective thoughts,[2] *i.e.*, thoughts regarded as objectively true, as universally valid. So Hegel says: "Logic . . . therefore coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 366. [2] Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

held in thoughts—thought accredited able to express the essential reality of things." [1]

The *Logic* is a *genetic* history of Metaphysics. Its work is to bring to light the ground thoughts of metaphysics, and to show their evolution. It has been said, "There is no evolution possible of a fact from a conception." [2] There is possible, however, an evolution in the conception of a fact. The Hegelian *Logic* is, I take it, the evolution of the conceptions of isolated facts into their ultimate implication—the conception of God. Hegel thinks that the conception of God is attained in logical science as the Absolute Idea—the Notion or Totality of Being comprehending itself. He says that the *Logic* sets forth the self-movement of the Absolute Idea as the original Word or Self-expression. He believes that in the *Logic* he is tracing the actual course of God's manifestation of himself through human thought about him. Hegel has no doubt that he has discovered, and is setting forth, the process by which the Absolute manifests itself in the appearances of our time and space world. The *absolute* method which is *his* method gets at the very heart of the object, he would say. The absolute method, being the immanent principle and soul of its object, develops the qualities of that object out of the object itself. This method Hegel unhesitatingly applied to the ultimate Object. The dialectic of thought is for

[1] Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 45. [2] Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

him the dialectic of Being. The final category is the idea of God regarded in the light of pure thought. It is the Notion (*Begriff*), or End. Hegel's "Notion" corresponds to the Final Cause of Aristotle, in which are included both the efficient and the formal cause. "In the End the Notion has entered on free existence and has a being of its own by means of the negation of immediate objectivity." [1] The category of End takes up into itself mechanism and chemism as subordinate categories. The End is not merely blind causation like the efficient cause.[2] In having a being of its own, End has properly subjectivity and is really self-consciousness abstractly considered. As subjective, End implies a matter external to itself on which it works. We have so far only external design. This is superseded in the notion of inner design, of reason immanent in the world.[3] The true End is the unity of the subjective and objective.[4] The End exists and is active in the world. It constitutes the world. Individual existences have their being only in the universal End. "The Good, the absolutely Good is eternally accomplishing itself in the world." [5] The End as actual is the Idea. "The Idea may be called Reason (and this is the proper philosophical significance of 'reason'), subject-object, the unity of the ideal and the real, of the finite and

[1] Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 343. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 344.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 345. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 351. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

the infinite, of soul and body,"[1] etc. The Idea is a process which is ever splitting itself into differences, but always preserves its relation to self. Hegel seeks to throw forth on the philosophical screen a vivid picture of the Absolute at work, weaving a world of men and things in the "loom of time." The first form of the Idea is life. Life is the Idea existing in the world as external and immediately given. From life we rise to Cognition. Here the subjective Idea stands over against the objective world that is given. In the process of Cognition[2] the subjective Idea starts out with faith in the rationality of the objective world and seeks to know it, *i.e.*, to realize its own unity with the objective. But the subjective Idea does not merely seek to *know* the objective world. It also seeks to realize its own ideals in the objective world.[3] This is the effort of will toward the Good. The subjective never quite succeeds in bending the objective to its purposes, and it is forced to fall back on the faith "that the good is radically and really achieved in the world."[4] This faith is the speculative or absolute Idea. Its object is the "Idea as such,"[5] and for it the objective is Idea. The Absolute Idea is the self-identity which contains the whole system of concrete things and persons as integral parts of itself.

[1] Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 355.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 363.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 371.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 373.
[5] *Ibid.*

It is the absolutely Good and absolutely True. It is not a mere abstract universal, but is rather the all-embracing, self-centred unity of things. The Universal realizes itself by determining itself to be the Absolute Individual, the Absolute Subject. Every step that the Absolute Idea takes in going beyond itself is at the same time a reflection into itself, an enrichment of self. The greater extension brings the higher intension. The highest, most acute point in the development is pure Personality, or absolute Subjectivity. This, through the completion of the absolute dialectic which is its own nature in expression, grasps and holds all in itself, and is conscious of its own unity amidst all the changing details of its world. We have reached the notion of God. Hegel uses the same phrase, "the Absolute Idea," to represent both our thought and the object of that thought. This double use has led to the charge that Hegel attempted to construct the real world out of abstract thought. The double use is in a measure justifiable, since the Absolute Idea as the ultimate existence is really the divine self-consciousness. From Hegel's point of view, it is the divine in us that enables us to grasp the Idea. Hegel analyzes the notion of self-consciousness and puts it forward with courageous anthropomorphism as the ultimate explanation of the universe.[1] He admits no dualism in the realm of consciousness.

[1] See Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel*, I., p. 239.

Underneath his double use of the word "Idea" lies the assumption that thought can fathom the depths of the divine activity in the world. Taken by itself this phraseology would support the view that God has no existence outside the process of human thought, and that he reaches self-consciousness only in the highest forms of human consciousness. We shall discuss later in what sense this is true of Hegel's thought.

But the Idea is the reverse of *abstract* thought. It is the most concrete reality. It is the τέλος. "As the beginning was the universal, so the result is the individual concrete subject." "The universal is only a moment in the Notion." The concrete Idea is not an abstraction. It is rather the complete reality. It is this individual and comprehensive character of the Absolute Idea which enables us to see that it is much more than mere thought. The Idea takes up into itself all the wealth of the subjective and the objective worlds. It holds together in one unity all the contradictions of human thought and passion. The Absolute Idea is not less but more than the rich and thronging world of human experience. It is all this because it is the one Absolute Individual. To forget this is to overlook what lies at the heart of Hegel's thinking.

Until the Idea is reached in the *Logic*, we have untrue categories. The Idea alone is true, *i.e.*, adequate to the reality, because itself the most

concrete reality. It is the unity of thinking and being, in which both are not merged in a higher existence, but thinking is regarded as the highest form of being, embracing all lower forms. The Idea is the realized Notion (*Begriff*). The realized Notion is the complete individual. "The Notion is not merely soul, but rather free subjective Notion that exists for itself and therefore has personality—the practical objective Notion, determined for itself, that as person is impenetrable atomic subjectivity—that is equally not exclusive Individuality, but rather is for itself Universality and Knowledge, and in its Other has its own objectivity for object."[1] The highest point reached by the dialectic method is the richest and most concrete. It includes in itself all the other stages of the dialectic movement, and thus becomes pure subjectivity or personality.

In the *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Philosophy of Spirit* are presented the three stages of the dialectic movement of Hegel's philosophy. The *Logic* lays the groundwork in pure thought. The other works fill in the details. In the final stage we reach absolute personality or absolute spirit, which is the most concrete fact, for it includes all the other facts. The Absolute Spirit is the Whole and the True. It is the ultimate

[1] *Werke*, V., p. 318. N. B.—The references are to the *Logik*, in the second edition (Berlin, 1841).

being upon which all finite being depends for its existence.

It has been thought that Hegel, in making a passage from the Absolute Idea of the *Logic* to nature, attempted to construct the real world out of abstract thought. It seems to me that what he really tries to do is to preserve the absolute coherence of his system, by showing that the inner necessity of the Idea demands that the Idea be discovered in nature. This was a presupposition of the dialectic method. If the latter, in very truth, reflects reality, then the movement of thought must be shown to repeat itself in concrete form in the world of nature. If nature be not an irreducible and wholly refractory element in the totality of the Divine Idea, then it must be shown how the Idea *becomes* nature. If nature were not the free, because self-determined, expression of the Idea, then from nature we should never be able to get back to the unity and repose of the Divine Idea in the perfection of its wholeness. Nature would be an unreconciled factor in the universe. So the transition from Logic to Nature is essential, not only to the dialectic movement of the philosopher's thought, but to the unity of the Absolute Idea in the eternity of its movement. The starting-point for interpreting the natural world is the Idea as end, concrete totality,[1] subjectivity which includes objectivity. In its appli-

[1] Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

cation to the spheres of nature and spirit the Idea seems to receive more concrete determinations than it receives in the *Logic*. Nevertheless the Idea in its most concrete form as Absolute Spirit has been the presupposition throughout. In the *Philosophy of Religion*, God appears as spirit, and nature is his self-externalization. Although Hegel does not construct the world out of abstract thought, he does deprive it of independent existence. It is but an aspect of the life of the Absolute Spirit. This brings us to the consideration of the nature of God as set forth in the *Philosophy of Religion*.

### 2. *The Full Expression of Hegel's Conception of God in the "Philosophy of Religion."*

Hegel criticises the theology of the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) very sharply, on the ground that it empties the thought of God of all content and makes him a mere unknown being beyond the world.[1] The task of philosophy, he says, is to *know* God. "Philosophy has the end to know the truth, to know God, for he is absolute truth, and in contrast to God and his explication, nothing else is worth the trouble of knowing."[2] It knows "God essentially as concrete, spiritual, real Universality."[3]

The Enlightenment does not get beyond the ab-

[1] *Werke*, XII., pp. 280–1. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 287. [3] *Ibid.*

stract categories of the understanding (*Verstand*). The understanding makes distinctions, such as finite and infinite, absolute and relative, and then lets these distinctions harden into oppositions. He criticises Jacobi's opposition of Cognition (*Erkennen*), as discursive and finite, to the immediate knowledge (*unmittelbare Wissen*) of God. Immediate knowledge tells us only *that* God is, not *what* he is.[1] But if God is not an empty Being beyond the stars, he must be present in the communion of human spirits, and, in his relation to these, he is the One Spirit who pervades reality and thought. Hence there can be no final separation between our immediate consciousness of him and our mediated knowledge of reality.[2] The oppositions of mediated thought are overcome from the standpoint of reason (*Vernunft*).[3] When we look with the eye of reason we perceive that the infinite includes the finite. God is the Absolute Idea, a circle that returns upon itself, not a straight line projected indefinitely. He contains the world of nature and finite spirits as differences within himself. God is to be conceived as the unity of all that is. He is the universe, the "concrete totality." God is the absolutely necessary being in relation to whom contingent things have no being.

The nature of this being must be further determined. To say simply that God is the identity of all that is, is to make him a mere universal, a

[1] *Werke*, XI., p. 45. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 48. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 102–57.

substance.[1] We must not rest satisfied with a bare identity. On the other hand, we must define God in his objectivity or universality. To say with Schleiermacher that God is known immediately in feeling is true but trivial.[2] This immediate consciousness of God must be mediated. To say that he is known *only* in feeling is to reduce him to a mere subjective experience of the empirical individual. When the empirical self has the higher religious feelings of repentance, sorrow, thankfulness, and, finally, love, it reaches the consciousness of identity with the universal.[3] But this progress of feeling towards universality is produced not by feeling itself, but by the rationality of its content.[4] Feeling in itself is mere particularity. It is the private and transient state of the mere empirical self.[4] From it no definition of God can be reached.

