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Whitfield Cobb

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Whitfield Cobb, Jr.
Graham Kenan Fellow 1933-34

Studies in Philosophy No. 8

Department of Philosophy
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N. C.
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The Department of Philosophy invites its friends to a feast. The richest of all fields is Religion. The deepest problem is God. When a student undertakes to find himself in this ocean the teachers in the Department are made glad.

Mr. Cobb puts to sea and gives us an interesting account of his voyage. There are three very interesting traits in this story. Mr. Cobb's thinking follows the highway of human thinking. Not once does Mr. Cobb permit the emotions to obscure the goal. He reaches port, docks his craft, and offers his log to the public. That Mr. Cobb will modify this statement in years to come is to be expected. The important feature is that he puts to sea. So much emphasis is put upon the visible that many wonder whether there be other than the visible. This attitude has become a teknik and is the source of our superficiality and uncertainty.

We take it as a bright omen that a gifted young man finds himself in the grip of the profound. We say, bon voyage.

H. H. WILLIAMS.

Department of Philosophy
University of North Carolina
PREFACE

"A Study of God and Values" would be an appropriate title for a comprehensive and authoritative achievement of a lifetime but might seem presumptuous for an essay by a student. I acknowledge the discrepancy between the scope and depth of theology, on the one hand, and the experience and capacity of the writer, on the other; but I cannot, merely on that account, ignore the conclusions of my own intelligence.

As a matter of fact, it was the conflict between a critical dissatisfaction with orthodox theology and an inherent need for religion which first turned my interests to philosophy. Hence it is but natural that my first adventure in philosophy is in search of a theology which will satisfy the demands of the heart, enrich and justify human activity, and yet not offend the keenest intellect.

The conception of this, my first philosophical offspring, has been impregnated with the fertile suggestions and stimulated by the intellectual maieutic of Prof. H. H. Williams, whom I take this opportunity to thank. His challenging remarks to the effect that there is "no longer any individual big enough to be a theologian" and that "science today knows the structure of everything except logic and religion," instead of discouraging me, have spurred me on.

W. C.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"To-day there is but one religious dogma in debate: What do you mean by 'God?'"—A. N. Whitehead, Religion in the Making.

Much as we might like to take the whole of religion as our province, an adequate treatment of it would be impossible in the time and space at our disposal. An essay of this kind must be limited to the essentials. The characteristic and essential element of religion, say most theologians, is the conception of God. Some of the more recent philosophers, however, declare the essence of religion to be connected in some way with values, value-judgments, or evaluation. Hence, without attempting here a complete philosophy of religion, we shall confine our consideration to God and values.

Confident that the supreme importance of God and values is already admitted by the reader or will become apparent to him as the essay progresses, we shall offer no justification for our subject but proceed to its exposition.

We propose to examine a fundamental problem involving both God and values: namely, the status of God with respect to values. Thus we hope to answer the question:—What relation between God and values is rationally tenable?

We would by all means avoid the mistake of the Ritschlians in making their theology dependent upon a doubtful epistemology and, even worse, in proposing and defending that epistemology to support their theology. But since we are to consider the relation of God to values, it seems incumbent upon us to explain the epistemological criterion and the ontological status of value. Nevertheless it must be remembered that we are not proposing a new axiology but merely stating for the benefit of the reader those principles which are presupposed in the present essay.

Not because these principles are contrary to common sense but because the unreflecting person uses the word "value" for such diverse meanings, it seems advisable first of all to exclude those meanings which would lead only to confusion and misunderstanding of all that follows. When we use "value," it must never be interpreted to mean "utility" or "importance," as when one speaks of the value of his auto-
mobile; nor may it be regarded as synonymous with "esteem" or "appreciation," as the value one may have for his home or his children. Nor shall we ever use "value" in the economic sense: either for "ratio of exchange" or "price," as when an importer asks the value of the British pound and the value of the imported goods; or for "real equivalent," as when a merchant says the value of an object is much greater than its retail price.

The word "value" is frequently used by the contemporary philosopher, whether he be Idealist, Pragmatist, or Realist. But as yet, in philosophical writings no less than in common usage, "value" is an ambiguous term. Hence an explicit statement of what we mean by "value" is not only permissible but absolutely necessary.