With a world of concrete differences on his hands, with finite nature and finite spirits before him, Hegel seeks for a definition of the Absolute which will allow it to take up all these differences into itself and still maintain its own unity. He finds the principle he seeks in self-consciousness or spirit. All things become moments of the Divine Self-consciousness, constituent elements of the Absolute Spirit. "God is spirit, the absolute spirit, the eternal, simple essential spirit that exists with

[1] *Werke*, XI., pp. 53, 56, etc.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 125 ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

itself." "It belongs to God to distinguish himself from himself, to be object to himself, but in this distinction to be absolutely identical with himself —Spirit." [1] Spirit is spirit only as manifesting itself. "Spirit that does not appear is not." [2] "God is a living God who is real and active." [3] "A God who does not manifest himself is an abstraction." [4] It is the very nature of God to manifest himself.[5] The finite worlds of nature and spirit are manifestations of him,[6] and he is the concrete totality of these manifestations.[7] God is the beginning and the end of the world-process. The logical Idea is the potential being of God, the abysmal nature from which all things proceed. But the primal ground of things never for an instant remains a dark abyss. From it eternally proceeds a world which is its objectified expression, and in relation to which God is spirit, is self-conscious subject. Nature, finite spirit, the entire world of consciousness, intelligence and will are embodiments of the divine Idea. But they are so far prodigal sons. In religion do these errant children first become reconciled with the Divine Father. It is the business of the philosophy of religion to show how this reconciliation is accomplished.[8]

In immediate knowledge or faith, God is object

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 151.
[2] *Ibid.*, XI., p. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[7] *Ibid.*, XII., pp. 189–90.
[8] *Ibid.*, XI., p. 27 ff.

for the finite spirit.[1] For faith he is not a mere totality, but rather a being to whom the finite spirit stands in relation.[1] God appears as Object in the form of representation (*Vorstellung*).[2] It is the task of philosophy to exhibit in the form of reason that which exists in the common mind in the form of representation. Philosophy and common-sense correspond in content; they differ only in their manner of conceiving the same fact.[3] We have the logical conception of God as unity, as totality of the finite, as manifesting himself in the finite world. We have also the religious representation of him as objective to the finite spirit. These two views of God must be unified and exhibited as equally necessary aspects of God's being. This is done in a representational (*vorstellende*) pictorial fashion in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. "The Trinity is the determination of God as Spirit. Spirit without this determination is an empty word."[4]

The three aspects of God's being are treated respectively under "the realm of the Father," "the realm of the Son," "the realm of the Spirit." God is the absolute eternal Idea who exists under these aspects. The absolute Idea[5] is, in the first place, God in and for himself, in his eternity, before the creation of the world, beyond the world. In

[1] *Werke*, XI., pp. 63–64 ff.

[2] The content or object is God, who is present at first in the form of inner intuition (*Anschauung*).

[3] *Werke*, XI., pp. 14–15 ff. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 22. [5] *Ibid.*, XII., p. 177.

the second place it is the creation of the world. This created world, this other being, divides itself into two parts, physical nature and finite spirit. Created being at first appears as external to God, as having existence independent of him. God reconciles it with himself, and we have, in the third place, the process of reconciliation. In this process the spirit, which as finite was cut off from the divine Spirit, returns to unity with the divine. The third aspect of God's being is the first enriched by union of the second with it. These three aspects are not external differences, but differentiations of one individual. The one spirit is regarded in these three forms or elements.[1] Each element involves the other two.[2] Any one element by itself is an abstraction and realizes its true being only through the other elements.

The first element is spaceless and timeless. It is God in his self-existence. It is the unity which preserves its oneness amidst change. In the second element or aspect, God enters the world of space and time, the world of nature and the human spirit. It is God's manifestation of himself in space and time. The first step in the dialectic of the divine life is the *non-temporal* act by which from the abysmal depths of his being God eternally brings forth a world of finite things and finite spirits.

[1] *Werke*, XII., pp. 177–9.

[2] The Idea is the divine self-revelation in these three forms. (*Ibid*, p. 179.)

The everlasting process of the world of experience is a dialectic movement of birth and death and rebirth. But the process is upward. It is pervaded by the Divine Idea, impelled by an *End* that is, while yet the goal, forever realized, and therefore can never faint or grow weary. The movement of the world is a return to the Divine Father. But this return can be real only if the Father has forever dwelt in the world. That he has so dwelt is the insight of religion. The full consciousness of his immanence is the realization of the absolute unity of man and God. Other religions strive for this. Christianity attains it in its doctrine of the God-Man. But the perfect unity of God and man is attainable only if the Father has been ever with man, bearing the burden and heat of man's life on earth and sharing in all the passion of his history. To pain and struggle and death in man corresponds the principle of negativity in God. He negates himself that there may be a world, and in this world which is struggling to overcome negation he dwells forever. The principle of negativity or death is an essential moment in the life of God. In the suffering and death of the God-Man is manifested the utter immanence of God in the world, his invincible presence in the dialectic of history. In the life and death of Jesus Christ there was presented at a particular point in time the full representation of the timeless life of God.[1]

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 287 ff.

But negation is not the last word. Death is followed by resurrection. Negation is itself negatived. The circle completes itself. The element of negativity is taken up into the positive element, which is Spirit. The *Spirit* which is present in the community is the realm of the reconciliation of the finite world to God. It is God as totality. The last becomes the first. The Spirit is the Father, and man, in whom the spirit is become conscious, is a mediate element or moment in the Divine Life.[1] The fulfilment of life is the perfection of subjectivity.[2] In nature God is present only in an external fashion. Man, on the contrary, rises to the consciousness of his unity with God and of the presence of the divine life in himself.[3] In the third sphere, that of the Spirit, we have God, nature, and man comprehended in their unity. God is the "concrete universal" which sets up a difference that is nevertheless "only ideal and is immediately abolished."[4] As Spirit he is the perfect Individuality which arises by the return of the *Particular* (nature and finite spirit) to the bosom of the Universal Father. The whole process, in which the Father sends out of his own depths the world of things and men only to recall them to himself, is the divine *History*.[5] In its wholeness this divine history is timeless. The three aspects

[1] *Werke*, XII., pp. 240, 312.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 284, 322.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 267–8.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 190.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

of it can be characterized in relation to the forms of human experience. Viewed in relation to human consciousness in general, the first aspect is the element of pure thought, the second that of representation (*Vorstellung*), and the third is subjectivity as such. The latter in its unanalyzed wholeness is soul, heart, or feeling, but when it knows itself it is thinking Reason.

Defined in relation to space, the three phases of the divine history are respectively *outside* the world, *within* the world, and *in* the spirit of the *church*, which is at once planted in space and reaches to the spaceless Heaven of the Father. Defined in relation to time, the three phases are respectively—God as the eternal Idea, timeless in reference to a world of change; God as having appeared in the past, as the properly historical manifestation in the earthly sense; and, thirdly, God as present in the communion of the church. The latter is limited. It must be reconciled with the timeless Spirit. "The Spirit which disperses itself into finite flashes of light in the individual consciousness must again gather itself together out of this finitude." "Out of the fermentation of finitude, as it transmutes itself into foam, there rises the exhalation of spirit." [1]

We have in the *Philosophy of Religion* the fuller development of the Absolute Idea, with which the *Logic* culminates, expressed in terms of religious

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 330.

thinking. In neither work is God a mere category. It is plain that the Absolute Idea, which is the unity that returns to itself from difference, or, to express the same thought differently, the self that maintains itself amid change, is identical with God as unfolded in the *Philosophy of Religion*. God is the ground thought of Hegel's system. But Hegel tells us that the Absolute Idea does not mean quite the same as God.[1] The term "God" carries here the meaning that it has for finite spirits contemplating him. It refers to God as he is present in religious devotion. God is object to man's faith in the form of representation (*Vorstellung*). Religion always presents God in the form of representation. As he exists in religion, God is wholly objective in relation to man, hence not the Absolute. The Absolute Idea is the comprehensive unity of God and man. Nevertheless the Absolute Idea is God speculatively considered. As a mere object to man's thought, God would be a finite individual entering into relation with other finite individuals. His individual character would thus be defective. God is not merely objective to man. Man has his being in God. God is at once the source from which the finite individual springs, and the ground of the relation through which, in its dependence, the finite individual reaches out to, and realizes itself in, the absolute individual. Finite selves are true

[1] *Werke*, XI., p. 16.

only because they belong to the infinite self. Therefore, metaphysically, God and the Absolute are one. We have seen above that God, metaphysically regarded, is the unity which differentiates itself into nature and man, and yet remains identical with itself. When man sees himself and nature as contained in this unity, and feels himself to be at one with the unity, he has reached absolute knowledge. He has attained the metaphysical determination of God. He lives in the kingdom of the spirit.

What is the relation of God as the central unity to his content, the world-process? God as self-related unity is not in time or in space, and yet the process of the world is an essential element of God's being. Hegel would say that the central unity and the world-process are both abstractions. Therefore it is fruitless to talk about their relations. God is both. They seem to contradict each other, but this apparent contradiction is a pulse of the divine Life.

The meaning of the world-process is further developed in the *Philosophy of History*. "The destiny of the spiritual world, and—since this is the substantial world, while the physical remains subordinate to it, or, in the language of speculation, has no truth as against the spiritual—the final cause of the world at large we allege to be the consciousness of its own freedom on the part of the spirit and *ipso facto* the reality of that free-

dom."[1] Freedom is the Idea of Spirit. In the development of the world this freedom is at first implicit and unactualized. All the struggles of nations and individuals are stepping-stones by which men rise to freedom. Men began with the belief that one man only was free, the king, and have risen to the belief that all men are free.

Hegel says that the Spirit realizes itself in time and that the idea of spirit is the end of history. "Spirit" is used here in the generic sense. The Absolute Spirit realizes itself in history, but as eternal; it is at every moment completely real. It does not wait until the end of time to attain fruition. History, Hegel says, is the theatre of the unceasing strife and reconciliation of the Absolute Spirit and the finite individual. The former continually overrules the purposes of men in order that they may realize their true destiny—freedom. God is immanent in the world, directs the world's history towards the development of freedom. God himself does not develop. Men are the subjects of historical development. The divine Idea realizes its purpose in history through the realization of human freedom. The concrete individuals have a place, not in themselves, but as realizing the divine purpose. On the other hand, the divine Idea has no meaning apart from the concrete individuals in which it finds expression.

It has been asserted that in the consideration

[1] *Philosophy of History*, p. 20 (translated by Sibree).

of the time-process of the finite world God as completed self-consciousness disappears, and that he appears only as subject of the historical development. It is true that, in the specific consideration of the time-process, which is one aspect of God, the aspect of him as eternally complete reality does not come forward prominently. Hegel would say that this abstraction is necessary for the purposes of exposition, but that it is not true. The truth is that eternity and the time-process belong together. God is not a mere subject of the historical development, yet the historical development is necessary to his selfhood. For God is the unity of all that is. The objection is made, however, that Hegel makes no passage from the notion of God as eternal, self-related unity to the facts of the finite world.[1] Here, again, Hegel would answer that only the abstract understanding would ask for such a passage, and that the demand is fruitless. His system is an attempt to give unity to the facts of the time and space world. The facts by their incompleteness demand the unity, and they depend upon that unity for their existence. By his construction of the Trinity, Hegel seeks to provide a place for the facts of the finite world in his conception of God. The phrases drawn from the conception of the Trinity are used in a metaphorical way. The three spheres of Father, Son, and Spirit express the three mo-

[1] By A. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, Lecture 6.

ments in the relation of the eternal and the time-process. God as eternally complete is the eternal-in-itself, being-in-itself. But being-in-itself could never exist by itself. God must manifest himself in the finite world. The eternal must appear in the time-process. This is being-for-self. But by itself being-for-self, that is, being which goes outside itself, is unreal. The eternal and the temporal must exist together. This existence together, being in and for self, the unity of the Father and the Son, of God and the World, exists in the realm of the Spirit. The Spirit is the sphere of reason, or, as we might put it, of constructive imagination that unites and holds together contradictions. In the Spirit we see God, nature, and ourselves in unity. The third element returns to the first. We recognize ourselves as contained in God.

But *how* are we to *think* together an eternal Unity and the flux of becoming? If change is an essential moment in existence and God in himself does not change, what does change mean in relation to him? How can God's history be timeless if man's history, which is for himself real and breathing with passion, has any significance for God? If man's life is an element in the divine Life, then the latter, sharing as it does in the time-process of the world, suffers imperfection. Does not imperfection then become a moment in the divine Life? Does it not mar the divine perfection? Does it not disturb the eternal repose

of God? Hegel's answer to the first of these questions is yes! to the other two, no! Hegel holds firmly to the repose of perfection and to the restlessness of imperfection as necessary and complementary aspects of experience.

The experience of the real flux of events presses too insistently on the philosopher to permit of his taking refuge in a merely static world. On the other hand, the instinct of thought, the thirst for completeness impels him to seek a unity. In what way shall he best express this unity that persists amidst change as the permanent law of change? How shall he conceive the perfect being without denying the progress of the imperfect world? In self-consciousness, which is ever in movement but retains its self-identity, which proceeds outward and gathers the concrete details of the world into itself, which absorbs and assimilates what at first seems external to it, Hegel finds the principle which best enables him to adumbrate the nature of the totality of things—God. He analyzes with keen insight the Self which, always reaching beyond itself and ever involved in contradictions, yet never loses itself and never succumbs to these contradictions. He applies the principle of selfhood to all the "tangled facts of experience."

The all-essential quality of self or spirit is, for Hegel, its inevitable tendency to find its own life in its *other*. The richness and perfection of selfhood are proportionate to the degree in which it

finds itself in that apparent *other* which is nevertheless only the wealth of its own potential being projected outward. The sterner the struggle the greater the victory. The deepest pain gives fullest joy. Spirit can comprehend itself only in infinite opposition.[1] So the Eternal Spirit realizes itself only through negation of self. The principle of negativity is woven into the very texture of being. Time, Space, Evil, Imperfection, are but forms of appearance of this principle of negativity. Yes! through it only truth and freedom, the highest attributes of Spirit, themselves come to be.[2] The dialectic process is a never-ceasing moment of life. "He that loseth his life shall save it."

Hegel's so-called followers of the Left have interpreted his conception of God as that of an impersonal Absolute which develops itself in the world-process, comes to consciousness first in man, and reaches perfection only in the greatest man. If the *Logic* only were in evidence, the interpretation might be justifiable. Such passages as: "Spirit, in so far as it is the Spirit of God, is not a Spirit beyond the stars," "God is present everywhere and in all spirits,"[3] have been interpreted in this way. What these passages actually testify to is a belief in God's living presence in the world. To say that "man feels and knows God in himself"[4] is not to say that God has no conscious

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 212.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[3] *Ibid.*, XI., p. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

existence apart from this individual feeling. The passage which would give strongest support to the view taken by the Hegelians of the Left is perhaps this: "Religion is knowledge by the Divine Spirit of itself through the mediation of finite spirit."[1] This statement is perfectly consistent with the idea of God as objective to every man. Finite spirit is an integral part of God's being. Man is God as "other." But God does not lose his identity in this difference. "Spirit is spirit *for* itself."[2] "We say God produces eternally his son (the world). God distinguishes himself from himself, . . . we must know well that God is this whole act. He is the beginning, the end, and the totality."[3] Nevertheless the process is nothing but a play of self-conservation, self-assertion.[4] God can be said to be conscious of himself in the religious man since he is immanent in man, and in religion this divine immanence comes to consciousness. God knows himself in man only as man knows himself in God. The divine immanence is not a dead fixture, but a living spiritual process. Man is indeed essential to God's being. The Hegelians of the Left emphasize this aspect of the system and neglect entirely the aspect in which God is regarded as eternally completed self-consciousness.

That God could never exist as conscious spirit

[1] *Werke*, XI., p. 129.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[3] *Ibid.*, XII., p. 185.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

without a world as objective to his thought is a legitimate inference from Hegel's system. But the further inference that therefore God had no conscious existence before the development of man on this planet is wholly unwarranted. In his self-diremption into the object of his own consciousness God is as truly eternal as in the abysmal depths of the Idea which is the father of all things. According to Hegel there was no time when a world did not exist for the divine thought. The principle of negativity is an eternal attribute of the divine Nature. Hence it is irrelevant to Hegel's system to speak of a point in time when God did not exist in the fulness of being. It is equally irrelevant to speak of a time when the world, considered as a moment in the divine Life, began to be. Spirit is the logical *prius* of the whole theory, but Spirit defines itself through all eternity in a system of differences.

Hegel is sometimes criticised for using the word "spirit" without qualification "to designate both God and man." He used the word in this way because with him "spirit" was the meeting-point of the divine and the human. But "spirit" is no abstraction. Hegel was keenly conscious of the necessity of doing justice to the concrete detail with which the world confronts philosophy. His theory of the concrete universal, *i.e.*, the *individual*, is an attempt to meet the difficulty. For Hegel the individual is the real, but there is only

one real individual, namely, God. In the *Philosophy of Religion* God is described in the realm of the Spirit as the complete unity which takes up the other two aspects into itself. "This third realm is the Idea in its determination of individuality." [1] Some critics think that the tendency of Hegel's thought is to make God an impersonal unity. Hegel's incessant naming of God as Idea lends color to this view. His vice is over-intellectualism. But an impersonal Absolute would leave no place for religion, and Hegel maintains in his system the reality of religion. He tells us that the *Philosophy of Religion* has the task to convert what is present pictorially to the mind of the common man into terms of thought.[2] He says that the opposition of believing and knowing is a false one. In believing or immediate knowing (*unmittelbares Wissen*) there is present in the form of feeling what is present in cognizing (*Erkennen*)[3] in the form of thought. In his lectures on the proofs for God's existence, he seeks, not to show that these proofs are adequate, but that they are means by which the human spirit elevates itself to God.[4] He talks quite in the Pauline vein of "the witness of the spirit to the spirit in man's knowing God." The relation of man to God is "the relation of spirit to spirit." [5] At the conclusion of the *Philosophy of Religion* he tells us that the "end of these

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 257 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, XI., pp. 14–5.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 64 ff. [4] *Ibid.*, XII., p. 301. [5] *Ibid.*, XI., p. 60.

lectures is to reconcile science and religion." [1] His designation of God as Idea is only the logical aspect of his theory of God. In his works dealing with the concrete world, God is called the Absolute Spirit. We have seen that God is essentially individuality, and that Hegel regards personality as the richest and most concrete being, including all differences in itself. Hegel characterizes the Absolute Idea and Personality in similar terms. The Absolute Idea contains in itself as essential moments the facts of the finite world. But in the finite world finite spirits are the true realities over against material things. God is the Absolute Spirit, the supreme self in whom finite spirits live and move and have their being. If God is not personal as we know personality, it is because he is super-personal. In terms of feeling God may be defined as Love—as a play of differentiation, together with the feeling of the unity which dwells in the differences.

The question has been raised as to whether Hegel's God is not better described as a society than as a single person.[2] Now, Hegel's God is certainly not an individual spirit existing in single blessedness apart from all the contents of his universe. He therefore is not a single person in the sense in which we are individuals.[3] But he *is* for-

[1] *Werke*, XII., p. 288.
[2] By Mr. McTaggart, *Mind*, N. S., VI., p. 575.
[3] *Werke*, XI., p. 66.

ever the *unity* of the society of individual finite spirits. In him the scattered rays of light which issue from the multitude of finite selves converge to a single point—to the unstained purity and translucency of an absolute self-consciousness. God, then, is the unity of spirits. The society of finite individuals exists as the object of his thought. Without them his Life would be blind. Without him they would be chaos and anarchy and naught.

In brief, God, in Hegel's philosophy, is the universal self-consciousness which comprehends within itself all concrete differences, men and things. "God is a Spirit *in* his own concrete differences, of which every finite spirit is one."[1] Man truly knows God when he sees nature and himself as manifestations of God, and recognizes himself as the highest of these manifestations, capable of grasping in thought the whole of which he is a part.[2]

It has been doubted whether there is any place in Hegel's system for individuals. It seems to me that the most insistent note in Hegel's writings is the emphasis on the concrete individual. He never wearies of attacking abstractions like "being" and "substance." The movement of the *Logic* is

[1] Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel*, II., p. 579.

[2] See Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, II., p. 95. After reaching this conclusion I find myself confirmed in it by Professor Pfleiderer.

towards the category of individuality. The *Philosophy of History* makes the freedom of the individual the goal of history. Hegel maintains that the moral, ethical, religious aspect of human individuals is an end in itself. This aspect in individuals is "inherently eternal and divine."[1] But the individuality of the *Logic* is the absolute, all-comprehensive self. The freedom of the human individual exists only where individuality is recognized as having its real and positive existence in the Divine Being.[2] The *Philosophy of Religion* is the presentation of an Absolute Individual, a unity in difference, a self-related system in which infinite individuals are at home when they know themselves as dependent on the whole organism, which is God. To speak in concrete terms, in Hegel's thought man has no existence *in himself*. He is real only as he knows himself in God. To know himself so is man's true destiny. But, on the other hand, God exists only as he knows himself in man. To separate the finite and the infinite individual is to destroy both, according to Hegel. The finite individual is but a moment in the Absolute, but he is none the less essential to the life of the Absolute. But, it must be admitted, Hegel does not recognize the value of individuality in itself. He does not seem to allow any interior life to the human person. He speaks as if the whole nature of the individual were

[1] *Philosophy of History*, pp. 34–5. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

exhausted in his relations to society, church, and state. Uniqueness in a person seems to be, for him, pathological. Corresponding to his disparagement of individuality is Hegel's depreciation of feeling. This, he holds, gets its significance entirely from thought. In itself it is that which we possess in common with the animals.

### 3. *Conclusion.*

Finally, what is to be said of this magnificent attempt to interpret the whole sphere of being in the light of a self-conscious principle of rationality? It must be said, I think, that the attempt fails to accomplish all that was aimed at. The aim of the system is to show that reality is rational through and through. But the contingent detail of experience proves too refractory for Hegel, and he is forced to admit that all the facts cannot be rationalized. In other words, his absolutism breaks down. The vice of this absolutism consists in the tendency to identify the ultimate reality with the time-process.

The key to the relation of the two factors is found in the dialectic method. In his application of this method Hegel has shown that all the forms of finite thought, such as the notion of separate individual things, of mechanical causality conceived as final, etc., are infected with the germs of decay. The knowledge which these finite cate-

gories give is mediated. The process of mediation goes relentlessly forward until the categories of common-sense and scientific thought find repose in the Spirit or Idea. This is the final reality. In Spirit the dialectic movement is transcended. It is true that, inasmuch as the march of common-sense and positive science was the march of the Spirit homeward, the dialectic belongs to the nature of spirit. But in the Absolute Spirit it is set at rest. The process of mediation has ended in a higher immediacy. If Absolute Spirit has been really reached mediation is transcended in the vision of reality, and the dialectic of philosophy has achieved its euthanasia. So long as the dialectic is in process spirit is not present in its perfection. Hegel is fond of calling the dialectic process the thing itself, the very reality of life (*die Sache selbst*). The method, he says, is the soul and substance, the absolute might and highest impulse of reason itself.[1] Now, a movement must be *of something*. A process, however essential to that which proceeds, must be from some state of being through some forms of existence and towards a definite goal. According to Hegel, Spirit is the starting-point, the way, and the terminus of the dialectic process. If this be so, then spirit cannot be adequately expressed as a mere evolutionary *process*. It may absorb the process, but in its own finality it ceases to be a process, and

[1] *Werke*, V., pp. 320, 321, etc.

never was simply that and nothing more. Hegel has to admit this conclusion. Then philosophy, as he conceives it, has not grasped the fulness of Spirit. It has not exhausted the nature of subjectivity. When the process is ended, being and becoming, the infinite and the finite, the absolute and the relative, holiness and imperfection are no longer united by the negativity of the dialectic itself, but in an experience which has ceased to be philosophy, since the dialectic has been set at rest and the power of the negative has been overcome. It does not seem, then, that philosophy can claim superiority of insight to art and religion. For in the latter the struggle of contradiction, which separates spirit from the immediacy of existence, is laid at rest. The knowledge of the Absolute must be an immediate experience which transcends negation, and is not a mere incomplete process of overcoming opposition.