In this essay we shall use "Value" to mean that which, whether actualized or not, ought to be. Truth, goodness, beauty, or whatever is worthy of existence for its own sake—that we shall call a "Value." Values need not exist, but they are worthy of existence and ought to be actualized. In contradiction to Value we shall call a "Being" that which, whether it ought to or not, does exist. Thus the exact nature of Values may be most easily grasped by contrasting it with Being. Being is that which is; Value is that which ought to be. Thus a Being is Reality determined as an object, whereas a Value is Reality determined as an objective. Hence Beings are commonly called "things," while Values are called "ideals."

The ontological status of Value may be illustrated by an analogue from mathematics. The mathematician speaks of determining the value of a product, of assigning values to an independent variable, and of desiring the absolute value of an unknown—meaning by "value" a determinate quantity. We shall use "Value" to mean not numerical value but something which, like the number system, is not a Being, is not dependent on any Being for its reality, does not occupy space, is indifferent to time, and yet may be applied to or exhibited by spatio-temporal Beings. Just as mathematics is valid knowledge whether pure or applied, so Values are real whether actualized or not. However, Values cannot be isolated and removed to some transcendental realm. As that which ought to be, Value is necessarily related to the world
of Being. Thus, far from being incompatible or unrelated, Value and Being are complementary. Reality is not a "refractory dualism of two ultimate surds" but an organic process.

We have defined Value as that which is worthy of existence and ought to be actualized. Hence we may recognize instances of Value by a feeling of respect or obligation or both. But to define Value in terms of these feelings would be as erroneous as to define Being in terms of sight and touch. Whereas Beings appear to us through the senses, Values appeal to us through the emotions. But we must learn to make value-judgments, as they are no more intuitive and spontaneous than factual judgments. Specific value-judgments are empirical; but the concept "Value" seems to be an a priori category, making possible our various judgments.

If we could now set forth a definition of God from which its relation to Values could be uniquely determined, our problem would be solved. But each philosopher, theologian, and layman thinks of God in his own peculiar way in accordance with his own temperament and his own cultural environment. The philosopher and theologian is generally more acute and exacting but no less an individual than the layman. Their conceptions of God are not only varied in expression but also incompatible in content. Thus any attempt at a synthetic definition would be absurd. On the other hand, to accept blindly any one conception of God as a definition and to denounce all other conceptions as illusory perversions would be outrageous. There is no unique definition of God!

What then can be done? A great variety of conceptions or diversity of opinions is always disconcerting to the bigot. But this very multiplicity is a challenge to the thinker. The formal logician analyzes and differentiates, sometimes making subtle distinctions, sometimes ignoring real differences, but hopes thereby to construct a clear-cut, logical classification.

The usual classifications of religion are made on the basis of either God or Values. Thus, according to the former, religion is classified, quantitatively, as monotheistic, polytheistic, or pantheistic, and, qualitatively, as deistic or theistic. And on the latter basis, religion may be classified as "natural" or "soteric," accordingly as its highest Values are bodily or spiritual. Of course each of these divisions may be subdivided
indefinitely, but all such classifications are essentially formal and static.

To overcome this limitation, recent scholars have abandoned classification for history. Instead of devising ingeneous systems of classification, they have busied themselves with primitive origins, hoping to discover in the history of religion the means for its comprehension. History escapes the defects of formal logic, but it adds some of its own. History is a connected, moving process, but its order is contingent and external. Temporal succession may illustrate but does not determine logical order.

Thus, if the multifariousness of theology is to be comprehended and reduced to a rational scheme of things, a third method must be employed. It must be logical but not formal, dynamic but not temporal—neither static classification nor historical sequence but logical development. This shall be our method.

Previous classifications and histories of religion have usually treated either God or Values as the significant element and subordinated all else to it. But either procedure is one-sided and indicates the presupposition of a particular relation between God and Values. Now some relation, whether consciously recognized or not, is implicit in every theology and philosophy of religion; but various relations are and have been asserted. Instead of something to be ignored or assumed uncritically, the relation between God and Values is itself a fundamental element of religious convictions—and the ground of theological differences.

In the logical development of the conception of God we hope to discover which relation between God and Values is rationally tenable. To this development we now proceed.
CHAPTER II
DEVELOPMENT

"The more external relation between man and the powers which, as he believes, protect him, gives way, and the gods themselves become immediate representatives of the goods placed under their surveillance,—become, indeed, one with them."—Harold Hoffding, The Problems of Philosophy.

Science claims to be knowledge of Reality; perhaps it can furnish us with a logical conception of God. Science begins with "facts." It makes no assumptions; it takes nothing for granted or on faith; it presupposes nothing—except Beings. Science is knowledge of what is, of Beings. Beings just are; things not Beings are not, are nothing. Existence, material existence, is synonymous with reality. God to be real must belong to the realm of Being. Science admits no qualitative differences. The supreme Being must be quantitatively supreme, a maximum. God to be superior to any and every other Being must be

THE TOTALITY OF ALL BEING.

God is thus Reality itself, neither partial nor fragmentary. God is omnipotent and omnipresent: impersonal yet alive with power; not limited to any time, place, or form but including them all. This is the theological basis of PANTHEISM.

But primitive pantheism is hardly a legitimate religion. Its "God" is merely another name for the world of Beings. Worship, prayer, salvation,—none of the usual religious phenomena are accounted for. The identification of God and the totality of Being might just as well be called "materialism" as "pantheism." This conception of God may be scientific but it is anti-religious.

But it is not really scientific. Science is not interested in such all-inclusive totals. Science presupposes a world of Beings, but it is concerned with the action of the particular Beings within it. And as science develops it becomes not description but explanation. Beings are no longer described as things in themselves but explained in terms of their surrounding environment or their previous states. Science becomes knowledge of cause and effect. Every Being is caused
by something other than itself; and this in turn, by something else.

But what is the first cause in this regress? What is the ultimate cause of the whole world of Beings? Science as such does not answer these questions, but theology offers the conception of God as

THE ONE TRANSCENDENT BEING.

Thus God is distinguished from the world and set apart from the world. God is the one Being not included in the world. God is not the conterminous sum but the external source of all Beings. God is not the universe but the cause of the universe, the first and uncaused cause. This is the theology of DEISM.

Although this deistic conception of God is derived from and seems to be supported by science, science really has no need for that hypothesis. The existence of God is postulated as the ultimate explanation of the world, but actually it must be explained by the world. Intelligence is immediately aware of the Beings of this world, whereas the conception of a transcendent Being must be constructed inferentially. The only properties that can be validly ascribed to God are those which are implied by our present knowledge of the world. Thus instead of explaining the world, deism adds no new knowledge and is an unprovable assumption.

Nor is deism a satisfactory basis for religion. God must be a distinct Being but not separated from the world. God must be an object of experience and not hypostatized for the sake of speculative completeness. God's existence must be seen or felt by the ordinary man and not conjectured by the rationalistic philosopher. In other words, God must be conceived as immanent rather than transcendent.

Moreover, God's presence must be differentiated from its absence. To say that everything is the work of God, to say that God is the cause of sunshine and of earthquakes, of health and of death, of happiness and of suffering, is to the average person not vain talk but infamous blasphemy. To the religionist God must be definite. God's actions must be specific and dependable. Inconsistent attributes cannot be predicated of the same God but may belong to different Gods. Thus God is conceived as
PARTICULAR BEINGS.

When God was regarded as the totality of all Beings in the world and when God was regarded as the one Being not in the world, the concept was uniquely determined. But if the concept "God" is applied to particular Beings, there must be some way of determining them and distinguishing them from other Beings not Gods. Force, energy, or power becomes the distinguishing characteristic of deity. Thus God may be conceived as observable objects and phenomena or as invisible Beings residing in or responsible for those objects and phenomena. The first conception is usually called FETISHISM and the latter ANIMISM.

These Gods may be of only momentary significance and chosen rather spontaneously or haphazardly, or they may represent serious and deliberate selection. They may be associated with the spasmodic or variable phenomena of nature, as the winds and rain, or with the more spectacular manifestations of power, as thunder and lightning, or even with the regular and recurrent phenomena, as the sun, the moon, and the stars. Moreover, the Gods may be animate or inanimate, personal or impersonal, natural or supernatural.

How then is fetishism or animism any more satisfactory than ambiguity of deism and the heterogeneity of pantheism? What gives a particular Being religious significance? The answers to these questions are respectively the recognition of and the influence on Values. To the religious person Values are just as real as Beings, but neither deism nor materialistic pantheism recognizes the validity of Values. Thus while historically much later, they must be regarded as lower stages of religion—i.e., as less religious—than fetishism and animism.