Such an experience perhaps comes only through the higher unity of feeling as an immediate consciousness. Hegel, I have said, depreciated feeling and heaped contempt on the finite individual as a centre of unique feeling. The Hegelian system sought to reveal the warp and woof of the universe, and not merely to show us the pattern of that part of the fabric on which we are figures, but to lift the screen and reveal the Great Weaver sitting at the loom. The fabric woven by Hegel is made up so entirely of intellectual threads that

it fails to represent fairly our world with its complex constituents. The system is one-sidedly intellectualistic. Hegel has marked some of the salient features of self-consciousness or personality. His terms ("in itself," "for itself," "in and for itself") are abstract expressions for the ceaseless movement of the human soul, for our life with its cravings, its desires, and its satisfactions, which seem to follow one another in a never-ending spiral movement. Our mental life is a ceaseless movement of outgoing to the object and return to self. But in his own application of subjectivity as the key to the riddle of existence, he overlooks entirely the place of feeling in the life of the self. He calls the highest form of subjectivity thinking reason, and this he regards as essentially active, that is, as including will. Hegel's thinking reason is cognition-volition. But the impulse of will lies in feeling, and the goal of will is an immediate state of feeling. Cognition can never adequately reflect the life of the subject. It is impersonal. Conation or volition, which arises from the union of cognition and feeling, is the expression of the personal life. Feeling gives unity to both cognition and volition. Hegel did violence to experience by overlooking the significance of feeling and volition in the life of the self. This oversight gives ground for the view that his philosophy is a one-sided system of mere logical idealism, a very inadequate interpretation of the nature

of man. The same oversight is responsible for Hegel's absolutism and his blindness to the uniqueness of personality. But what could one expect from the official philosopher of the Prussian bureaucracy?

Hegel was too sure of the similarity of divine and human thought (particularly his own thought). He carries his anthropomorphism too far. There may be forms and conditions of being of which we have never dreamt. It is useless and mischievous to assume that God exhausts his nature by his manifestations on our planet. We should hesitate before "transferring to God all the features of our own self-consciousness."

Hegel's great quality as a philosopher is his faith in the rationality of the world. He stands as a splendid example, worthy to be followed by all who would ask questions of the universe. He inspires us with the confidence that such questions in some way will be answered. His highest philosophical achievement consists in his insight into the apparent contradictions of life. He sees clearly that the development, not only of thought, but of the spirit of the race and of the individual spirit, is a process of growth into greater fulness and concreteness of life through struggle, suffering and decay. He sees that "Die to live" is everywhere the law of existence. Contradictions belong to the heart of things. But they do not destroy. Nay, rather they build up. They are

complementary factors in the unity of the organic life of man. This is an insight to think and live and work by. But it is the offspring of the whole man, rather than the product of the mere intellect. Hegel gives us a true standpoint from which to view human history, and then vitiates his work by assuming an air of finality and infallibility. We cannot, from the standpoint of scientific knowledge, make dogmatic statements with regard to what lies beyond the world of our experience. But Hegel's insight into the mysteries of the life of the spirit in the individual and the race is profound, and gives a permanent and fruitful point of view from which to appreciate and penetrate the inner meaning of human history and the individual life.

## CHAPTER III.

### SCHLEIERMACHER'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

It should be premised that the word "conception" does not apply to Schleiermacher's doctrine of God in the same technical sense in which it applies to Hegel's doctrine of God. For Hegel the Divine Idea is simply the actualization of the *concept* (*Begriff*). Schleiermacher, on the other hand, regards the concept as a secondary and inadequate expression of the knowledge of God, possessing only an approximate and constantly changing value. He regards the God-consciousness as immediate. The direct organ of the knowledge of God is *feeling*. I hope, in the course of this exposition, to bring out clearly this fundamental divergence of Schleiermacher from Hegel. In the meantime I shall endeavor to follow the course of Schleiermacher's own exposition of his doctrine. Then I shall give some account of his relation to other philosophers, and I shall conclude with a brief estimate of the value of his views.

## 1. *Schleiermacher's Doctrine of God in its Various Aspects.*

### *A. The General Attitude as Expressed in the "Reden über Religion."*

Schleiermacher's deeply gifted and many sided nature early received a profoundly religious impress; first through the training of his mother, and later in the Herrnhutic communities at Niesky and Barby. The Herrnhutic brotherhood was strictly pietistic in tendency, and its organization and methods were wholly directed towards developing in the members a personal relation to the Saviour. The education given at the seminary in Barby was modelled with this design, and the contemporary science and literature of the *Aufklärung* were rigorously excluded. At the community school in Niesky Schleiermacher had, with several friends, studied the Greek and Latin classics, and in spite of the watchfulness of the religious teachers and directors at Barby the eager spirits of these youthful friends found means of further communication with the outside world. They eagerly devoured the writings of Wieland, Goethe, etc., and the result, in Schleiermacher's case, was that at the age of seventeen, after a painful struggle and in the face of the stern displeasure of his father, a minister of the Reformed Church, he broke with the brotherhood and sought

more light at the University of Halle. Here he found himself in 1787 in the full tide of the *Aufklärung*. But Schleiermacher had no interest in the ruling rationalistic theology of Halle, and devoted his attention, for the most part, in these and the succeeding years, to Plato, Aristotle, and Kant, and to current literature.[1]

Notwithstanding the wide gulf that separated Schleiermacher's maturer views from those of the Herrnhutists, we see clearly from his letters that he remained at one with them in his estimate of the independence and supremacy of religion as a unique factor in the life of man.

In his first published work, *Addresses on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*, Schleiermacher speaks as one who has gone through the *Aufklärung*, but who nevertheless remains in possession of a genuine religious experience. The epoch-making character of the *Addresses* consists in their vindication of the uniqueness of religion in full view of the revolution wrought in theology by modern science and philosophy. There were at the time (the first edition of the *Addresses* is dated 1799) two currents of theological rationalism, the one waning, the other waxing. The first was that of the natural theology of the eighteenth century, which regarded the only valid element in religion to be the intellectual assent to the existence of a benevolent Designer of Nature. This doctrine had just been shattered

[1] W. Dilthey, *Leben Schleiermacher's*, pp. 12–86.

to its foundations by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and on its ruins there was being erected the moralistic religion of Kant, which made belief in God simply the necessary postulate of morality and measured the value of religion solely in terms of its relation to moral conduct.

Against these views Schleiermacher asserts that religion is neither an annex of science nor of morality. "True Science is a perfect intuition. True Conduct is self-produced culture and art. *True Religion is sense and taste* for the *Infinite*."[1] The organ of religion is *feeling* (*Gefühl*). This feeling of the Infinite, which constitutes the essence of religion, exists in the immediate unity of self-consciousnes.[2] In this immediate feeling sense and the object are one.[3] The aims of both knowledge and action are to become one with the universe.[4] But these aims are attained only in religion. When we feel the action of the universe upon us[5] this immediate presence of the universe in the feeling of self-consciousness is religion. It is the presence of God in us, the meeting-point of the universal Life with the individual life.[6] The feeling of being an *I* and the pious feeling are one. The God-consciousness and true self-consciousness are mutually involved.

[1] *Reden*, *second* edition of Schwarz's reissue of the original *fourth* edition, p. 37.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 40. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 45. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

This feeling of the oneness of self with the universe might, if not further defined, involve a purely naturalistic or even materialistic pantheism.

But Schleiermacher holds that it is not preëminently with the outer universe that one is united in feeling. It is with the world of humanity, which in all its countless individual forms is the expression of God's life.[1] The feeling for the totality of humanity, as divine in origin, and the reverence for every man, as a unique manifestation of the divine life, constitute religion.[2] Hence the true fountain of religion is history. Religion is historic, and history is the expression of religion. Science and morals are both historic manifestations, but they do not present that unity of self and the universe which religion alone offers. Hence science and morals are both incomplete and dependent on religion.

The unity of self with the universe is realized where the living God is present in feeling, and the conceptual terms in which we are to think of this experience are secondary and dependent on the mental characteristics of the individual. God is directly present in feeling, but not in the concept.[3] When we speak of the relation of God to the individual we think of him as personal. When we think of the limitations of human personality and the contradictions involved in applying this conception to God we think of him as impersonal or,

[1] *Reden,* pp. 65, 67, etc. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 69. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

better, as super-personal. Schleiermacher says that the manner in which a man may think of personality as applied to God will depend on the power of his creative imagination (*Phantasie*) to envisage ideas and on his dialectic conscience.[1] He regards the imagination as the highest power of the human mind, and the concreteness of one's idea of God as the result of the balance established between imagination and the dialectic or critical faculty.

### *B. The Idea of God in the Dialectic.*

Schleiermacher defines Dialectic as the art of philosophizing, the art of grounding knowledge, etc.[2] Dialectic is both Logic and Metaphysic.[3] Logic without Metaphysic is not a science, but a mere technical art. Metaphysic without Logic is capricious and fantastic in its procedure and results.

Knowledge is the unity of Thought and Being, of the Ideal and the Real. The test of truth is the correspondence of thought with a real being.[4] But the unity of thought and being does not lie in an indifference-point outside consciousness.

"Knowledge is grounded in the identity of the thinking subjects."[5] "In our self-consciousness both Thinking and Being are given."[6] Our first step in grounding knowledge, then, will be to find

[1] *Reden*, p. 108, etc. [2] *Dialektik*, p. 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 7; see also *Beilage* C, i.–vi., and D, i–vi.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 386. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 48. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

within the mind the point of contact of thinking and being. Schleiermacher begins his investigation by defining the objective factor. "The object of thinking is the inner impulse from which it sets out, and the being to which thinking, as knowing, shall correspond is not something outside of us, but within—the *inner will-movement.*"[1] I shall return to this doctrine, that the element of objectivity lies in the will, after considering the manner in which Schleiermacher unites the ideal and the real in the subject regarded as knowing. There are two functions of the self—the intellectual and the organic. The former is the source of unity in knowledge, the latter of chaotic manifoldness.[2] The two functions are mutually dependent.[3] Knowledge is the product of their interaction. "Knowledge is that thinking which can be posited in like manner as having issued from the organic or the intellectual function."[4] The intellectual function brings unity into the organic manifoldness under the form of concepts. A given concept expresses a multiplicity of judgments. But inasmuch as judgments are potentially infinite, we can never complete the series of

[1] *Dialektik*, p. 49. "The purposeful will makes actual the potential personality." (See P. Schmidt, *Spinoza und Schleiermacher*, p. 172.)

[2] *Dialektik*, p. 63. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 52. As we shall see, they are at bottom the same. "Organization is the mental life opened towards the outer world." (*Ibid.*, p. 387.)

judgments which would make up the perfect sphere of concepts, and hence we can never attain a *conception* of the absolute unity of Being.[1]

If both factors of knowledge lie *within* the individual subject, the objective validity of knowledge must be dependent on an assumed identity of reason in all subjects. And this is Schleiermacher's position. "The concepts which are contained in the system of knowledge develop in every reason in like manner on occasion of organic affections."[2] The idea of knowledge involves a community of experience and principles, and hence an identity of reason as well as of organization in all.[3]

We have seen that, within the individual subject, there is a mutual relation of ideal and real expressed in the interdependence of the intellectual and organic functions. But the community of the organic activities of different individuals involves a being outside of us. Without a stability of the organic factor in experience judgment would be impossible. Therefore judgment depends on the identity of the organic functions of the subject with a being outside ourselves.[4] In other words, the individual subject does not by itself offer a complete identity of the ideal and the real, and we require a transcendental basis for knowledge in the shape of an over-individual stimulus to organic activity. The unity of the intellectual

[1] *Dialektik*, pp. 86, 87.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

and organic functions in judgment depends on a higher unity. We can have no concept of this absolute unity. For the concept arises through the union of judgments. But nothing can be predicated of the highest subject. It is, indeed, the unity of the system of judgments, but it is above them.[1] For the system of judgments remains incomplete.