Man has great respect for certain Values and great anxiety for their existence. A powerful Being may have power not only over other Beings but also over Values. Hence, whatever Being he regards as influencing or controlling these Values—that Being he calls a God and endeavors to propitiate. Thus the ultimate concern of religion has been called the "conservation of values" and the status of God regarded as the agency by which this conservation is effected. But the word "conservation" implies the preservation of something already existing, whereas Values need not exist and religion
is often concerned with Values that have never existed. Religion is not conservative but creative. The religious zealot desires not that the amount of Value in the world will always be constant but that it will continue to grow, constantly transcending its previous maximum. Thus he invokes the Gods not for the "conservation" but for the "actualization" of his Values.

We say "his" not because Values are subjective whims because man identifies himself with them and devotes his life to their actualization. Each individual may invoke a separate God whom he regards as having unique control over his Values, or he may with others placate a whole pantheon of Gods. But as man broadens and becomes more explicit in his evaluations, he recognizes the universality of certain Values. All the members of a family, a clan, a tribe, or a nation may unite in recognizing the valuableness of a certain object. Then why must each person appeal to his own God? There must be a particular God whose function it is to actualize that particular Value. And likewise, there must be Gods for other Values. Thus man recognizes in Value something more important and more ultimately real than his own individuality. The pluralism of individualism is transcended by the pluralism of Values.

The Gods are no longer regarded as powers indifferent to their utilization by man, but the Gods themselves take particular interest in the Values over which they have influence. The Gods as much as or more than men are concerned about the actualization of Values and share with them that responsibility. The Gods are regarded as fellow workers with men. Thus man may even have the feeling of kinship with particular Gods as in TOTEMISM.

As the Gods are chosen and designated according to the particular Values with which they are associated, they gradually become identified with them. The Gods remain powerful Beings, but they demand more and more that consideration which at first only the Values received. They become ends as well as means in the actualization of Values. They come to typify or embody those Values which they endeavor to actualize in the world. Thus the Gods can no longer be conceived as mere Beings but are now
PARTICULAR VALUE-BEINGS.

Thus the significance of the Gods has increased tremendously. Instead of being favorable or unfavorable influences to be invoked or placated by man, the Gods now command his respect and demand his emulation. Man’s attitude toward the Gods now combines admiration and loyalty with cooperation. This stage of religious development and theological formulation is usually known as POLYTHEISM. But the transition from fetishism, animism, and totemism is so gradual and yet so inevitable that they too may be considered primitive forms of polytheism.

These polytheistic Gods—these Value-Beings—are autonomous and self-sufficient. They are no longer powers that need man’s direction, for each God is itself a Value. Nor do they need man’s assistance to make them actual, for each God is also a Being. But as Beings they are powerful and active. Each God would overpower the others; each God would make his Value supreme. Each God commands obeisance to his Value; each God demands submission to his power. Instead of being free to invoke the aid of whatever Gods he will man is now a slave of the Gods. He is oppressed by their power and distracted by their conflicting claims for his loyalty. The pantheon becomes a camp of warring factions!

But, fortunately, war always seeks its own termination and would eventually destroy itself. There are, moreover, two alternative solutions: one contestant may be found superior to the others, or all contestants may be conciliated. A military conflict may end either with a victory or with a truce. Similarly in this theological strife, one God may be declared superior to the rest, or a more fundamental principle may be found which will unite the various Gods. But since these Gods are Value-Beings, one God may be judged superior either on the basis of power or Value or both. Thus man may set up a hierarchy of Gods ranked according to their imputed power, or according to the relative worth of the Values symbolized. But the inferior Gods gradually lose their significance, becoming subservient and tending to disappear altogether. Likewise if the other alternative is followed, the underlying unity, the common identity, displaces the individual Gods and undermines their petty conflicts. Thus in either case the plurality is absorbed and God is conceived as
THE SUPREME VALUE-BEING.

God is now uniquely determined as supreme. God is the supreme Being, more powerful than any other. God is the supreme Value, more worthy than any other. As a Value, God is to be respected and emulated, worshipped and served. As a Being, God directs and controls the processes of life. God is single; but this may be regarded as “one among many” or as “one and only.” The former conception may be called HENOTHEISM and the latter MONOTHEISM. Thus henotheism and monotheism correspond to the alternative transitions from polytheism. But the distinction is rather subtle; hence any belief in one supreme Value-Being is commonly called monotheistic.

A great many people seem to take the monotheistic conception for granted whenever God is mentioned. But it is not nearly so clear and definite a concept as they might suppose. It is derived from polytheism and long retains vestiges of that stage. Particularly is this true of what we have called henotheism. God may be regarded as a solitary worker needing man’s cooperation or as an aggressive leader requiring man’s subservience. God may be vague and undefined or definitely anthropomorphic. God may be immanent in the world or may inhabit a transcendental empyrean. But God is the embodiment of Value, whose cause he champions in the world.

We might mention here an anomalous development that is often found in connection with or in place of henotheism. In the emergence from polytheism, the power of the Gods may seem not to be proportional to the relative worth of the Values they represent. This may lead to Weltschmerz or even despondent pessimism. On the other hand, instead of one hierarchy of Gods or one dominant God, there may be two—both approximately equal in power, but one positive and the other negative with respect to Values. Thus the chaotic strife of polytheism is preserved in a dualistic struggle. Just why these two trends are taken and just how long they are accepted seems to depend upon the temperament of the individual or the environmental circumstances. The normal person or the stable civilization soon transcends this stage—if it is touched upon at all. But unfortunately the confirmed dualist and the thoroughgoing pessimist are usually very
dogmatic about their views and very stubborn about changing them.

Genuine monotheism either absorbs or ignores as superficial any apparent lack of harmony. God is now defined as the supreme Value-Being. Hence its superiority has been attained either by surpassing the power of all other Beings or by transcending the worthiness of all other Values. As distinguishing from henotheism, God is no longer thought of as the acme of a hierarchy. God is unique; God is incomparable. Thus monetheism is the climax approached by henotheism. But once this point has been reached by the religionist, he readily slides over into pantheism. Man is prone to conceive God as a maximum, a total. God must be in every Being; God must embody every Value. God is all-powerful and all-worthy. God is

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE VALUE-BEING.

God is unconditioned and self-sufficient—"The Absolute." God alone has independent existence. God alone is entirely worthy of existence. Every Being is a part of God, a fragmentary element of the divine whole. Every Value is an aspect of God, a partial indication of the complete deity. This is "HIGHER PANTHEISM."

This higher pantheism has satisfied many sophisticated thinkers to whom monotheism and polytheism were but little more than superstitions. Science and religion are now reconciled; the philosopher may speak of God without blushing; the reality of God may be proved—such are the claims made by the rationalistic adherents of higher pantheism! This theological conviction has even been formulated as a system of metaphysics and thus become the corner-stone of a distinct school of thought.

Nor has higher pantheism been completely lacking in emotional appeal: nineteenth-century literature bears witness to that. But in general, the gain in intellectual tenability has been accompanied by a loss in genuine religious significance. One may find God in the innocence of the little child and the wisdom of the sage, the simple beauty of a wild flower and the majestic splendor of a sunset. But the religious person rebels at attributing to God ignorance, stupidly, deformity, or discord. Nor does undifferentiated Being evoke religious sen-
timents. God cannot be in everything alike; yet Reality is the whole, and only the whole can be proved real. Thus a distinction is made: there are degrees of Reality. God is still identical with the whole of Reality, but the whole is no longer thought to be homogeneous.

However, this new piece of reasoning tacked on to patch up the flaw in pantheism really makes that defect more conspicuous. God cannot be the all-inclusive Value-Being! God may be found in some things but not in all things. Mere existence as such has no significance for religion. To identify God with all that is, is meaningless. God must be distinct and distinguishable from ordinary existence. But through rigorous intellectual application, science has discovered a unity and a uniformity among Beings which no intelligent person would ignore in his conception of God. Science investigates all existence, and its explanation leaves no place for the interpolation of a unique Being called "God." Thus the existence of God as a Being is ultimately untenable.

Unfortunately, the person who reasons thusly in a conscientious effort to rid theology of spurious notions is immediately branded an "atheist." But to deny the adequacy of a particular theological dogma is not a denial of the reality of God. An adequate conception of God must satisfy emotional as well as intellectual prerequisites. The existence of God may be precluded by scientific knowledge of all Beings, but science claims no knowledge of Values. Religious experience is here the sole authority. As it is purified and purged of fears and fancies, the emotions demand that God be absolutely worthy of existence whether or not an existent Being. God may still appear in all the manifestations of Value, but God must not include Beings of no Value. Furthermore, the reality of God extends beyond the particular Beings in which it is manifest and does not depend on any Being. Thus God is conceived no longer as the all-inclusive Value-Being but now as

THE TOTALITY OF ALL VALUE.