We have now seen that knowledge involves a transcendental ground. Equally so does willing[2] (volition). It is *first in willing* that we reach a genuine conviction as distinguished from mere thinking or opinion.[3] Persistent willing demands a coherence of being with willing. Willing, through its concept of an end, is thinking. Thinking, through the clearness of its free productivity, is willing.[4] "In thinking, the being of things is posited in us in our manner. In willing, our being is posited in things in our manner." The identity of thinking and willing supplies the subjective unity of intellectual and organic functions, and at the same time gives us the transcendental basis of both knowledge and action.

The relative identity of thinking and willing is a *unity of feeling* (*Gefühl*), or *immediate self-consciousness*.[5] This immediate feeling differs from the reflective self-consciousness or consciousness of the *I*, which arises from the original feeling,

[1] *Dialektik*, pp. 125, 135, etc.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 428.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 429.

and it also differs from sensation (*Empfindung*), which is the subjectively personal element in a determinate moment of consciousness.[1] In reflection our consciousness is divided into the opposing moments of thinking and willing, which, as we have seen, express antithetical but complementary aspects of our relation to being. But the immediate self-feeling exists before the oppositions develop, and these oppositions are again resolved in the immediacy of self-feeling. Nevertheless our consciousness could not be this abolition of opposites if we were not conditioned and determined by something above the opposites—viz., by the transcendental ground itself.[2] Hence the transcendental basis of knowledge and action, the identity of thought and being, is presupposed in every movement of our consciousness. It lies involved in the immediate unity of our feeling. In feeling we are directly related to the primal ground of things[3] (*Urgrund*). Will and feeling are coördinated as the two aspects of the fundamental being of our determinate existence,[4] but will seems to be the primitive element common to subject and object. *Feeling* is the *subjective* identity of the receptive and the spontaneous (*i.e.*, of thinking and being).[5] This identity, objectively con-

[1] *Dialektik*, p. 429.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 430.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 430.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 473.
[5] Schleiermacher seems to identify the antithesis of thinking and being with that of intellectual and organic. But receptive

sidered as knowledge, is intuition. Another form of the antithesis is that of representative and prefigurative (*abbildlich und vorbildlich*) thinking, which have their unity in self-consciousness.[1]

The outcome of this search for a transcendental ground of knowledge and action is the discovery of a God-consciousness in immediate feeling or *intuition*. We have reached by a more toilsome route the central doctrine of the *Addresses on Religion*. There is a religious feeling or intuition immediately involved in self-feeling.[2] But we must not suppose for an instant that the intuition of the Godhead is an isolated experience. The very fact that it is the implicate of self-feeling precludes such an assumption. We intuit or feel the Godhead only in and with the entire system of intuitions.[3] The Godhead is just as inconceivable as knowledge. For it is the basis of knowledge.[4] Hence it is as certain as knowledge.[5] The system of knowledge gives us the

and spontaneous do not mean quite the same for him as organic and intellectual. The intellectual function is predominantly spontaneous, and the organic predominantly receptive. (See W. Bender, *Schleiermacher's Theologie*, I., p. 28.) Thinking (*Denken*) of course includes both knowing and willing (*Erkennen und Wollen*). (See Bender, *op. cit.*, p. 32 ff.)

[1] *Dialektik*, pp. 523, 531, etc. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 430.

[3] "Intuition is the identity of perception and construction." (*Ibid.*, p. 319.)

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 322. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

intuition of God.[1] Our knowledge of God can only be completed with the completion of our view of the world (*Weltanschauung*), and the two develop together.[2] In the development of this two-sided system of knowledge the system of concepts forms the permanent framework, the system of judgments (empirically determined) the living process of filling-in.[3]

The idea of God and the idea of the world are correlative and mutually dependent.[4] Both are transcendent and involved in knowledge and action, but in different senses. The idea of the world lies outside our real knowledge, but as the idea of a completed system of knowledge it is the basis of our progress in knowledge. In other words, the idea of the world is that of the completion of our progressively realized knowledge. It is, as Kant would say, a regulative ideal, and is not directly present in any single act of knowing.[5] The idea of the world is the transcendental *terminus ad quem* of knowledge. On the other hand, the idea of God, as the unity of thought and being, is directly involved in every act of knowledge and will. It is the transcendental unity of life which makes possible every step in our lives. The idea of God is the transcendental *terminus a quo* and the principle of the possibility of knowl-

[1] *Dialektik*, p. 328. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 322. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[4] "Kein Gott ohne Welt, so wie keine Welt ohne Gott." (*Ibid.*, p. 432.) See also p. 162. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

edge in itself.[1] The world is a *limit* to conception (*Begriffsgrenze*). God is the unity which alone makes any conception as well as any action possible.[2] The world is a unity including all opposites. God is a unity excluding and transcending all opposites.[3] He is Life, developing opposites out of itself, but since it is timeless, not going out of itself.[4] We cannot say more than that God and the world are to be posited as existing in mutual relations.[5] We cannot identify the two ideas. On the other hand, we know nothing of God's being beyond the world or in himself.[6] God dwells in us in our ideas and in our conscience. His inborn presence in us constitutes our specific essence, for without ideas and without conscience we should sink to the level of the brutes.[7] Conscience involves a general agreement. Law is the expression of this agreement, *i.e.*, of conscience. Law must be grounded in an absolute subject. God, as Creator, is the *Law-giver*.[8] As source of the world-order he is *Providence*. Law is intelligence conceived as power.[9] God, as Law-giver, is the author of the fixed forms of existence, *i.e.*, he is *Creator*. The expression Providence is not entirely adequate, but we may

[1] *Dialektik*, p. 164.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 526.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 433.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 531.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 154–6.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 427, 519–22.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

say that God, as Creator and Providence is at the same time Law-giver.[1] God is the absolutely free *subject—free*, because he is self-determined. For freedom is self-development, self-expression.[2] Every living being is, in some measure, free, and God is absolute freedom since he is Absolute Life.

Schleiermacher regards Time and Space not as illusions, but as images respectively of the ideal and the real (*i.e.*, of thinking and being) in the subject.[3] Matter he defines as the chaotic material of consciousness, as that which fills space and time.[4]

The *Dialectic* was never completed, and Schleiermacher's metaphysical treatment of the idea of God remains unfinished.

### *C. The Doctrine of God in the "Christian Faith."*

Schleiermacher's *Christliche Glaube* is a systematic exposition of the contents and implications of the specifically Christian religious experience; in other words, a scientific account of the religious consciousness as manifested in the Christian. This exposition falls into two parts. The first part develops the principles of the pious self-consciousness in so far as this is present in man universally, and hence is presupposed in the Christian. The scope of the first part corresponds to

[1] *Dialektik*, p. 527.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 420–1.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 398.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

that of the old natural theology or to what we today call the general philosophy of religion. The second part expounds the principles of the specifically Christian consciousness. The *Addresses on Religion* discovered the root of religion to be the feeling of dependence. The *Dialectic* showed us that the objective unity of consciousness and being, which is presupposed in the knowledge and action of the individual subject, is presented in religious feeling. The *Christian Faith* takes this universal feeling of absolute dependence, *i.e.*, the religious feeling, as its starting-point, and expounds the nature of God in "relation to this feeling." The Divine Essence, says Schleiermacher, is in itself inexpressible, and the Divine attributes, as we conceive them, express only moments of the pious self-consciousness.[1]

The feeling of absolute dependence—the religious feeling—arises in the meeting together of self-consciousness and object-consciousness.[2] The feeling of dependence is most complete when we identify ourselves with the world, when we see all as *one*. In this complete oneness of finite being there is posited the most perfect and universal connection of nature.[3] Hence *creation*, the idea of which expresses the absolute dependence of the world on God, must be the timeless activity which issues in the order of nature.[4]

[1] *Christliche Glaube*, I., p. 259 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 224. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 227. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

The fundamental attribute involved in the feeling of absolute dependence is the *Divine Causality*.[1] This absolute causality is, with reference to its character, distinct from the causality of nature. For while the latter occurs in time, the former is eternal. On the other hand, with reference to its extent, Divine Causality is simply the whole order of nature.[2] It is *omnipotence*. When we compare God with finite beings, we get two other attributes, viz., *omnipresence* and *omniscience*. These express respectively the spaceless and timeless nature of the Divine Causality. For the idea of causality, which the feeling of absolute dependence calls forth in us, cannot be spatial or temporal.[3] However, the spaceless and timeless character of omnipotence is better expressed by saying that God's causality is inward, living, and absolutely spiritual.[4]

It is much more important that the Divine Causality shall be thought as *absolutely living* than that a similarity shall be established in some specific fashion between God and what we call "mind" in ourselves. For the latter can be done only through an infinite process of approximation, since there can be no receptivity or passivity in God, and both these qualities are inherent in our minds. The only kind of thinking in us which is relatively independent of an object is our pur-

[1] *Christliche Glaube*, I., p. 261.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 264-5.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 267-80.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 291.

posive or end-forming (*zweckbildende*) activity. The greater part of our thinking is dependent on the presence of objects. God's thinking is entirely of the former or purposive kind. But even here we must distinguish between God's thinking and man's. We cannot say that in God the formation of a purpose comes first and then later its execution. For the Divine Thinking and the Divine Willing are absolutely identical.[1]

Schleiermacher holds that the Divine foreknowledge does not destroy human freedom, since the latter is the expression of the nature of the self,[2] and not a power of acting arbitrarily.

In the second part of the *Christian Faith* we have a statement of the Divine attributes which are involved in the specifically Christian consciousness. The presupposition here is the recognition of the reality of both evil and sin and of the need for redemption. Evil is the punishment for sin, but sin is social in its effects, and hence the evil which befalls the individual cannot be deduced from his own sin.[3] Sin is our own act. Every sinful impulse is, on the one side, the expression of a sensuous nature-impulse which involves the Divine Causality.[4] On the other side, sin is a turning away from God, a denial of the God-consciousness or of the consciousness of the Divine Will in regard to the particular

[1] *Christliche Glaube*, I., pp. 292–3.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 430.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 452.

impulse.[1] God is indeed the cause of the natural impulses from which sin arises. On the other hand, every impulse *can be* brought in relation to God's will. Hence sin is man's own deed. But it can exist only where salvation is possible. The consciousness of sin by itself is an abstraction.[2] In so far as we can never have a consciousness of grace without a consciousness of sin we must assert that the being of sin is ordained together with the grace of God.[3]

The consideration of the state of sin in relation to the state of grace gives rise to the ideas of the *Divine Holiness* and *Justice*. *Divine Holiness* is that Divine Causality by virtue of which in the common life of men the conscience is posited together with the need of salvation.[4] Hence the conscience is social, and the Divine Holiness is the Divine legislative causality in the common life. *Divine Justice* is the Divine Causality in so far as it has ordained a connection between sin and evil in the common life. Hence Divine Justice is social, not individual.[5] In the Christian life there is no general consciousness of God which does not include a relation to Christ and no relation to the Saviour which is not connected with the general God-consciousness. When, through the efficacy of salvation, we become conscious of our restored fellowship with God and refer this work of sal-

[1] *Christliche Glaube*, I., p. 453. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 438.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 439. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 460. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 465.

vation back to the Divine Causality, we assume a *Divine Government* of the world, manifesting itself in *wisdom* and *love*[1] The *Divine Love* is that attribute by virtue of which the Divine Essence communicates itself and is known in the work of salvation.[2] *Love* is God's very being in relation to men, and hence it differs from all the other attributes.[3] For in the first part of the *Glaubenslehre* the entire *Divine Activity* or *Causality* was assumed and discussed without a motive for its being. Love, manifested in the work of salvation, supplies this motive. All men are objects of the *Divine Love*, but it is not realized in all.[4]

The *Divine Wisdom* is the expression of love. Wisdom is the principle which orders and determines the world for the Divine self-communication in the work of salvation. The Divine Wisdom is the highest Essence (*Wesen*) in its absolutely simple and originally perfect self-exposition and communication.[5] The Divine Wisdom is the ground by virtue of which the world, as the theatre of redemption, is also the absolute revelation of the highest being, and consequently good.[6]

The doctrine of the Trinity, says Schleiermacher, expresses the union of the Divine Es-

[1] *Christliche Glaube*, II., pp. 507–11.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 513.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 517.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 515.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 521.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 523.

sence with human nature in Christ and in the Spirit of the Church. It is not a philosopheme, but is the expression of the Christian consciousness, the touchstone of Christian doctrine, although not in a wholly satisfactory form.