Religion seems primarily concerned with Values and their actualization. God has been conceived as means for this actualization (as Being) and as a combination of means and actualization (as Value-Being), but none of these various conceptions have been ultimately satisfactory. Thus it is in-
evitable that God be conceived as the Values themselves. But historically this step has been taken only hesitantly. The conception of God as the totality of all Value is rather recent. As yet, it has not been accepted by a religious institution. However, it has been proffered and accepted by various members of a contemporary school of philosophy—but not sufficiently to warrant its identification with the name of that school.

Now the totality of Values seems to be quite different from the totality of Being. We are quite accustomed to speaking and thinking of the totality of all beings as "the world" or "the universe," the latter term showing clearly the unity of the whole. Likewise, the conception of the all-inclusive Value-Being, "the Absolute," is a unified idea, having developed from the notion of a single Value-Being. But the totality of Values, on the other hand, seems to lack a corresponding unity. Values do not form a homogeneous plenum; nor are we so thoroughly convinced of the network of relations and the mutual interdependence of Values as of Beings. Thus, while we may speak of a total, we almost invariably think of Values individually. Thus the totality of Values breaks down into a plurality. Hence God is conceived not as the totality of all Value but as

PARTICULAR VALUES.

Each Value is separate and distinct, quite independent of all other Values. Each claims absolute validity for itself; each claims unconditional respect and uncompromising loyalty from man.

But the various Values cannot be coordinated. However worthy each may seem when considered abstractly, in concrete situations some of these Values must be sacrificed. It is impossible to give equal deference to all Values. Selection and discrimination must be made. This estimation may be exhaustive and final or conditional and provisional. The former procedure would determine a fixed scale of Values; the latter would presuppose a "fundamental value universal," an unconditional standard of all Values. These two alternatives correspond to the alternative transitions from polytheism to monotheism, introducing unity into plurality. Thus the discreteness and rivalry of the distinct Values disappears.
Specific virtues and isolated Values lose their individual import. Thus God cannot be particular Values but rather

PURE VALUE—PERFECTION.

Particular Values have absolute validity no more than particular Beings have independent existence. But Perfection is absolute and independent. Particular Values may be ordered as better and worse, higher and lower; but "bitterness" is not the essential characteristic of Values. Their relative worth is secondary and derivative. Perfection is the very essence of Value, the absolute standard according to which all things are evaluated.

Thus God is unique and inimitable. Ethics may be codified as the decalogue; morality may be confined to the performance of certain acts or the abstinence from certain others; virtue may be reduced to three, four, or seven abstract qualities;—but God cannot be circumscribed. God is restricted to particular ideals and particular duties no more than to specific times and places. God transcends all particularity. God is not the quantitative total of all Values but the one ultimate Value, Perfection. God is the one ideal, absolute and unconditional. Particular Values are concrete particularizations of this ideal. God is pure Value.
CHAPTER III
CONCLUSION

"This is what I worship when I worship God, if I truly understand what I am about: I worship the apogee of aspiration."—R. A. Tsanoff, The Problem of Immortality.

The purpose of this essay was to determine the relation between God and Values. But a unique solution being precluded by the lack of unanimity in the conception of God, we have examined, as impartially as possible, each of the various doctrines, noting especially the status of God with respect to Values. Considering these diverse conceptions not as isolated revelations or random guesses but as steps in a logical development, we have endeavored to exhaust all possible types of theology. But no attempt was made to label and catalogue the particular conceptions of individuals or cults. We have confined our consideration to logical possibilities and left the reader to decide which type his own conception of God illustrates. Even though his idea of God may include vestiges and rudiments of differing logical types, by examining them and thinking through to their conclusion the tendencies implicit in them, he can discover for himself the logical transition to a "higher," more adequate conception of God.

In this manner we have found the only tenable relation between God and Values—thus solving our original problem—and at the same time we have evolved a rational conception of God. For until we reached the conception of God as Pure Value, each type of theology was successively found inadequate and ultimately untenable.

To this doctrine of God as the one and only ultimate Value we have given the name "axiological theology." Of course such an epithet is merely tentative: when the majority of people think of God as Perfect Value and nothing but Value, the qualification, "axiological," will be superfluous. But for the present we must maintain the distinction between axiological theology and all other conceptions of God.

Heretofore, our treatment has been a sequacious development rather than an argument ad hominem. We have striven for universality and rationality, completely disregarding traditional and contemporary beliefs. But now that our con-
elusions have been reached, it will not be out of place to con-
trast them with current theological notions, thus making more
evident the superior feasibility of axiological theology.

The existence of evil has long been the bugaboo of orthodox
monotheism. If God cannot prevent evil, he must be limited
in power or knowledge or both. If God can prevent it but
doesn't, he is morally responsible and unworthy of being God.
In fact any of these alternatives is fatal to a theology which
proclaims an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God.
But this dilemma does not implicate axiological theology. Its
God is not a pre-existent creator but an eternal ideal. God
determines not what the world is but what it ought to be. Per-
fection cannot be responsible for imperfection. Thus the ex-
istence of evil is no stigma on the character of God and no
imposse for axiological theology.

Moreover, axiological theology gives morality religious san-
tion and incentive. The God of axiological theology is not an
autocrat stultifying human endeavor but an ideal inspiring
it. Melioration is not only a possibility but a religious duty.
Science may discover uniformity in nature and even speak
of the inexorable law of cause and effect, but man is con-
tinually adapting and utilizing the forces of nature to sub-
serve his own ends, to actualize certain Values. The world
is not a completed product, designed and executed by an om-
nipotent, arbitrary Being. It is up to us—religious men and
women—to make the universe divine, to make God universal!

It might seem that without an omnipotent Being to assure
just rewards and punishments, morality would have no in-
centive and religion no significance. But surely no conscien-
tious person could think that an act done from hope of reward
or fear of punishment is an instance of morality or that the
function of God is to encourage such acts.

The God of axiological theology is a motivating ideal. No
one can really worship Perfection without striving to be-
come perfect in thought, word, and deed. Consequently axi-
ological theology prescribes no specific ethical duties and re-
quires neither promises nor threats as added inducements
for morality. Its only command is the categorical imperative:
—Do the perfect thing in every circumstance!

Now Perfection is no new term to be applied to God. For
centuries Christianity has proclaimed the Perfection of God
and of God alone. But man has clung to the notion of God as a Being. God is said to be the Perfect Being, the one and only Being that is Perfect. However, as we have already seen, this conception is not substantiated by actual experience and is responsible for a great many of the illogical theories and unreasonable dilemmas that have dismayed the layman and confounded the orthodox theologian.

In the New Testament God is continually referred to as the "heavenly Father." To what extent this epithet is metaphorical we dare not say. Perhaps neither Jesus nor any of the New Testament writers ever ceased to think of God as a Being, as the Supreme Value-Being. But no one can deny that the most authentic and the most characteristic teachings of Jesus proclaim the ethical perfection of God as an ideal for man! Axiological theology merely renders this doctrine more explicit by its complete identification of God and Perfection.

APPENDIX

Present-day scholasticism hesitates to call any piece of work "scholarly" unless there is appended to it an exhaustive bibliography. Hence a large bibliography is often added for its own sake, both for the sheer impressiveness of size and for the magical touch lent by the names of a few authorities. On the other hand, we hope there will be some readers sufficiently aroused by the above three chapters really to appreciate a few suggestions for collateral reading. But believing as we do, that any doctrine should stand on its own rationality rather than on the authority of cited authors, and that a long bibliography would be confounding to the layman and unnecessary for the scholar, we shall not conform to the conventional procedure.

The religious-minded reader is bewildered by the almost overwhelming number of books and articles claiming his attention. But the only ones worth reading are those which will help the reader to find or, if already found, to preserve a rational conviction of his own and at the same time to develop or, if already developed, to maintain an intelligent tolerance of other convictions. Bigotry and complete lack of conviction are the two extremes that must be avoided. (And
here we must remember that bigotry is not synonymous with, 
or limited to, orthodoxy. The dogmatic anthropologist who, 
piecing together archeological discovery and imaginative in-
ference, announces that modern religion is the vestige of a 
primitive response to an unfriendly environment; the radical 
modernist who, denouncing all else as superstitious accretion, 
proclaims his most recently acquired tenet to be the primeval 
essence of all religion—these are only two examples of the 
bigotry now competing with orthodoxy.)