### 2. *Schleiermacher's Relations to Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling.*

Schleiermacher first made the acquaintance of Spinoza's system through Jacobi's *Letters on Spinoza*. In his commentary on the latter work, although confined to Jacobi's quotations for a direct knowledge of Spinoza, he shows a much finer understanding of Spinoza's system than Jacobi.[1] Schleiermacher always spoke of Spinoza with enthusiasm, and he has been called a Spinozist. But while there are important points of contact in the two systems, there are equally important points of divergence. Schleiermacher shares Spinoza's idea and love of the *One*. The Infinite is not outside the world of phenomena. On the contrary, the latter exist *within* the Infinite One. The latter is the completion of the series of conditioned existences, and not something separated from them. The Infinite exists in the finite. On the other hand, the Infinite One of Schleiermacher is a living *Spirituality, dynamically* conceived, in which thought holds the primacy, whereas Spi-

[1] See Dilthey, *Denkmale Schleiermacher's*, pp. 64–9.

noza's Absolute is the static indifference-point of an infinite number of attributes, of which two, thought and extension, are known to us. Moreover, Schleiermacher's most original and important philosophical doctrine, that of the worth of individuality, separates him from Spinoza. Whilst the latter holds that Body and Soul are related only in and through the Divine substance, Schleiermacher regards every human individual as a unique manifestation of the unity of the ideal and the real, of thought and being. Hence human individuality is with him a sacred and significant manifestation of the Absolute.[1] There is an inconsistency between Spinoza's conception of the Absolute and his recognition of the reality of the individual. For Spinoza determination, and therefore individuation, is negation. For Schleiermacher individuation is affirmation. Here he takes up Leibnitz's doctrine of the positive reality of the monads as mirrors of the universe, but he rejects their absolute independence of one another, and sets up instead a dynamic unity.

Plato and Kant were Schleiermacher's greatest philosophical masters. Schleiermacher strives to be true to the spirit of the *Critical Philosophy*, while purging it of its inconsistencies, and infusing into it the spirit of Plato. He is a more sympathetic and appreciative disciple of Kant

[1] See Dilthey, *Leben Schleiermacher's*, pp. 147–52, and P. Schmidt, *Spinoza und Schleiermacher*.

than either Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel. Schleiermacher rejects Kant's moral postulate as to the necessity of uniting virtue and happiness, and his consequent inference as to the necessity of an omnipotent Being outside the world, who shall heal the breach existing between them in this life. Schleiermacher accepts the negative results of the Kantian dialectic, and strives to find within the limits of experience, as these are defined by criticism, a principle by virtue of which the two Kantian dualisms—of sense and understanding within the individual subject, and of thought and being within the cosmos—can be overcome. Such a principle he finds in the synthetic unity of the individual consciousness. Kant's doctrine is that this synthetic unity has an over-individual origin, that it is transcendentally involved in knowledge, but cannot be empirically verified in the experience of the finite self. Schleiermacher, guided by the attempt of Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* to find a solution of his two dualisms in the immediate unity of æsthetic feeling, endeavours to discover the actual presence of such an *immediate self-consciousness* or *feeling of unity* in every act of knowledge and volition. In this attempt he was influenced by the current idea of an *intellectual intuition*. Schleiermacher's doctrine of *self-feeling* or the immediate self-consciousness is the discovery of the actual presence of the *synthetic unity of consciousness* in the life of the

empirical *I*. His doctrine that the transcendental ground of existence is revealed in this immediate feeling, is the restatement of the Kantian transcendental unity of consciousness in terms of the *felt-unity of the actual self*. The God of Schleiermacher is the transcendental unity of Kant discovered to be the condition of the unity of conscious life in the finite self.[1]

Fichte and Schleiermacher had their common starting-point in Kant. Fichte's doctrine of the harmony of subject and object, the *I* and the *not-I*, was congenial to Schleiermacher. He was also in agreement with Fichte's conception of the will as the centre of the individual *I*, and Fichte's entire genetic method which started from the finite *I* appealed to him. But Schleiermacher was not willing to go with Fichte in his reduction of the entire outer world to an illusory reflection of the activity of the *I*. Moreover, as time went on, the important differences in their conceptions of individuality came to the front. Fichte regards individuality as a limitation of the Absolute, and holds that the nearer one comes to the Absolute the more does one's individuality retreat into the background. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, regards the genesis of the individual as a free and self-expressive act of the Absolute, and he carries the finite individual into the holy of holies of the

[1] See Dilthey, *Leben Schleiermacher's*, pp. 88–128, and J. Gottschick, *Ueber Schleiermacher's Verhältniss gegen Kant.*

religious life.[1] In Dilthey's admirable phrase, Schleiermacher joins together the self-intuition of Fichte and the world-intuition of Spinoza in the original coherence of his own system.[2]

Schleiermacher was influenced by Schelling's *Philosophy of Nature*, particularly by his doctrine of opposites. No doubt, too, his own philosophical reflection was stimulated by Schelling's doctrine of the identity of thought and being. But it would be a great error to regard Schleiermacher's doctrine of identity as an offshoot from Schelling's. For in the *Addresses on Religion* Schleiermacher had already struck out on an independent way to the unification of the ideal and the real. Schelling's *intellectual intuition* is exclusive and aristocratic. Schleiermacher's union with the Absolute in the immediacy of feeling is universally human and democratic.

### 3. *The Significance of Schleiermacher's Conception of God.*

Schleiermacher's exposition of the originality and uniqueness of the religious life in man and his doctrine of immediate self-consciousness or the *feeling of unity* as the source of religion in the individual are the most important contributions towards a philosophy of religion that have been made in modern times. While he vindicates

[1] See Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

the uniqueness of religion he does not separate it from the general life of the self. Religion is the meeting-place of self and world. This immediate feeling of unity or fundamental intuition in which the religious life is grounded is the root of the distinctions and oppositions which arise in the analytical processes of thought and volition, and, at the same time, it is the medium in which these oppositions and distinctions are constantly being transcended in the onward movement of life. "Self-intuition and intuition of the universe are interchangeable conceptions." [1] "The universe is like man in that in both activity is the principal thing, the events only the fleeting results of it." [2]

Höffding says that, inasmuch as the reality for us consists in subjective feeling or intuition, Schleiermacher is not entitled to regard any doctrines as more than symbols, and that when he infers from the existence of the feeling of dependence an objective cause in the form of an Absolute Being, he has gone beyond his premises.[3] Höffding thinks that the desire to mediate between theology and philosophy has betrayed Schleiermacher into this fallacy. Höffding seems here to misunderstand the procedure by which Schleiermacher reaches his doctrine of God as the transcendental ground of existence. Schleiermacher, keeping within the limits of the critical

[1] Dilthey, *Denkmale Schleiermacher's*, p. 118. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[3] Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), p. 211.

philosophy, does not anywhere regard God as an individual, objective cause in the same sense in which we speak of one phenomenal event as the cause of another. God, for him, is the underlying principle, the *all-embracing life* of the phenomenal universe. God transcends the single individual, but not the whole system of individuals. Schleiermacher's Absolute is not separated from the universe. He does not hold that the Absolute is the *external cause* of the feeling of dependence or of the immediate unity of ourselves with the universe, but that he is the absolute ground of these feelings, and in himself transcends the *individual life*. The specific attributes of God are indeed symbols, but Schleiermacher repeatedly states that these attributes do not at all account for the unitary being of God. They only express aspects of his relation in and to us. God as the absolute unity is the *conditio sine qua non* of our conscious selfhood.

It is clear that Schleiermacher did not hold to the personality of God in the traditional sense.[1] He did not see how the transcendental ground of finite personality could be the *absolute condition* of finite personality and yet be described as personal in itself. But Schleiermacher held to what is of most value in the traditional idea of personality. God is for him the absolute ethical Life, the

[1] See E. Zeller, *Erinnerung an Schleiermacher's Lehre von der Persönlichkeit Gottes*, in his *Theologisches Jahrbuch*, Bd. I.

Infinite and Transcendent Spirit. Perhaps a reconstructed notion of personality will in the future find room for Schleiermacher's fundamental ideas on the relation of God and man.

Schleiermacher's emphasis on the unity and unchangeableness of the Divine Causality involves a serious difficulty in regard to the ideas of freedom and sin in the individual. He is a determinist, but he asserts the objective reality of sin and at the same time the responsibility of the individual. Sin, he says, is an actual destruction of nature. The reality of sin involves the need of redemption as a historical process. But neither conception is consistent with Schleiermacher's doctrine of the absolute unchangeableness and all-inclusiveness of the Divine Causality. Schleiermacher understands by human freedom the self-determination of the unique individual, and this idea of the free self, taken in conjunction with the reality of a historical process of redemption, involves definitely the idea of God as a self-conscious unitary Life who at once *expresses himself* and *limits himself* in the production of finite individuals. This idea, when carried out, involves further the existence of distinctions within the Divine Nature itself and the reconstruction of the doctrine of the Divine unchangeableness. The latter doctrine must either be formulated in such a manner as to admit a real living and progressive relationship between the finite individual and God, or it must

be given up entirely. Schleiermacher does not seem to have apprehended either the inherent difficulty of this problem or the great import of the practical and religious as well as speculative interests involved in its solution. His own doctrine of the unchangeableness of the Divine Causality approaches very closely the abstract and motionless Absolute of Spinoza. It tends to become a modern version of the Eleatic one. Schleiermacher's idea of God can be corrected and developed from his own starting-point. He lays stress on the sacredness and worth of individuality. He deduces the being of God from the feeling of dependence within the finite self-consciousness. But he does not deal adequately with the social relations of the individual which are involved in the fact of knowledge as well as in action. He hints that the individual consciousness of change and the feeling of absolute dependence are the encompassing elements of self-consciousness which lead the individual out of himself.[1] But a more careful consideration of the problem implied in the relation of the individual to the social factor in knowledge and volition would make room for a more concrete conception of God and one more closely related to human personality.

In his great doctrine of the ethical worth and the philosophical and religious significance of individu-

[1] *Philosophische Sittenlehre*, p. 243.

ality or personal uniqueness, Schleiermacher has raised a problem slighted by his great contemporary Hegel, and has made an important contribution to its solution. If we are to attain an adequate philosophical conception of God we must start from the individual, *i.e.*, we must start from Schleiermacher's point of departure. But there is another correlated problem which was first seen clearly and handled adequately by Hegel—that of the objective or institutional spirit embodied in the work of history. These two ideas of the individual spirit and the objective or historical spirit are complementary, and the future philosophical doctrine of man and his relation to God must be built on them. Perhaps just now we need most a reconsideration of individuality.

Hegel possessed a concrete wealth of knowledge and a speculative grasp of history which Schleiermacher did not have. On the other hand, Schleiermacher was a virtuoso in the appreciation of personality and looked much further and more clearly into the depths of the personal life. His vindication of the uniqueness of religion, his estimate of the philosophical importance of the immediate or feeling-aspect of human self-consciousness, and his doctrine of individuality are all evidences that Schleiermacher possessed a keen, subtle, and sympathetic insight into the soul of man.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MR. SPENCER'S UNKNOWN GOD.