Modern man is in need of a modern theology. He who 
would supply it must interpret religion as he sees it, but he 
must also allow for interpretations differing from his own. 
This we have tried to do; but it has also been done by Miss 
Frances Power Cobbe and, to a certain extent, by Dr. Charles 
Carroll Everett. Both of them are unequivocal in pointing out 
what they consider the highest and best; yet both of them 
recognize the diametrically opposite position and grant a grad-
ual development from it to the more advanced point of view.

As the present essay was nearing completion, our attention 
was attracted to an article entitled “The Two Religions,” writ-
ten by Miss Cobbe and appearing in the Contemporary Review 
of December 1890.1 While expressed in a different terminol-
ogy and treated in a different manner, this article in essence 
is identical with our own.

The thesis of the article is stated in the first sentence:

“The religions of mankind, howsoever variously 
classified as Natural or Revealed, Heathen or Chris-
tian, Monotheistic or Polytheistic, are, morally, of 
two orders only; namely—the worship of POWER, 
and the worship of GOODNESS.”

These two “orders,” and their various modifications and com-
binations, are then clearly illustrated by selections from the 
sacred scriptures and poetic classics of ancient Egypt, India, 
Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Miss Cobbe’s examples are concrete and show the definite 
effects of the conception of God on personal conduct, ecclesi-
astical organization, and other manifestations of religion 
which we had to neglect. She does not give a rigorous logical 
development as we have attempted in Chapter II; but her in-
sight into the “historical religions” is so clear, her statement

of it so simple, and her plea for the worship of Goodness so earnest, that the article is quite appealing if not really convincing!

In a course of lectures given at Harvard, Dr. Everett used to classify religion on the basis of psychological development. This classification consisted in grouping the various attitudes or "feelings" which have been recognized as religious, under three general headings: namely, "self-centered," "divided," and "God-centered." But even though his chief concern was the psychology of religion, Dr. Everett's three-fold classification is in essential agreement with our own treatment of the development of the conception of God.

The first stage is the religion of one "who seeks his own good," whose relation to God "is that of expectation of some service, or of recognition of a service which has been performed."

"The worshipper regards himself as the centre, and appeals to the divinity to help him in the attainment of the special ends which he has at heart, or to deliver him from evils which he wishes to avoid." Nothing could be clearer! God is a Being, endowed with power. Man respects certain Values ("special ends which he has at heart"). Unaware of his own power and not yet the master of the power of nature, man appeals to God for the actualization of these Values. God is not valued except as an agency in the actualization of Values. God is not worshipped for what it is, but praised for what it has done. The worshipper says, "not 'How good God is!' but 'How good God has been to me!'")

In the second stage, Dr. Everett continues, "the worshipper begins to see that the divinity has needs of its own to which the worshipper ought to yield; he begins to recognize the rightfulness of the moral and divine law." In other words God is no longer an indifferent power to be conjured up for the securing of wants. God is more than a disinterested Being to be invoked for the actualization of Values. God

2. These lectures have been published, posthumously, in book form: The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1902. See especially ch. VIII.
3. Ibid., p. 110.
4. Ibid., p. 112.
is still a powerful Being but is now identified with certain definite Values ("needs of its own").

Dr. Everett rightly observes that this second stage "marks the development of the worshipper out of the lower into the higher forms of the religious life." But on the whole he seems not to realize its extreme significance. He speaks of it as "psychological rather than historical," but its historical embodiment has been far-reaching. It is, of course, merely a transitional stage; but how many people even today are content to remain in it!

The last stage is the culmination of the whole development.

"In the third group of feelings God is the centre, and the worshipper not only feels and recognizes the supremacy of the divinity, but rejoices in it."

The self-centered desire and adoration of the first stage have now become the God-centered love and worship of the third. Seemingly without realizing the denouncement of traditional theism implicit in his statements, Dr. Everett speaks of love and worship of God "not for what he has done for the worshipper but for what he is in himself," "not because he has brought help to the worshipper, but because he is himself worthy of worship." The truth implied in these remarks is that God must now be regarded not as a Being but as Value. We may fear or trust, conciliate or praise, submit to or invoke a God conceived as a Being; but Value alone can be the object of true worship!

Thus Dr. Everett's classification of religious feelings as (1) self-centered, (2) divided, and (3) God-centered is the psychological counterpart of the logical development of the conception of God from Being, through Value-Being, to pure Value.

5. Ibid., pp. 112-113.

THE END.