Mr. Spencer's theory of the ultimate reality which underlies appearances may be summed up in a very few words. The object of philosophical investigation is "that unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply."[1] The title of the first section of his *First Principles* is "The Unknowable." He proceeds in this work to show us that the "Unknowable" is the ground of meeting and reconciliation of science and religion. All religions have their legitimate sphere "in that nescience which must ever remain the antithesis to science."[2] Nescience, then, being the subject-matter of religion, science might claim that by its own methods were disclosed truths hidden to religion. This is true, Mr. Spencer says, but when each scientific principle is pushed to its legitimate conclusion, *i.e.*, when it is raised to a philosophical principle, it too terminates in nescience. Hence, whether we view it from a religious or a scientific point of view, "the Power which the universe manifests

[1] *First Principles*, Fourth Edition, p. 17. [2] *Ibid.*

to us is utterly inscrutable."[1] "The mystery of the universe is not a relative, but an absolute mystery."[2] These statements are sufficiently clear, but they at once start certain questions. It is positively asserted that we know nothing about the ultimate reality *except* that it is absolutely unknowable. This certainly is a species of knowledge unique in kind. How can we *know* that we can know absolutely nothing about a conceivable object of knowledge? Mr. Spencer's knowledge of the unknowability of the ultimate reality is, so far as it goes, very positive. And, furthermore, he knows that the Unknowable is a *Power*, "an Infinite and Eternal *Energy* from which all things proceed." The certainty that such a Power exists, while, on the other hand, its nature transcends intuition, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing.[3] Furthermore, we *know* the modes in which this *inscrutable* Power manifests itself. "The Power manifested throughout the universe distinguished as material, is the same Power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness."[4] Notwithstanding the antinomies which Mr. Spencer finds to be involved in thinking "Infinite" and "Eternal," and notwithstanding that the deepest nescience is the goal of human thought, he confidently asserts that "amid the mysteries

[1] *First Principles*, p. 46.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Principles of Sociology*, III., p. 171.

which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain (to man) the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." [1]

The positiveness of this conclusion, when compared with Mr. Spencer's declaration of the impotence of knowledge when it is confronted with ontological problems, is sufficient of itself to awaken doubts as to the legitimacy of his procedure. I therefore propose to inquire: first, how Mr. Spencer arrives at his conclusion; second, whether his procedure is consistent and his conclusion valid; and, third, if the second inquiry receives a negative answer, how may Mr. Spencer's procedure be corrected.

Mr. Spencer is agreed that the starting-point for philosophy lies in consciousness. We can never reach anything which is absolutely different from consciousness. He says if one regard one's "conceptions of these activities lying beyond Mind, as constituting knowledge, he is deluding himself; he is but representing these activities in terms of Mind and can never do otherwise." [2] Here it is already implied that the activities outside mind are *absolutely different* from the activities of mind. Hence the mind cannot possibly know the activities which lie out-

[1] *Principles of Sociology*, III., p. 175.

[2] *Principles of Psychology*, Third Edition, I., p. 160.

side itself. It is at once assumed that the nature of extra-mental reality is such that it cannot be known. Mr. Spencer rehabilitates the "Ding-an-sich," and from the same motive which originally led Kant to set it up—fear of subjective idealism. Mr. Spencer takes it for granted that if there *is* a real world beyond the human mind, it must be *toto cælo* different from mind; otherwise it could not be real. This is an entirely unwarranted assumption. Kant, having set up the "Ding-an-sich" from the fear of being regarded as a subjective idealist, at once drops it and proceeds to analyze *experience in itself*. Kant sees that the "Ding-an-sich" can have no place in the analysis of thought. The "Thing-in-itself" is a vanishing quantity in Kant's analysis of experience. On the other hand, Mr. Spencer's chief concern is to dump the contents of experience into his Unknowable. Let us see how he accomplishes this end.

Belief in an external world is, he says, a result of the interaction of the organism and the environment. The two factors, subject and object, imply one another, and their relation increasingly discloses some active power beyond consciousness, always in interaction with consciousness.[1] "The consciousness of self and the consciousness of not-self are the elements of an unceasing rhythm in consciousness."[2] We have thus, in

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, II., p. 505, hh. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 438.

Mr. Spencer's theory, two factors, mind or the subject, and something external which acts on mind. Mind at once reacts on the "something external," and so forms a conception of the latter. But the action of mind on its material seems to Mr. Spencer to be the distortion of that material, so that the subject never attains to a true conception of the object. Here he makes a wholly gratuitous assumption of disharmony between the mind and its material. He seeks to prove his assumption by showing that the process of mind in knowing is such that it cannot possibly disclose the nature of Reality. He holds that Reality is necessarily *implied* in all knowledge, but is not *revealed* therein. This is "transfigured realism," and leads directly to the hypothesis of the unknowability of the objective world.

Mind does not know the nature of Reality. What, then, is the relation of mind to the totality of the Real? Mind "is a differentiated and integrated division of the totality of being."[1] We can think of matter only in terms of mind. Nevertheless matter is in some way real, and mind is, like matter, a part of the total Real. But the admission that we must think the external world in terms of mind is strong presumption in favor of the theory that the external world is likewise mind in some form. Mr. Spencer replies that we can think mind only in terms of

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, II., p. 505, vv.

matter. He overlooks the fact that matter is one of the categories which the mind uses in thinking its own experience. The theory that matter is of similar nature to mind explains the knowability of the external world. If the latter is mental, then, when the subject reads that world in terms of its own consciousness, it is not falsifying the external world, but finding itself therein. Throughout his treatment of the epistemological problem of the relation of knowledge to reality Mr. Spencer fails to clearly distinguish mind in its *generic* capacity and the *individual subject-mind.* His reasoning is conclusive against solipsistic idealism, and he is justified in saying that each individual mind is a differentiated and integrated division of the totality of being. But he has by no means shown that there exists anything beyond *minds.* The mental characteristics of our external world, as revealed in experience, may justify us in assuming a mind in some form as the ultimate Reality from which individual minds are derived. Mr. Spencer would reply that we are in no better case than before, since "Mind also is unknowable."[1]

He holds that the progress of knowledge consists in proceeding from concrete mental experience to the analysis of that experience into abstractions. For him, abstract hypothetical elements constitute the reality of things, of which

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, I., p. 159.

concrete experience is the imperfect manifestation. He finds the reality of mind in the supposed primordial elements out of which it is built up. "There may be a single primordial element of consciousness."[1] He thinks it probable "that something of the same order as that which we call a nervous shock is the ultimate unit of consciousness, and that all the unlikenesses among our feelings result from unlike modes of integration of this ultimate unit."[2] But why assume any such primordial unit of feeling as the substance of mind? Shall we not gain a truer knowledge of the nature of mind by seeking the relations involved in our concrete experience as a totality? We throw away all possibility of knowing anything about either our minds as concrete wholes or the external world, if we resolve the mind into utterly featureless, unknowable elements. The *total mind* is the real existence, not hypothetical primordial shocks. Mr. Spencer's procedure is "the reduction of all the more complex forms to the simplest form," which "leaves us with nothing but this simplest form out of which to frame our thought."[3] "If every state of mind is some modification of this substance of mind, there can be no state of mind in which the unmodified substance of mind is present."[4] So that we can know nothing of the *substance* of mind, hence

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, I., p. 150.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 157.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 146–7.

nothing of mind. This assumption, of simple elements, of a *mind-substance* existing apart from its manifestations, is but the setting up of a scholastic entity. It is assumed that the substance of mind consists of units of feeling, and because these are not known as such it follows of course that mind is unknowable. Mr. Spencer's mind-substance is clearly an elusive and unknowable "ghost" of his own raising. This unknowable mind-substance leads us directly to a consideration of Mr. Spencer's general theory of the Unknowable and the process by which he arrives at it.

The chapter[1] on ultimate religious ideas opens with a consideration of the nature of conceptions and their adequacy to their objects.[2]

Our conceptions become more symbolic, *i.e.*, less like the reality, as they rise in generality. This symbolizing process is necessary, but leads to our mistaking our symbolic conceptions for real ones. We habitually regard our symbolic conceptions as real because they can in most cases be developed into complete ones. A conception is "complete only when the attributes of the objects conceived are of such number and kind that they can be represented in consciousness so nearly at the same time as to seem all present together."[3] As the objects conceived

[1] *First Principles*, part i., chap. ii., pp. 25–46.
[2] *Ibid.*, § 9, p. 25 ff. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

become larger in extent and meaning the conceptions of them grow less complete and more symbolic. The use of such symbolic conceptions is legitimate so long as by any process of thought we can assure ourselves that they stand for actualities. Beyond this, he says, these symbolic conceptions are vicious and illusory.

With this criticism of conceptions in mind Mr. Spencer proceeds to examine ultimate religious ideas. The first of these to present themselves are the ideas growing out of the problems of the origin of the universe.[1] In this regard there are three suppositions—self-existence, self-creation, and creation by an external agency. We would all doubtless agree with Mr. Spencer that the idea of the creation of the universe by an external agency involves a palpable absurdity, provided the universe is taken as meaning the entire circle of being, and not a finite world, with beginning and end. Self-creation or passage from potential existence to actual existence is rightly regarded by him as vague and inconceivable. But if we mean by *self-creation* that the universe is active and contains within itself a principle of development, this does not seem to me to be an impossible though it is indeed a vague conception. Mr. Spencer seems to mistake entirely the meaning of the statement that the universe is *self-existent*. Strictly speaking, the phrase is,

[1] *First Principles*, § 11, p. 30 ff.

perhaps, an unfortunate one. To say that the universe is self-existent is only to say that the universe possesses continuity of existence. Self-existence means, indeed, existence without a beginning, but it does not mean that we must try to think the universe as existent in endless past time. We may say with truth that the Universe of Being possesses *continuity of existence.* Accepting Mr. Spencer's criticism that this does not explain how being came to be, we may reply that the question *how* being was made is absurd and meaningless.

Having disposed of these illusory symbolic conceptions which refer to the *origin* of the universe, he turns to those which express the *nature* of the universe. "The objects and actions surrounding us, not less than the phenomena of our consciousness compel us, to ask a cause: in our search for a cause we discover no resting-place until we arrive at the hypothesis of a First Cause: and we have no alternative but to regard this First Cause as Infinite and Absolute."[1] He says it might be shown that these are symbolic conceptions of the illegitimate order. He prefers to show the contradictions involved in viewing the three conceptions—the First Cause, the Absolute, and the Infinite as attributes of one and the same being. He avails himself of Mr. Mansel's demonstration, which is substan-

[1] *First Principles*, p. 38.

tially as follows:[1] Cause exists only in relation to effect. The Absolute is out of all relation. Therefore it can cause nothing. It does not avoid the difficulty to say the Absolute exists first by itself and afterwards as a cause. For the Absolute is infinite. How can the Infinite become that which it was not? The Absolute can neither be related to anything else nor contain an essential relation within itself. "For if there is in the Absolute any principle of unity distinct from the mere accumulation of parts or attributes, this principle alone is the true Absolute,"[2] and if there is no such principle there is no Absolute, but only plurality. Even if these difficulties were overcome it would be impossible to imagine the Absolute as cause of the relative. The Absolute is perfect. If causal activity is a higher state than quiescence, then in becoming causal the Absolute becomes more perfect, and this again is contradictory. The Absolute and Infinite involves contradictions from whatever side it is viewed.

Nevertheless, says Mr. Spencer, we are not to conclude that there is no "fundamental verity" contained in these errors. Following his method, he abstracts from all these contradictory views and from the multiplicity of religious creeds their

[1] *First Principles*, p. 39 ff. Mr. Mansel's treatment is substantially a repetition of Kant's in the *Antinomies of Reason*.

[2] *First Principles*, p. 40.

common element. This common element we discover to be the utter inscrutability of their subject-matter. Mr. Spencer does not tell us how the conception of Power or Energy survives through all this process of abstraction. On his principles he is not entitled to say positively that the ultimate is even an "Ultimate," much less an "*absolute* mystery." Having completely obliterated all content from the ultimate religious ideas, Mr. Spencer performs the same office by the ultimate scientific ideas.[1] He finds time and space inconceivable. Into his criticism I have not space to enter, but I will make one remark thereon. His dilemma—that if Space and Time are entities we cannot conceive them because they are without attributes, and if they are non-entities we cannot conceive them since they would be two nothings—does not exhaust the problem. It is thinkable that Space and Time are in some way properties of the Real, and that they are relatively imperfect aspects under which the Real appears to us. It is possible that, in Plato's words, they share in both being and non-being. Mr. Spencer points out the difficulties in the way of conceiving matter as either infinitely or finitely divisible, and shows that if matter is absolutely solid the law of continuity is broken in regard to collision. Again, he says, if we regard matter as made up of solid units, we must

[1] *First Principles*, chap. iii., pp. 47–67.

still inquire as to the constitution of these units, and so we cannot bring our thought to a termination. Motion and the relations of motion and rest are likewise involved in contradictions. We cannot conceive the nature of force or understand the connection between force and matter. Turning inward, we ask, Is consciousness finite or infinite? and cannot find an answer. We cannot know the self truly, for "a true cognition of the self implies a state in which the knowing and the known are one, in which subject and object are identical."[1] When we have resolved external phenomena into manifestations of force in space and time, we still find that force, space, and time are incomprehensible. When we have resolved mental actions into sensations we find that sensations are incomprehensible. To the man of science objective and subjective things are alike inscrutable.

Having demonstrated the incomprehensibility of ultimate facts, whether viewed from the side of religion or of science, Mr. Spencer proceeds to clinch his argument by showing on rational grounds that all knowledge is relative, and hence, of course, inadequate to its object.[2] All explanation and all understanding of cognized facts depends on their reduction to more general cognitions. "As the most general cognition cannot be reduced to a more general one, it cannot be

[1] *First Principles*, p. 65. [2] *Ibid.*, chap. iv., pp. 68–97.

understood. Of necessity, therefore, explanation must eventually bring us down to the inexplicable. The deepest truth which we can get at must be unaccountable."[1] This result reached by an analysis of the *product* of thought our author finds confirmed by a study of the *process* of thought. He quotes Sir William Hamilton's and Mr. Mansel's demonstrations of the relativity of knowledge, which are substantially as follows:[2] To think is to condition, to distinguish objects and bring them into relation with one another. To distinguish one object from another is to limit one by the other. But the Absolute, the Infinite is without condition, and so cannot be thought. The Infinite is the mere negation of the finite. It can have nothing either in common with or different from the finite. Again, our whole notion of existence is relative, and we can form no conception of the Absolute, since it is merely the absence of relations. Mr. Spencer tries to strengthen this demonstration by additions of his own. If we are to know the Absolute and Infinite, it must be classed. Classification involves recognition. But the Absolute can be like nothing else that we know, and therefore cannot be recognized or known. Again, the relativity of our thinking to relations in our environment shows that no thought can express more than relations.

[1] *First Principles*, p. 73. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 74 ff.

It has apparently been proved in so many ways that the Absolute is absolutely inscrutable, one might infer that it is Mr. Spencer's purpose to reduce it to a mere negation of consciousness. But no! He maintains that we have a *positive* though indefinite consciousness of the Absolute. This consciousness is formed by the attrition and coalescence of all our ideas and conceptions.[1] So we arrive at the consciousness of an actuality lying beyond appearances. When all our concrete experiences have been emptied into the Ultimate Inscrutability, we are told that this Inscrutability still *is*. This is the mere statement that Being is —a bare tautology. We are told that religion is the consciousness of the "inscrutable power manifested to us through all phenomena." We must "refrain from assigning to it any attributes, on the ground that such attributes, derived as they must be from our own natures, are not elevations, but degradations."[2] So we are offered as the object of our ultimate belief and worship a "night in which all cows are black."

It is evident that Mr. Spencer regards the progress of knowledge as an increase in extension accompanied by a corresponding decrease in intension. As conceptions embrace wider fields of existence within their grasp, they become less adequate to express the concrete fulness of existence. In his own language they become more

[1] *First Principles*, p. 87 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

symbolic and less real. For the completest conception is one in which all the attributes of the object are held together at the same moment in consciousness. The truth in this view is that the concept should be the logical unity of all the attributes of the object. As such, the concept expresses the unity of a series of judgments. The ideal concept is a principle of unity of which the attributes are moments. Mr. Spencer says that conceptions become very unlike the things conceived when we come to propositions concerning wide-embracing classes, *e.g.*, the vertebrata or the whole animal kingdom. Now, the truth is that the *perceptual image*, which is the psychical setting of the concept, may become more unlike the individual objects of the group. But the true concept of a class of objects is not formed merely by the attrition and coalescence of the perceptual images of particular objects. The concept is not an average percept. A concept expresses, through the unification of particular *judgments*, the unity of the salient features in the form and behavior of the class of objects which it stands for. The concept is adequate only when the attributes of its group are grasped, not simply together, but in their relations to one another, so that these attributes are conceived, not as existing side by side in an external juxtaposition, but as reciprocally influencing one another in the unity of the concrete objects. Every true

concept will then be complete in so far as the group of objects it stands for is complete. But since groups of objects exist only in relation to other groups no single group-concept can have meaning in isolation from others.

Mr. Spencer's method is wholly analytic. He holds that the goal of thinking is the discovery of the most highly abstract laws. These he holds to be true and yet not true, because they stand at the farthest remove from the concrete world of perception. He holds that science constructs its laws from experience of the real world, and yet the construction is of such a character that the real world cannot be reconstructed in terms of science. Now, on the contrary, knowledge can claim to fulfil its purpose and to approach completeness only when its highest principles or laws are grasped in their mutual relations, not as abstracted from the concrete details of experience, but as the principles of the concrete particulars which make up the real world of perception. Such a system of principles will give to each particular its true meaning by exhibiting its place in the individual system which constitutes reality. The discovery of the laws of phenomena can be said to decrease our knowledge of phenomena only when these laws are hypostatized and placed *above* the world of experience in solitary state. A *really synthetic* philosophy would endeavor to see each principle of science as an

element in that organic unity of knowledge through which alone knowledge represents reality. Each particular law or truth represents a phase or moment of reality. Neither abstract law nor bare fact is true in *isolation*. Both are elements in a relational unity of experience. As such an element the law represents the fact by stating the conditions of its existence. Consequently "the most general cognition at which we can arrive" is *not* "inexplicable." It is a cognition, and has a meaning only because it is the organic unity of all less general cognitions, and so represents the organic unity of the real world. It is no more inexplicable than the most modest fact in the world. Indeed, it is nothing but that relational unity which is implied in the concrete world, and the explication of which confers meaning on the particular facts of perception. Truth is an organism, not a mechanical heap of isolated laws. Analysis and synthesis imply one another. It is as necessary for the life of knowledge that they should go on together as it is for the animal organism that katabolism and anabolism should work together. Any single truth is by itself abstract, a mere particular. Truths express the relations of facts. But no truth is true by itself. When a truth is grasped in its relations then the facts which it represents are transformed. Seen in their relations they cease to be mere particulars, and be-

come concrete individual elements in the system of experience.

It is this false conception of knowledge as a mere process of analysis or abstraction that has led Mr. Spencer to accept the empty conceptions of the First Cause, Infinite and Absolute held by Hamilton and Mansel. The First Cause is certainly an impossible absolute, if cause be used in its ordinary sense as something antecedent to and existing entirely outside of the effect. The true Absolute is the totality of causes and effects. If the Absolute be thought as wholly characterless, a mere absence of relations, it is very easy to show that it is inconceivable. Is not the Absolute to be thought rather as the total reality of things, embracing all relations within itself as a self-related individuality? Again, the true Infinite is not the mere negation of the finite, but the presupposition and completion of the finite as given in experience.

In our search for knowledge of the real which is presented to us in experience we are led ever farther into a world of complex relations, of unity in difference. This is a strong presumption that relations belong in some way to Reality. By relations I do not mean mere bloodless categories, but relations of energy, of will and feeling, as well as of discursive thought. If knowledge is valid in any sense, then the growth of human experience in complexity or interrelated-

ness is a disclosure of the nature of reality. The goal of human knowledge and action is the concrete Individual, and this goal will find its fufilment in the thought of the Absolute Individual.

Mr. Spencer's conclusion is that the Absolute is Force. "The power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness."[1] "The last stage reached is recognition of the truth that force as it exists beyond consciousness, cannot be like what we know as force within consciousness; and that yet as either is incapable of generating the other, they must be different modes of the same. Consequently the final outcome of that speculation commenced by primitive man is that the Power manifested throughout the universe distinguished as material, is the same Power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness."[2]

The "Unknowable," then, possesses the single positive attribute of being "Power" or "Energy." But "Energy" is a particular category of self-conscious thought. It cannot be used in this offhand fashion to designate the total reality. Like Space, Time, Matter, and Motion, "Energy" is simply a relatively abstract mode under which thought conceives experience. "Energy" is a name for *one generalized* aspect of experience. "Energy," then, as a term to designate

[1] *Principles of Sociology*, III., p. 170. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

reality, is a mode of conceiving a single aspect of reality. Like the other categories above named, it is a relatively abstract, incomplete expression for reality as experienced. To offer "an Infinite and Eternal Energy" as the ultimate explanation of existence is to explain the whole by the part, to make the tail wag the dog. One might as well call the Absolute Infinite Space or Time.

The mere category of energy offers no explanation of the significance of human personalities. It does not account for the self-consciousness from which knowledge of energy itself springs. The mechanical explanation of things is a mode of thinking part of our experience, and arises from the practical need which the human mind has of conceiving the external world for purposes of calculation in the simplest possible terms. But we have no right to extend this conception to the explanation of the whole of experience. For this explanation does not account for the origin, nor can it explain away the value, of the many-sided self-conscious life of human experience, with its poignant feelings and its unceasing struggle to find expression and satisfaction in the forms of truth, beauty, and goodness. If the category of energy or power is but a means of comprehending the movement of the world, and springs from the self's practical needs, it carries in itself no justification for the subordination to it of those categories which express higher human values.

If we must satisfy our metaphysical craving by setting up a single principle to explain experience, let such a principle be found by the reinterpretation of consciousness in the *wholeness* of its life as once affective and expressive, receptive and active. For self-consciousness holds within its own concrete unity all the various aspects and kinds of experience, and these lose their meaning and value when they are permanently isolated from the unity of the experiencing self.

The Absolute may not, then, indeed be fully known, but it will be intelligible and self-consistent, since it will be conceived as in some way continuous with and the completion of human experience. It will appear as the fruition of human ideals. The Absolute will be thought as the sustaining and harmonizing central experience from which no phase of conscious life is excluded, but in which each phase of experience has its place determined by its value for the whole spiritual life, *i.e.*, by its degree of spirituality. Indeed, the nature of the Absolute can only be adequately defined after a careful estimation and appreciation of the various activities of consciousness. To carry out this work with completeness would involve a comparative philosophy of knowledge, æsthetics, ethics, and religion on a historical basis. It may turn out that the idea of the Absolute so defined is analogous in content to the God of the highest religion. If

this should be so, then the idea of God contained in any given form of historical religion will be expressive of its conception of the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness fused with and modified by racial characteristics and historically inherited systems of culture. This idea of religion gives us the plan for a philosophy of religion. For the ends of metaphysics and of religion are the same, but in a sense very different from that held by Mr. Spencer. Metaphysics, critical and interpretative in its method, will wait upon, clear up, and unify concrete knowledge, conduct, art, and religion rather than endeavor to anticipate or supplant the intuitions of ethical and religious experience.